

Building better food systems for healthier communities

VicHealth Local Government Partnership



This module covers:

Impact streams

- Creating thriving local food systems
- Embedding healthy food and drink in council owned and operated spaces and services
- Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities
- Enabling healthy partnerships

Partners

We would like to thank our development partner for co-authoring this module:



SUSTAIN
the Australian food network

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Overview

Nutritious, healthy foods for children are important for optimal growth and development. However, food systems are becoming increasingly complex, making it more challenging and confusing for families to get affordable and healthy food.



‘Food systems’ is the term used to describe global, national and local webs of supply chain activities from paddock to plate. Today’s food system sees children and young people disconnected from how their food is produced while also increasingly bombarded by promotions of unhealthy food and drink. Spaces that are dominated by unhealthy food options and promotions influence children and young people’s food preferences, attitudes and consumption, and can normalise diets that include excess unhealthy food and drinks.

Urgent action is required to assist our future generations to become active food citizens. This can be achieved by creating local and healthy food systems, and giving children and young people opportunities to actively engage in the issues and solutions.

Councils, through their commitment to health and wellbeing, have a responsibility to ensure children’s nutrition needs are prioritised and protected. Councils have strategic, policy and service delivery mechanisms to shape local food systems that put the right to good food for children at the centre of this work.

Food systems span multiple areas of responsibility for local governments. While food systems are influenced by a number of factors, including state and federal governments, local governments have various powers to shape the natural, built, economic and social environments within their communities. In Victoria, many councils are well progressed on this journey.

These council mechanisms provide a platform to drive healthier food environments, improve access to healthy food and drink options, promoting healthy sponsorship and partnerships, and building local food systems to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people in their communities.

Increasing access to healthy food and drink options positively impacts children and young people’s diets and supports their mental wellbeing and development. Creating positive change in the local food system presents wider health, social, economic and environmental sustainability benefits for communities as a whole.

Councils can take action to create spaces where families feel comfortable and confident feeding babies and young children. They can work to connect local grocers to early childhood spaces, so children learn where their food comes from and can explore sensory food experiences.

This module draws from a rich history of experience and action within local governments across the state. VicHealth first supported this effort with the Food for All initiative; subsequently, the Victorian Government released and supported Healthy Food Connect from 2014, a model for councils to influence and activate local food system change.

This module further builds and provides best practice and evidence-informed actions for councils to increase access to healthy food options, address unhealthy food and drink sponsorship and partnerships, and create local food systems that support healthy, sustainable and equitable diets. Alongside this, the module will support councils to strengthen the capacity of children and young people to achieve better health through active engagement in locally led initiatives.

Collective impact for healthier food systems in Victoria through priority initiatives

Significant investment and effort are taking place across Victoria to improve access to healthy, appropriate and affordable food.

These healthy eating programs and services target some of the key systems, services and settings that have a role to play in helping Victorians eat well.

In addition to leading actions such as those described in this module, councils have a valuable role in supporting a collective impact¹ approach to healthy eating through:

- sharing a common agenda with other stakeholders
- offering backbone support, such as convening local and regional networks and supporting funding mechanisms
- delivering mutually reinforcing activities
- participating in shared measurement
- being in continual communication with other stakeholders, partners, community and tiers of government to advance the work.

Throughout this module, we have referred to these initiatives as **Priority Initiatives** and a summary is provided in the Topic in Focus section.

Partnering with Community Health – Health Promotion

Health promotion teams in Victorian Community Health Services undertake health promotion and prevention addressing the key focus areas of the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019–2023, including increasing healthy eating.

Funding guidelines encourage them to accelerate the implementation of healthy food and drink supply policies in key settings (i.e. Healthy Choices Guidelines and Canteens, Healthy Eating and Other Food Services Policy, Victorian Menu Planning Guidelines for Long Day Care and Healthy Choices: Policy Directive and Guidelines for Health Services), with support from the Healthy Eating Advisory Service.

Key terms

‘Early childhood services’ is used in this module to refer to the variety of council-operated services that provide care and other services for young children. This includes early childhood services (childcare centres, family day care, kindergarten, before- and after-kindergarten care, occasional care and playgroups), maternal and child health services, new-parent groups and community health services.

What are the benefits for councils?

This module will support your council to:

- align your Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan actions with the 'increasing healthy eating' and 'tackling the health impacts of climate change' focus areas outlined in the [Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2019–2023](#)
- strengthen the capacity of the community to make positive changes to their local food system
- create opportunities to involve children and young people in conversations around their local food system
- provide healthy food retail environments in council-owned facilities frequented by children and young people
- lead the way in creating spaces and places frequented by young people that are free from unhealthy food and alcohol sponsorship and marketing
- ensure council-owned places and spaces are supportive of breastfeeding as part of a healthy start to life
- develop strategies to address food security to help meet targets set under crisis response strategies
- contribute to a thriving local food economy, distinguished by greater connections between producers and consumers and increased opportunities for local small business enterprises
- ensure all residents enjoy their basic human right of physical and economic access to safe and nutritious food at all times.



Impact stream:

Creating thriving local food systems

To complete this impact stream, councils will select from:

- **Quick win:** *Deliver a community food festival or forum*
- **Step up:** *Create a local food coalition*
- **Step up:** *Create food system education opportunities for young children*
- **Ambitious:** *Implement a healthy and sustainable food system strategy*

This impact stream requires councils to undertake a strategic policy approach to create a sustainable and healthy local food system, ensuring community members can access healthy and secure options at any stage of life.

Complex health issues such as obesity and food insecurity require food system solutions founded in a common vision and direction, promotion of learning and innovation, and collective action. While many councils already play a role in many parts of the food system, a lack of strategic and multi-sectoral planning can result in disjointed policy and programs.

