

# Creating Healthy Schools & Communities



is an initiative in New York to establish and support sustainable healthy communities as places where it is easier to practice healthy behaviors...

through

Strengths-based & Community-based  
**ACTION**



with

Policy, Systems, & Environmental  
**CHANGES**



to

**REDUCE DISPARITIES**  
in high-need areas



since  
**2021**



across  
**5**  
regions in  
New York...

**21**  
NY organizations  
("grantees")  
received 25 grants...

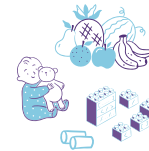
to improve  
**~225**  
local  
communities.

**4 million**  
New Yorkers potentially  
reached through CHSC  
grantees!

The  
**4**  
key approaches  
CHSC takes to  
improve the health  
of New Yorkers



Increase the availability and consumption of nutritious foods in community settings & workplaces with community nutrition guidelines & behavioral design



Support providers to strengthen physical activity and nutrition practices and policies in early care & education settings

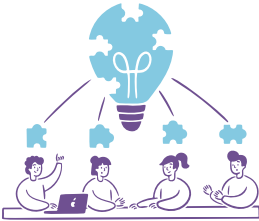


Make it easier, safer, and possible to walk, bike, and roll to school, work, and other everyday destinations with activity-friendly routes



Promote school wellness by increasing nutritious options and opportunities for physical activity in schools

# How CHSC uses a community- and strengths-based approach



1



2



3

Grantee recruits local site (“site partner”) to implement one (or more) of the four CHSC strategies:

Site partners have been:

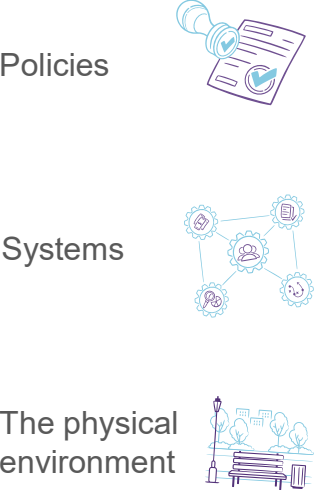
- Schools
- Food banks
- Community recreation centers
- Workplaces
- Childcare centers
- Municipalities



They conduct an assessment to identify:



Grantee provides support to improve:



CHSC works alongside communities to plan, implement, leverage resources, and tailor interventions.



# Community nutrition guidelines

**GOAL**

**More nutritious food access and consumption in workplaces & community settings**

## WORKPLACES

**With cafeterias or vending machines**

Government Facilities

Hospital and Healthcare Settings

Colleges and Universities

## COMMUNITY SETTINGS

Food Pantries

Local Parks

Recreation & Youth Programs

Public Event Sites & Concession Stands



# 156

Sites implemented community nutrition guidelines.



Ensure that healthy foods are available.

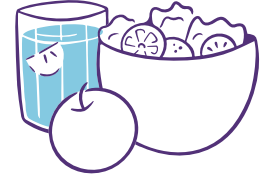
Let's buy more apples and fewer chips for our staff.



Great idea! We just got new coolers and have the space.

# 144

Sites implemented behavioral design.



Make healthier options more visible, accessible, and appealing.

That apple is cheaper than chips! I'll get that.



I'm in a rush, looks like that apple is the fastest to grab. I'll take it.



## Community nutrition guidelines

In Chautauqua County, **20 food pantries** received cooler displays, signage, and shelving. Pantries then came together to share best practices regarding what makes their food pantries work and examine ways they could further improve.

In Genesee County, the Batavia Salvation Army partnered with Batavia National Grid to create a **community garden** that provides fresh produce for its food pantry. This initiative increases access to healthy food, teaches gardening skills, and fosters community involvement.

In Erie County, Resurrection Life Food Pantry implemented new technology, including **iPads with ASL transcription software** and a smart board, to improve communication with Deaf patrons.

In Wyandanch, Gerald J. Ryan Outreach Center used **new refrigeration** to better assist clients visiting their food pantries, community garden and senior food delivery program. Now they can store and promote fresh, healthy produce for the 15,000 people they serve each year and prioritize nutritious and culturally relevant items for all.