A standalone food system strategy that adopts a whole-of-council approach can provide the necessary actions, measures, indicators and targets to build a local healthy sustainable and fair food system for all. A whole-of-council approach ensures the strategy informs, aligns with or complements the Council Plan and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan as well as other policies and strategies including those for sustainability, local planning, street landscapes, waste and litter, human rights and urban heat island effects. Councils should consider opportunities to integrate these policies and strategies when they are up for review.

Councils are increasingly undertaking strategic work to create thriving and sustainable local food systems. There is a drive to strengthen connection with and increase the skills of people connected with the local food system and celebrate good food at a community level.

Young people are particularly affected by many fundamental challenges facing the food system. In addition to being consumers of food, many young people are also actively engaged in food as farmers and community garden volunteers. Councils play an important role in elevating and facilitating young people's thoughts, ideas and knowledge on issues that affect them, particularly during the development of local food system policy, program and event design.

Young children should also be considered in these strategic approaches and connected to their food system through early experiences in tasting, trying and growing foods. Councils can work with families and early childhood professionals to identify areas where breastfeeding, first foods and food exploration for young children can be prioritised through strategic partnerships.

Intended outcomes

Councils undertaking this impact stream can expect to:

- strengthen the connections that children and young people have with their local food system
- address food security and foster social connectedness
- build a local and thriving food system
- strengthen healthy and more sustainable local food procurement.

Minimum deliverables

To complete the impact stream 'Creating thriving local food systems', councils will have:

- documented council's goals for the identified implementation action, including a priority focus on:
 - food security
 - food at all stages of life, including breastfeeding and first foods
 - healthy, sustainable and locally sourced foods
- established partnerships with key stakeholders in the local food system
- demonstrated activities to involve members of the community, including children and young people, in working toward the goals of the activity
- demonstrated support from council and local leadership to work toward the goals of the impact stream, for example, endorsement or alignment of policies
- demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.





Quick win: *Deliver a community food festival or forum*

A great strength of councils is their capacity to bring the community together. Local food harvest festivals, cultural food practices urban agriculture activities (e.g. garden tours and workshops) and local food forums enable [local food leaders](#) to build community connections and demonstrate how their work contributes to a healthy and sustainable environment.

Food festivals or forums are a great way to connect residents and local food producers, raise awareness of the benefits of local, seasonal, and sustainably produced foods, and increase consumption of those foods. A food festival can platform and celebrate the diverse food systems knowledge and practices of different cultures within the local community.

The scale of the events you deliver will depend on internal capacity and (if required) external funding and sponsorships. Start small. Select an achievable range of activities to deliver with key local partners. This will create a foundation that can be built upon annually.

Ensure your activities reflect how local food in the municipality is grown, produced, processed, accessed, consumed, redistributed and disposed of. Involve local growers and gardeners. Ensure the event is healthy, inclusive and accessible to all members of the community.

Key terms

Food festivals typically combine a collection of food-based activities that appeal to different segments of the community, are organised over a few days to weeks, and are about celebrating local, seasonal and sustainably produced foods.

Food forums are usually held on one day and are focused on exchanging ideas, problem-solving local food system challenges, and exploring ways to expand and strengthen collaborations by bringing local leaders and champions together for a concentrated burst of activity.



How-to guide to:

Deliver a community food festival or forum

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include environment and sustainability, health planning and promotion, multicultural community liaison, family and youth services, open space and land use planning, economic development and events.

Planning the festival or forum provides an opportunity for you to engage with local food leaders and children and young people with an interest in healthy, sustainable food systems.

Crossover opportunity

For information on how to create events and a council landscape that promotes healthy sponsors refer to the related impact stream in this module '[Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities](#)' Impact stream: [Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities](#)'



Plan

Conceptualise and scope the event

Convene a working group of council officers from a range of teams/departments. Develop an event outline to determine the parameters of your local food festival or forum, including:

- goals and objectives of the event; examples can be found in the [Food Forum: Program details template](#)
- event evaluation – what is your criteria for success? (e.g. number of participants, especially children and youth) and degree to which the community is represented at and participates in the event
- event themes (see below)

- event management experience and capacity within council and local partners
- available budget and resources, including opportunities for grants and healthy local sponsors
- how the event can be environmentally sustainable (e.g. don't provide single-use plastics, demonstrate alternatives to sending food waste to landfill)
- location: consider child and youth friendly places (e.g. schools, libraries).

Expand on the event plan in the design step.

Hot tip!

Consider when seasonal produce grown in your municipality is harvested and a date/time that is convenient for families and young people.

Assess

Use themes as a way of gaining cross-department engagement

Themes for the festival or forum can be an effective way to demonstrate how the event cuts across several council departments and can help you gain cross-department engagement. For example, in the following table, the theme 'protecting land to grow food' directly relates to council's responsibility for land use planning.

Draw on the community's skills, capabilities and interests. Ask individuals, organisations and/or businesses to participate in the event and contribute their knowledge about succession planning, co-operative farming and/or urban agriculture etc.

Suggested theme	Relevant council department/ responsibility	Examples of relevant topics
Protecting land to grow food	Land use planning	Barriers and enablers in local planning schemes for diversified and small-to-medium scale farming, succession planning for local farms and how to support the next generation of farmers, co-operative farming models, urban agriculture potential, accessing public land for community gardens
Enhancing food skills, knowledge and culture	Health, community cohesion	Healthy food for all ages, cooking demonstrations for children and young people, reconnecting with food, celebrating and sharing food growing and preparations practices from different cultures
Sustainable food: water, waste and space	Sustainability, waste management	Protecting resources for future generations, school-based kitchen garden models, water-wise gardening, circular economy models
Growing a vibrant local food economy	Economic development, tourism	Supporting potential of young and aspiring farmers, distributors, artisanal and craft makers, chefs, restaurateurs and agri-tourism

Establish a community reference group

A community reference group is a great way to include local food leaders and young people in the event's design. Community reference groups foster community ownership and engagement, build local community capacity and ensure activities are relevant and embedded.

Consider sending invitations to join the reference group to [multi-sectoral community leaders](#) and young people who represent how local food in the municipality is grown, produced, processed, accessed, consumed and disposed of.

Invite representatives from existing council youth groups to be involved and/or get in touch with young food leaders in the municipality. Contact the [Youth Food Movement Australia](#) and identify if there are any local young people they could refer.



Design

Formulate the event type, format and activities

Consider what types of activities will best bring local food leaders, organisations and residents together to share their work, stories of success and challenges, and plan how they can make their local food system more healthy, equitable and sustainable.

If a community reference group is already established, ask them what type and format of activities would be meaningful to them.

Event activities to consider:

- **A 'future of local food'** workshop where businesses, community organisations, individuals, youth leaders and local government officers can discuss the future of local food in your municipality. This session should be hosted by council and include:
 - a brief presentation from council outlining the opportunity
 - time for residents to share/discuss concerns and priorities
 - identification of appropriate people/organisations for the Local Food Coalition.
- **Food swaps** at youth service or early childhood services where residents can swap excess homegrown produce such as fruit, vegetables, eggs or seedlings. This may also extend to workshops on gardening tips and seasonal recipes.
- **Cooking demonstrations** with/by children and young people featuring healthy, tasty, affordable meals that children and young people can replicate. Where practicable, children should have the opportunity to 'cook along' with their families.
- **Truth telling** by local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders where residents can learn about the pre-colonial history of food in your region and ongoing connections to Country. Contacting local Aboriginal organisations and Elders in the community is a good starting point for respectful engagement.
- **Composting and worm farming workshops** where children and young people can learn alongside their parents about the basics of alternative methods of food waste disposal to landfill, including vermiculture and the fascinating world of worms.
- **Presentations** from local food leaders, where they share their work, stories of success and explain how young people can get involved. This could be delivered in person or virtually.

Hot tip!

Be sure to start any communication with Aboriginal organisations and Elders as early as possible in the process to build trust and ensure meaningful consultation. Local land councils and heritage corporations may be able to assist in connecting council with local Aboriginal organisations and Elders.

Develop an event plan

To ensure compliance with council regulations and other related policies at your event, check any existing guidelines.

Consider the following elements when planning your event (not all will be required):

- runsheet (see next page)
- MC and facilitators
- guest speakers
- photographer
- audio visual hire
- public liability insurance
- signage and site plan
- infrastructure and facilities list
- local and healthy food and drink vendors
- food safety compliance

- pedestrian and traffic management
- waste management.

A template [Food Forum Project Plan](#) has been developed for your convenience.

Consider how you will provide healthy food and drink options and how you will make the event child and family friendly. For example, to make it breastfeeding-friendly, provide comfortable seating for breastfeeding parents and a play area for young children accompanying them.

A key part of the planning process is the development of an event runsheet, with detailed timings for each moment of the day (or week in the case of a festival) together with who is responsible.

See this [sample runsheet from Day 1 of the 2021 Urban Agriculture Forum](#) which will help you with your event planning and delivery.

Deliver

Run the event and build on the interest in healthy and sustainable food systems

The event is a great opportunity for council to connect and engage with the community and learn about how they see the challenges and opportunities for creating a healthier local food system.

Consider:

- **Surveying attendees** with a questionnaire to understand how the community engages with the local food system and learn about local food networks.
- **Informal or structured conversations** to get to know the challenges and opportunities facing local food procedures and consumers.

- **Asking event staff and volunteers to record** the themes and topics of interest that emerge through their conversations at the event.
- **Preparing to build a basic food system map** by capturing information about people, groups, organisations and resources that make up the local food system.

Review and embed

Evaluation

Ask participants to complete an [evaluation survey](#), toward the end of the event or in the days after if registrations were required. Meet with the community reference group to evaluate the event. Some considerations:

- What went well and what challenges were experienced?
- Did the event meet its goals and objectives?

- Were there any barriers to delivering an environmentally sustainable event? Can these be overcome?
- Were the resources and capacity required appropriate for the outcomes?

Refer to the evaluation section in 'Evaluating and Monitoring' for further guidance on conducting the evaluation and embedding this activity.

Recommended resources

- [Food Forum: Program Details](#) – includes examples of suitable goals and objectives for a food forum, as well as suggested order of proceedings.
- [Food Forum: Project Plan](#) – a place to document key requirements for your event including the scope and purpose of your event, project schedule, funding sources and responsibilities for (as appropriate) MC and facilitators.
- [Food Forum: Runsheet](#) – event delivery from Day 1 of the 2021 Urban Agriculture Forum (delivered online).
- [Food Forum: Evaluation Survey](#) – example questions to include in a participant survey post-event.



Case study

Cardinia Food Forum

The [2017 Cardinia Food Forum](#) was a celebration of the wonderful things happening in food and farming across Cardinia Shire, and also an opportunity for the community to come together and respond to local food system challenges.

The event was a grassroots community effort. Food network members played a key role in organising and delivering all aspects of the day, from program design and set up to registrations and pack down.

The event was funded through a philanthropic grant from a regional funding collaboration, as well as an allocation from the annual budget of the Cardinia Food Circles project, financed by council. The approximate cost was \$10,000 including catering, venue and staffing.

More than 100 teachers, farmers, chefs, business owners, health workers, local residents, community workers, local government officers and landcare networks attended the event, which featured:

- international and local speakers who built a shared understanding of the local context and challenges and opportunities facing the local food system
- workshops where attendees learned about the great work being done locally and opportunities to get involved
- roundtable discussions where new connections were formed across and between attendees and speakers, growing and strengthening the work many people are doing.

For more ideas, take inspiration from the [2021 Urban Agriculture Forum events](#) held across Australia.