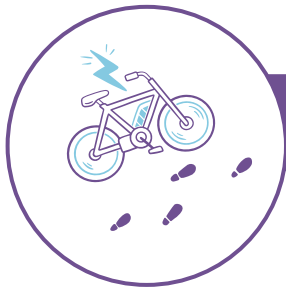
In St. Lawrence County, the St. Lawrence Food Access Program Alliance brings together more than **60 food access programs** every quarter. This coalition of volunteers, staff and food bank leaders meet regularly to network and share ideas on how to make an impact on food access.

In Suffolk County, Resurrection House, an emergency shelter for single men, installed a **new water filter** to promote hydration and built **raised bed gardens** to grow vegetable and herbs.



## Here are some examples from across NY





## Activity-friendly routes

### GOAL

Make it easier, safer, and possible to **walk, bike, and roll** to school, work, and other everyday destinations.

### THROUGH

- Infrastructure for pedestrians & cyclists
- Land use planning
- Street design and connectivity
- Public transportation
- School improvements

...which has these bonus impacts



↓ air pollution



↓ transportation costs



↑ economic growth

# 181 projects

have already improved NY pedestrian and bike transportation systems!

## 98 pedestrian and bike transportation systems

## 83 land use and environmental design

Now that there's a longer multi-use path, I can walk to the store!



These new bike lanes make it so much safer to bike to work!

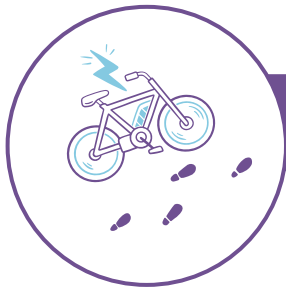


# 52 policies

have been improved or adopted with the goal to improve pedestrian and bike transportation systems.



Nice! Now every time a road is repaired, a sidewalk will be installed if it doesn't already exist.



## Activity-friendly routes

In Broome County, Windsor Central School District **renovated wooded trails into new walking paths** on the Windsor High School Campus. These provide safe and convenient options for physical activity in a rural area where walking and biking options are limited.

In Clinton County, the Harry J. McManus Northern Tier **Recreation Trail** was made more accessible and attractive by adding **safety features** (trail crossing signs, solar lights on trail markers), **amenities** (benches, bike racks), and a **disc golf course**. The trail's usage has now doubled.

In Saratoga County, Mechanicville Area Community Services Center installed **bike racks and a bike fix-it station**, making it easier for residents, especially those without cars, to access vital community resources.

In East Harlem, **data collection and community engagement** through community events and bike and pedestrian counts helped improve the built environment and enhance health equity; it is now safer to bike.



## Here are some examples from across NY



### Check out these collaborations between activity-friendly routes & school wellness strategies!

In the Bronx, 'Open Streets' events transformed streets around **schools into safe spaces for physical activity**. With activities like biking, obstacle courses, and art, these events increased student and community engagement, making fitness fun and accessible in the Bronx.

In Newburgh, Hudson Elementary School, **repurposed a parking lot into a bike garden**. A bike garden simulates the road so children can learn bike safety in a safe setting. Bicycles were also provided to the school.

In Brooklyn, a **weekly Bike Bus Program** created a safe environment for students and families to bike to schools via bike routes.

In Ulster County, the City of Kingston worked with KaN Landscape design to **plan 2 new greenspaces** along the Kingston Greenline. KaN worked with local youth organizations and spoke to about 1,500 community members so the future development will meet their needs.





## School wellness

### GOAL

Promote **school wellness** by increasing nutritious options and opportunities for physical activity in schools

### THROUGH

- Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs
- Healthy Nutrition Environment
- Local Wellness Policies
- Safe Routes to School

**56**  
policies

have been improved to support new practices and opportunities for nutrition and physical activity in schools

Okay everyone. The new policy was approved. We aren't going to tie food or activity to rewards or punishments anymore.

I'm so glad we won't take recess away as punishment anymore.



**267**  
projects

have already improved NY school environments!

**210**

New best practices to help schools improve nutrition or implement comprehensive physical activity programs

Let's see how fast you can walk around our new school trail. GO!