Case study

Yarra Ranges Food Connections

The [Yarra Ranges Food Connections](#) online forum 2022 brought together community members, stakeholders and local food leaders across the Yarra Ranges Shire. Yarra Ranges Council and Inspiro Community Health partnered on the initiative in response to a stakeholder consultation that demonstrated local interest in exploring the themes of improving affordable and accessible healthy food, connecting community, and better understanding what others were doing in this area.

The Food Connections forum included presentations from successful local food program 'Crops for Community', Enliven (Primary Care Partnership), neighbouring councils like Cardinia and a local farmer.

The forum also provided an opportunity for participants to share and connect with each other which strengthened partnerships and encouraged future collaboration.

[A video case study is available here.](#)



Step up: *Create a local food coalition*

Councils, in partnership with businesses, community organisations and individuals, have a role to play in creating thriving, equitable, healthy and sustainable food systems.

The establishment of a Local Food Coalition (also referred to as a Local Food Assembly or Local Food Alliance) is one way that councils can facilitate and lead change through coordinating action at a local level.

A key factor for success of a Local Food Coalition is a strong authorising environment. This can be achieved by having the right decision-makers at the table who can actively contribute their involvement and resources.¹

Local Food Coalitions serve as forums for discussing food issues, help develop a common language and understanding about the strengths and challenges of the local food system, foster coordination and collaboration between different sectors in the food system, evaluate and influence policy, work to mobilise resources and funding, and launch or support programs and services that address local needs. Councils should aim to have a strategic, multi-sectoral focus that is relevant to their local food system.

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include environment and sustainability, health planning and promotion, family and youth services, open space and land use planning, economic development and events.

Establish a Youth Food Council

Consider supporting the establishment of a Youth Food Council or Coalition – either as a standalone initiative or as a youth-led working group of the Local Food Coalition.

A great example is the [Toronto Youth Food Policy Council](#). The City of Toronto is renowned internationally as a leader in healthy and sustainable food systems policy. The Toronto Food Policy Council was established in 1991 under the auspices of the City's Board of Health. The need for a strong youth voice was identified by the end of the 1990s; however, it wasn't until 2009 that the Toronto Youth Food Policy Council was established explicitly as the 'youth arm' of the Food Policy Council itself.

The Youth Food Policy Council now meets and operates as its own entity, supporting youth leadership and engagement with the food system. It also has two seats on the Toronto Food Policy Council, ensuring a strong youth presence in important food policy dialogue and decision-making.

1. Healthy Food Connect, Department of Health 2014

Include a focus on breastfeeding and first 2,000 days

The establishment of a local 'breastfeeding and first foods' representative or a subgroup within the coalition can facilitate action and change at a local level by keeping the nutrition needs of young children on the agenda of food systems work.

These representatives can advocate for access to convenient, healthy food options for young children in their first years of life, and champion a commitment for these rights to be protected and prioritised.

This action could broaden the remit of the coalition, serving as a forum for:

- Fostering coordination and collaboration between different sectors in the food system, with a particular focus on the voice of children.
- Developing a common language and understanding on the importance of breastfeeding and access to healthy first foods.
- Evaluating and influencing policy relevant to breastfeeding and first foods.
- Surfacing the needs and priorities of families in the community and advocating for food systems change on their behalf.
- Mobilising resources and funding to support programs and services with a focus on breastfeeding and first foods.
- Depending on membership and expertise, advising or participating in other actions from the Building Better Food Systems for Healthier Communities module where young children and families are the focus of the work.

Representatives could include those with roles as:

Council staff

- Early years/children's services officer/leader
- Community development officer/leader
- Maternal and Child Health nurse, including [INFANT facilitators](#) where relevant

Community organisations

- Community health representative
- Women's health representative
- Australian Breastfeeding Association representative (e.g. ABA local support group member)

Individuals and community members

- Parents or carers of children aged 0-5, including those with those with experiences to share about breastfeeding via existing networks, such as local INFANT programs or parent groups connected with maternal and child health services
- Key community leaders
- Local academics, if possible, particularly in the field of early childhood development, nutrition or policy development
- Australian Breastfeeding Association or a general practitioner or physician with an interest in feeding and maternal and child health.
- Representatives from existing council reference groups, including different cultural groups



How-to guide to:

Create a local food coalition

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include environment and sustainability, health planning and promotion, family and youth services, open space and land use planning, economic development and events.

Planning the festival or forum provides an opportunity for you to engage with local food leaders and children and young people with an interest in healthy, sustainable food systems.



Plan

Identify Local Food Coalition members

Coalition members will lead all sectors of the community in partnership with council to address the complex social problem of unhealthy and unsustainable food systems.

Membership of the coalition should be selected through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process and aim for representation from relevant council departments and all sectors of the community, including producers, business, community services, faith and cultural groups, youth, health, education and sporting associations.

A suggested membership list for the group can be found [here](#).

Structures and governance should be clearly outlined to ensure the coalition can function with greatest potential impact. Regardless of the size of the council, this will involve secretariat responsibilities of the coalition being held by council staff and drawing on the skills and knowledge of community leaders.

Hot tip!

See the Topic In Focus: [Guiding Principles for Better Food Systems](#) further information about how to design and facilitate a Local Food Coalition with the Collective Impact and Asset Based Community Development methodologies.

Crossover opportunity

One option for establishing a Local Food Coalition is to extend targeted invitations to local food sector leaders to join the coalition. Another option is to build on community engagement at a local food event (see '[Quick win: Deliver a community food festival or forum](#)' in this module).

Identify Local Food Coalition members cont.

Young people's participation in the coalition should be prioritised and can be facilitated by:

- including a representative from existing council Youth Reference Groups
- extending invitations to aspiring and active young farmers and/or producers
- engaging with young rural and urban farmers through [Young Farmers Connect](#)
- engaging with young people passionate about food systems through the [Youth Food Movement](#)
- engaging with young people through the [Youth Affairs Council of Victoria](#) and/or the [Koorie Youth Council](#).

The formation and inclusion of a core body of cross-department or inter-disciplinary council officers to support and form part of the Local Food Coalition will ensure that breaking down silos and working across them is an established practice within council.

Together, these council officers should form an internal subcommittee that meets monthly to progress actions agreed to in coalition meetings. Departments and teams represented should include those with responsibility for health and wellbeing, community strengthening and development, economic development, statutory and strategic planning and land use, environment, sustainability and waste management, education and youth, and climate change.



Design

Collaboratively develop terms of reference

Build on council's standard terms of reference processes and consider the following inclusions for your Local Food Coalition. Ensure all members are involved in the development process.

- Mode and frequency of contact (bi-monthly meetings are recommended).
- Membership and key roles (see [suggested membership](#)).
- Secretariat responsibilities (these should be held by the VicHealth-funded council officer).
- Objectives of the coalition, for example: discuss and develop a shared agenda for policy developments, collaborative projects, sustainable investment and planning for local food systems. See the [Template Terms of Reference](#) for a Local Food Coalition to assist in defining the purpose and structure of the Coalition.

Sign the Urban & Regional Food Declaration or create your own

By signing the [Urban & Regional Food Declaration](#) a council declares that it stands with dozens of signatories from councils, organisations and individuals united by a shared vision for a healthy, sustainable, resilient and fair food system for all residents and for all Australians. The Food Declaration is a good starting point for identifying potential projects and action items across the community and within council.

Alternatively, or in addition, a Local Food Coalition can create its own declaration based on local food system priorities. As an example [The Latrobe Valley Food Declaration](#) outlines a vision for a strong local food system that is safe, secure, fair, sustainable and connected for all residents of the Latrobe Valley.

Assess

Undertake a local food system needs assessment

This section has been adapted from the Healthy Food Connect resource. For further information about undertaking a local food system needs assessment, collation and presentation of findings, and prioritisation of actions, contact the Victorian Department of Health at prevention@health.vic.gov.au to access the Healthy Food Connect resource, including the complete Municipal Food Security dimensions and opportunities tool (developed by the Victorian Local Government Association).

It is important to have local evidence on current trends, practices and policies across the 4 environments for health that have an impact on community food access: natural, built, economic and socio-cultural.

Undertaking a local food system needs assessment will support the development of effective initiatives that reflect the needs and priorities of the community.

When undertaking your needs assessment, consider the following:

- Keep the process short and set yourself a timeframe within which to complete it – for example, allow a maximum of 3 months.
- Develop a broad understanding of the food environment in your municipality first, then decide on what area(s) you will focus on.
- Determine what information about local food access/systems has already been collected.
- Identify any gaps and whether any of this needs to be repeated.
- Ensure all information collected is integrated and considered as part of your broader system inventory.
- Identify and engage relevant stakeholders to actively participate in the data collection process.
- Use the municipal food security dimensions and opportunities table as a framework to collect your data.

Hot tip!

This table promotes a food system scanning process that uses the 4 'environments for health' to frame local opportunities to food access and availability.

Environments for health

Natural	Economic	Built	Socio-cultural
Local food growers - primary producers	Local retail outlets that provide home deliveries Mobile food vans that offer healthy food options (i.e. at community events) Review of contractual arrangements, regulations and fees applicable to food service outlets, local markets and mobile food vans (to explore opportunities to incentivise healthy food options)	Local food retail, food markets and vending machines, water fountains in public places	Community programs and services - for social food and connectedness places

Undertake a local food system needs assessment cont.

Hot tip!

An example of a local food system needs assessment that has used ‘environments for health’.

Municipal Food Security dimensions and opportunities

Health & Wellbeing

- What are the demographic factors? What are the indices of disadvantage?
- Are there infants, children, youth and women of child bearing age who are at risk of food security problems? What are the food and nutrition risk factors for the population?
- Who are considered to be the most vulnerable?

Opportunities	Natural	Built	Economic	Socio-cultural
Local Food Chain System	Are there any food growers (primary producers)?	Are there any local food factories/ processors/ distributors?	Are there any characteristics of retail food outlets that are economic barriers to food access?	Are there any emerging cultural groups who require access to culturally appropriate food?
Food produced	Are there any community gardens used for growing local food? Are any programs encouraging edible planting in public areas?	Are there any local supermarket food outlets? Are there any other local retail food outlets? Are there any local retail food markets? Are there any retail local dining and meal outlets? Are there any local liquor outlets?	Does the cost of transport affect ability of residents to access food?	Are there infant, child, youth, and aged support and activities for social and food connectedness?
Food available for distribution	Are any programs supporting growing & sharing of food from home gardens?	Are daily basic food needs (milk, bread, fruit) within reasonable distance for all residents?	Are there any local retail food outlets that provide home food deliveries?	Are there any ‘Breastfeeding Welcome Here’ locations?
Food available for purchase	Are local water restrictions in place? What are the effects of water restrictions on growing food in these gardens?	What amenities are provided for bicycle transport? Does public transport connect households to retail food supplies, dining and meal outlets?	Are there any local retail food outlets that provide online food shopping with delivery?	Are there community programs and activities for social and food connectedness?

Food purchased	Is any assistance available for water conservation and recycling?	Are there essential (maintained) amenities on walking routes and in public spaces?	Are there any community dining and meal outlets?	Are there any barriers (natural, built, economic) to food access for cultural groups and at-risk groups?
Food eaten	How is food and water safety, food waste and packaging waste addressed?	How many households have cars? Are Baby Change Room facilities readily available? Is there any community transport connecting households to food supplies, dining and meal outlets?	Do any community food outlets provide take-home or home food delivery? Are there any community kitchens?	Are there any barriers (natural, built, economic) to physical activity for cultural groups and at-risk groups?
Social benefit Health status outcomes	Are there any local environmental initiatives?	Are there minimum standards for food storage and preparation in community housing?	Are there any emergency relief food outlets?	Are there any identified community resilience factors that can be built on to improve food security?