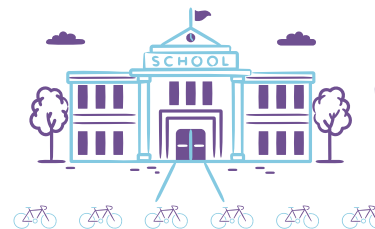
Isn't it neat that this includes veggies from our school garden!

I helped with the lettuce!



**57**

Increased opportunities for walking or biking to school



I see so many more bikes here now that we have bike racks!





## School wellness

In Monroe County, a grassroots coalition called Healthi Kids, in collaboration with Rochester City School District and parent and community leaders, amended the **district's wellness policy to center racial health equity**.

In Warren and Washington Counties, schools have integrated **indoor growing systems into classrooms**, allowing students to grow and harvest their own produce.

In Ulster County, the Kingston City School District expanded its Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. Over 1,100 students across three schools were reached—a nearly 2,000% increase. With support from the Rondout Valley Growers Association, students enjoyed **locally grown produce and farm-to-school activities**.

In Suffolk County, Wyandanch elementary school students received **'Math & Movement' mats** that combine physical activity with learning.

In Erie County, Colden Elementary School created a **new walking and biking trail on campus**, installed **bike racks**, and launched a bike program that includes **bikes and helmets for students** to use.

In Franklin County, the Salmon River Central School District established a **Seed to Tray Program with grow carts in the schools**. This program gives students ownership of food production, teaches students about nutrition, and is self-sustainable for the school.

In Suffolk County, the Brentwood School District launched staff wellness initiatives like the **'Monday Mile' and 'Wellness Wednesdays,'** where staff engage in walking, stretching, and other wellness.

In Seneca County, Seneca Falls Central School District installed **raised garden beds and tower gardens**. Students share their harvest with the school and broader community.



## Here are some examples from across NY

In the Capital Region, educators from 8 school districts received training on strategies like **kinesthetic learning and mindfulness practices** to keep students active, even in small spaces.

In Rockland County, the North Rockland Central School District's **Drumming for Fitness** program was implemented that combines music with fitness. About 2,500 4th - 6th graders have participated!

In Nassau County, the Roosevelt School District promoted health and wellness through activities like **school gardens, food tastings, and walking clubs**.





## Early care & education

### GOAL

Increase nutritious options and opportunities for physical activity in early care & education settings through practices and policy transformation.

Family day care homes

Day care centers

Pre-K programs

153 practices have been implemented

105 policies have already improved

This is going to be a great way for them to learn about healthy food!

Agree! So glad we have new policies in place to encourage this.



## Here are some examples from across NY

In Orange County, a family daycare received **physical activity materials, tools for a garden,** and technical assistance. Children are now able to **explore healthy food through the 5 senses** and engage in learning through movement.

That's so neat this came from the daycare garden!



In Sullivan County, Valley Daycare integrated **snowshoes, an indoor/outdoor gross motor space, and a Ninja Warrior playground** to their facility to keep kids active year-round, even during harsh winters. **New picnic tables, grow station, and garden enhancements** allow students to grow their own food and enjoy fresh air, rain or shine.

Don't worry kids! Even though it's raining, we can just go to our indoor playground!



## Creating Healthy Schools & Communities



CHSC is supported with funds from the State of New York.



With ongoing program investments, we can decrease the chronic disease burden.

But we have so much more we want to accomplish!



Site partners have goals to build or expand:

- Bike racks
- Trails
- Garden beds
- Tower gardens
- Seed libraries
- Food storage
- Supportive policies

## Here's how **you** can get involved & help CHSC keep going!

Attend our events!

**Let's meet** so you can learn more about our activities and how it's helping people eat healthier & be more active.

Invite us to meetings & events and/or radio, podcast and television shows.

Connect us with your constituents so we can recruit more sites and partners.

Identify supplemental funding sources so we can grow and sustain our work.

Send us an email today!

Email: [bccdp@health.ny.gov](mailto:bccdp@health.ny.gov)

[health.ny.gov/prevention/obesity/prevention\\_activities/chsc/](http://health.ny.gov/prevention/obesity/prevention_activities/chsc/)



Department  
of Health