Assess the food security of your community

Having conducted the local food system needs assessment, conduct an assessment of the strength of the local food system in terms of the extent to which the community – and in particular the most vulnerable members of the community – do or do not enjoy food security.

Consider the following questions in making your assessment:

- To what extent do the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community enjoy secure and affordable access to culturally appropriate and healthy food at all times?
- If they do not enjoy such access, what are the principal barriers, and how might they be addressed? At what level (local/regional/national/global) do the barriers exist?
- Are any existing groups, organisations and/or institutions taking action to address those barriers? If so, what actions are they taking? How effective have they been?

Use your findings to identify and prioritise actions. This information will also serve as a conversation starter within local government, the local food coalition or the community more broadly.

Hot tip!

For more information on Food Security please see [Topic in Focus: Local Government Policy and Program Approaches to Food Security](#)

Deliver

Develop an action plan

After undertaking a local food system needs assessment, the Local Food Coalition should lead the development of an action plan to address the key gaps and opportunities identified.

Through the action plan, the coalition will:

- develop a common language and understanding about the strengths and challenges of the local food system
- set targets for the coalition for 12 months/3 years
- include time for reflective/planning workshops at 6-month intervals to track progress
- foster coordination and collaboration between different sectors in the food system, with a particular focus on the voice of children and youth
- evaluate and influence policy
- work to mobilise resources and funding
- launch or support programs and services that address local needs – again with a particular focus on children and youth.

Councils should consider prioritising 1 or 2 key actions. As part of this, councils may wish to consider 'quick win' actions to help generate enthusiasm and support. Examples of policy and program actions councils should consider include:

- developing a comprehensive food system strategy
- exploring food distribution gaps and opportunities including a food hub feasibility study
- providing healthy food and drink in community facilities and at events
- exploring how the community can support and enable community school garden/farm initiatives
- mapping vacant urban land for food growing.

Example action plans and further examples of policy and program actions can be found under recommended resources.

Review and embed

Develop an evaluation framework to monitor progress

Continuous evaluation of the Local Food Coalition against the Terms of Reference (including core coalition membership) and Action Plan is required to ensure it is meeting its objectives.

The best way to do this is to develop an evaluation framework that details the measures, process, and reporting requirements of the Coalition. Refer to the Evaluation section for more information.

Recommended resources

Local Food Coalition

- [Terms of Reference template](#) to help councils define the purpose and structure of their Local Food Coalition.
- [Expression of Interest \(EOI\) for a position on the Local Food Coalition](#)
- [Healthy Food Connect](#) – a model for local food system change from the Victorian Government.
- [Benalla Food Security Scan: Scoping Healthy Food Access in Benalla Mildura VLGA Food Scan Report](#)

Examples from other councils

- [Cardinia Community Food Strategy and Action Plan 2018–26](#)
- [Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy 2020–2030](#)
- [City of Melbourne Food policy discussion paper](#)
- [Darebin City Council Food security discussion paper](#)
- [Moreland Community Health Service Food security in Moreland: a needs assessment](#)
- [HealthWest Healthy foods for healthy communities: issues of food access and availability in the west](#)

Examples of policy and program actions

- [The People's Food Plan](#) – contains specific proposals for goals, targets and actions that local governments can take to realise a fair, diverse and democratic food system for the benefit of all Australians.
- [North East Victoria Local Government Food Policy & Strategy Discussion Paper](#) – explores opportunities for local governments to develop food policy and strategies that will benefit communities and the environment.
- [VicHealth Food For All](#) – 10 resource sheets and short videos designed to support local governments in advancing a food security agenda.
- Partnership between the Neighbourhood Project, the Fawkner Bowling Club and Moreland Council to establish the [Fawkner Food Bowls](#) urban farm.
- City of Monash's support for 3000 Acres [Olive Harvest Festival](#)
- [Toronto Youth Food Policy Council](#)

Case study

Latrobe Valley – Food for All

The local food coalition, known as [Food For All Latrobe Valley](#), was established in October 2018 in response to high rates of food insecurity within the municipality. The Coalition is an initiative of the Latrobe Health Innovation Zone, and is supported by the Latrobe Health Assembly, Central West Gippsland Primary Care Partnership and many other organisations and community members.

Food For All Latrobe Valley's main goal is to increase access to fresh nutritious food across Latrobe Valley. To do this, the Coalition strengthens local partnerships and works collaboratively to support local organisations, community groups and community members to deliver effective, place-based solutions.

Food For All Latrobe Valley is currently implementing the [Food For All Latrobe Valley Action Plan 2020–2021](#), which outlines the Coalition's vision and objectives, and includes 45 specific and measurable actions.





Step up: *Create food system education opportunities for young children*

In this ‘step up’ action, councils will connect early childhood services with immersive education opportunities about food growing and sustainability. By using its relationships and expertise, council can improve the focus on high-quality local, cooperative food education experiences.

This guide is written with a focus on early childhood facilities, but councils may work with other types of early childhood services and facilities depending on local need.

Immersive food education programs ranging from hands-on gardening opportunities to sprouting seeds on an indoor windowsill at an early childhood service encourage young children to strengthen their understanding of how food grows and where food comes from.

By facilitating immersive education opportunities in early childhood services, councils play a role in helping children understand the relationship between food and global health and create a learning foundation for future food system leaders.

These experiences also enable early childhood services to address their responsibilities to meet [the National Quality Framework’s Quality Area 2 – Children’s health and safety](#) developed by the Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA). This standard specifies the importance of a healthy lifestyle, outlining that healthy eating and physical activity should be promoted to each child.

In some cases, early childhood services will already provide food system education opportunities but may lack the time or local knowledge to explore the quality of incursions or to establish strong local partners. By leveraging its relationships and expertise, council can improve the quality with which food education experiences are developed and offered.

Key moments inside and outside early childhood services can become opportunities for young children to learn food growing and sustainability. When used as learning tools, immersive experiences such as the development and maintenance of early childhood services gardens and farm and local grower visits can form an understanding of the connections between food, personal and community health, and the natural world.



How-to guide to:

Creating food system education opportunities for young children

Involving young children and families

Councils and early childhood services can involve parents in co-designing the immersive and appealing education experiences about food growing and sustainability in step with their developmental stages.

Parents may be able to be involved directly in a variety of experiences alongside the children from tending to vegetable and herb gardens to helping out in food preparation.

Councils can also directly involve young children in providing ideas, testing and giving feedback on the education experiences, and ultimately the children will also get to eat what they produce and can experiment with different tastes and types of food.

Engage champions to support immersive education opportunities about food growing and sustainability

Food growing activities are great fun and can be an opportunity for parents and early childhood educators to share their own talents or cultures. Parents or carers and early childhood service staff or representatives can be champions of immersive education opportunities about food in early childhood environments. As an example, a nominated “champion” may offer live recipe demonstrations for children and staff and highlight how to use seasonal produce in meals and snacks at home.

Council and community

Council teams to involve in this action include health planning and promotion and family and youth services. Council should also engage with representatives from early childhood services.

Council staff working in parks and reserves, sustainability education or arbory services may also have great access to suitable materials or local providers.

Council operational centres and waste facilities may also be a great source of useful donations including timber off-cuts and mulch (from felled trees), items donated to recycling or waste centres, or worm/fertilisers gained through other sustainability projects.

Council staff may also have existing relationships or offer support to community gardens, farmers markets and other growers societies.

If these relationships do not already exist, it may be helpful to reach out to a local nursery or hardware store for donations or other support for starting an edible garden.



Plan

Consider establishing a working group or committee of staff from relevant council teams, early childhood service staff and parent champions, and local growers and grocers, to identify potential immersive food experiences for young children.

Suggested immersive education training topics about food growing and sustainability include:

- Establishing and delivering a kitchen garden program such as the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program for Early Childhood Services, which is a [play-based, hands-on program](#) that can be integrated into early childhood services. Young children learning in a kitchen garden environment:
 - learn how to grow, cook, eat and celebrate fresh, delicious, nutritious food and the lifelong role it plays. For example, the Darebin Information, Volunteer & Resource Service (DIVRS) has some [great online resources](#) that support learning about growing fresh food locally, nutrition, reducing food waste and food security.
 - develop respect for environmental and sustainability practices.
 - take healthy recipes home, start backyard veggie patches and bring their families into the garden and kitchen.
- Farmers market visits to allow young children to pick out new foods for meals and snacks. Children can also help with simple preparation like washing produce and mixing salads.
- Local grower and farm visits where children may be offered the chance to:
 - pat and feed farm animals
 - gather farm produce and taste products such as cheese, honey, fruit and vegies produced on-farm
 - watch demonstrations of shearing, herding, milking, harvesting or cheese-making.
- Urban farmer incursions for young children who may be unable to participate in farm visits, with activities including:
 - interactive demonstrations
 - tasting food produced on-farm
 - question and answer sessions with agricultural workers.

Determine the number of early childhood services in your municipality you will work with as part of this activity and identify priority services based on an assessment of local needs in relation to local food access and education.

In planning, consider how parents can become more actively involved in immersive food experiences offered by early childhood services. This may be including invitations for parents and carers to attend and assist with excursions or incursions, or special morning or afternoon teas where families can cook or prepare food together.

Implementation plan

Develop and co-design a plan for working with early childhood services to design and deliver immersive education opportunities about food growing and sustainability. The plan should cover:

- an outline of the goals and objectives of the experience.
- available programs that already exist and may be suitable or tailored for specific locations.
- working with early childhood services to undertake training needs analysis and identify available budgets.
- funding opportunities and processes.
- engaging providers for immersive food education.
- evaluation and review.

Assess

Find and connect local growers, farmers markets, grocery stores, or wholesalers to early childhood services to determine whether there is an opportunity to develop a relevant and hands-on immersive experience for young children.

It is important to consider how advanced an early childhood service may already be in providing food system education programs, and also how busy and what other external issues may impact the ability to be involved in this action.

An effective first engagement may be offering early childhood services an opt-in to join the program, then surveying them on their needs and which elements of such a program they need council support with.

Survey staff and parents

Depending on the readiness, and a positive opt-in from the early childhood service, council could conduct surveys of early childhood service staff.

Design survey questions to identify:

- if the service has a suitable location and capacity to establish a garden or offer gardening experiences
- if early childhood service staff wish to enhance the learning environment with food and agriculture related activities
- available and appropriate curricula, activities or books related to gardens, preparing and eating healthy, local foods or learning about where food comes from and how it grows.

Work with early childhood services to conduct surveys of families. Design surveys to identify:

- families' interest in contributing to or leading an immersive food growing and sustainability experience

- families' views in relation to the suitability and healthiness of fresh first foods
- families' views as to whether early childhood services promote and encourage healthy eating and provide healthy eating environments
- how to instill healthy eating habits in their children and create healthy food environments at home.

Design

Work with early childhood services, and staff and parent champions to design immersive education opportunities about food growing and sustainability that meet the identified needs of staff and families, according to available budgets.

When co-designing the experiences consider:

- local rates of food insecurity and rates of healthy food consumption.
- capacity to continue food growing and healthy eating activities among participating centres.
- budget limitations or opportunities (including the cost of any additional staffing, if required).
- gathering perspectives that ensure foods and practices from diverse cultures are included.

Deliver

Support early childhood services to deliver immersive education opportunities and be available to connect them with suitable providers of programs and experiences.

If possible, offer appropriate council venues to conduct the education experiences.

Hot tip!

Encourage early childhood services to join the [Victorian Government's Program](#) for support to establish a healthy eating environment. Once services register with the program, they can access the online portal for a range of tools, resources and to receive the support you need along the way.

Case study

[Read how](#) the Achievement Program supported Fifth Avenue Childcare in Dandenong in promoting healthy eating and developing immersive education experiences focusing on food

Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate the reach and success of the program

Seek evaluation and feedback from families of young children attending early childhood services after each immersive food experience, or at regular intervals if the experience has been integrated into regular activities.

When seeking feedback, use tools or simple surveys that are easy to understand and complete without overwhelming participants. You may want to offer both an online and hardcopy option, acknowledging not every family has access to the internet. Visual formats can also be a great tool, especially when seeking feedback from little people.

Review evaluation and feedback and work with early childhood services and program providers to use it to refine and improve future experiences.

Share results

Share and publish key results with early childhood services and via the council website and social media. Encourage early childhood services to share key results with families.

Share key results with council leadership to encourage funding and support for ongoing immersive education opportunities.

Embed

Work with early childhood services to embed immersive education opportunities about food growing and sustainability in core activities.

Encourage services to embed budgets for these immersive education opportunities in their annual budgets.

Consider in-kind opportunities to share expertise of council staff and use this program to deliver existing council food or sustainability education programs to a young audience.

Set aside a small grants program for early childhood services that would not be able to fund these activities otherwise.

Recommended resources

[Achievement Program for Early Childhood Services](#)

[Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program for Early Childhood Services](#)

[Darebin Information, Volunteer & Resource Service \(DIVRS\)](#)

[Healthy Eating Advisory Service curriculum activities](#) and [Healthy Eating games and activities](#)



Ambitious: *Implement a healthy and sustainable food system strategy*

Growing numbers of Victorian councils are developing, adopting and implementing food system strategies. Food system strategies provide a framework and mandate for local government that guides actions to support and strengthen local food systems in order to achieve key health and wellbeing, sustainability and community development objectives.

It is critical that the food system is designed for the whole community. Consider breastfeeding and early years nutrition, and focus on members of First Nations, as well as young people and members of culturally and linguistically diverse communities, and people who have reduced opportunity to experience a healthy and secure food system.

Consistent with the principles underpinning local government action in the Local Government Act 2020 (see [Topic in Focus: Guiding principles for better food systems](#)), the strategy should be founded on an inclusive and participatory approach with multisectoral involvement from within the community and across council departments. The strategy should clearly identify tangible actions with specific measures, indicators and targets, and be accompanied by a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Hot tip!

As you embark on your food system strategy priorities, think about how they can align with the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Council Plan and other strategic documents. This will ensure support from key internal stakeholders and decision-makers across the organisation and coordination between any priority population groups identified in those other plans, such as children and young people.





How-to guide to:

Implement a healthy and sustainable food system strategy

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include environment and sustainability, health planning and promotion, family and youth services, open space and land use planning, community strengthening, economic development and events.

Ideally, the strategy will be developed by a key working group from a local food coalition (see [‘The step up: Create a local food coalition’](#)) or by a similar group of people working to achieve healthy food system goals. If a coalition is not currently in formation at your council, make sure the working group includes a range of food system actors and perspectives, especially those experiencing food insecurity and/or other forms of disadvantage, and youth members.

Discussions of lived experiences of food insecurity or poverty should be carefully planned to ensure they are done in a safe, empowering and respectful manner. Before engaging with community members consider: your own skills and position, preparedness, what support could be offered and whether you can address their feedback.

VicHealth’s Youth Engagement and Evaluation Framework outlines some tips for [engaging people with lived experiences](#).



Plan

Convene a food system strategy working group

This working group will guide the process and provide governance oversight and support.

It should integrate closely with the established cross-department internal council officer sub-committee.

Depending on council size and capacity, 2 or 3 council officers from the sub-committee should attend and support meetings of the working group. This is critical to continue building capacity, confidence and understanding of food systems issues and opportunities broadly across council.

Develop a food system strategy plan

The plan to develop the strategy should be scoped out over a period of 18 months to 3 years, depending on council capacity and timelines, on a month-by-month basis, with specific responsibilities and reporting allocated to key staff and partners.

The working group should determine the goals of the plan. For example, a healthy and sustainable food system strategy could include:

- multisectoral actions to support the adoption of sustainable farming practices and food production enterprises
- healthy food policies in local government-owned settings (see the [‘Embedding healthy food and drink options in council owned and operated places’](#) impact stream in this module) and healthy food procurement.
- provision for the consideration of health and social impacts of land use planning
- supporting and empowering children and youth to understand where their food comes from and the impacts it has on their health and wellbeing as well as the natural environment (food literacy)
- improving availability and accessibility of nutritious and culturally appropriate food for all, including vulnerable groups
- celebrating the diversity of local production and economic opportunities.

Design

Build capacity of the working group with the collective impact methodology

Collective impact is a valuable method to guide the development and implementation of a food system strategy. Reasons for this include the multi-dimensional nature of the food system, which means that change requires the collaborative efforts of many different organisations and partners working together, over an extended period, around a shared agenda for change, with mutually aligned and reinforcing actions, and agreed measures to monitor progress.

These are all key characteristics of the collective impact approach, which has been used successfully to guide the development and implementation of

other council food strategies. The [Community Food Strategy in Cardinia Shire](#) as well as the [Food System Strategy of the City of Greater Bendigo](#) are 2 strong examples.

For an outline of this methodology see Figures 1 and 2 below; and [see here for further resources](#) listed by the Australian Institute of Family Studies.

Familiarity and confidence with this methodology is vital to the successful development and implementation of the food system strategy. It is suggested that each council seek appropriate training as required for working group members.

1	2	3	4	5
Common Agenda	Shared Measurement	Mutually Reinforcing Activities	Continuous Communication	Backbone Support
Common understanding of the problem Shared vision for change	Collecting data and measuring results Focus on performance management Shared accountability	Differentiated approached Coordination through joint plan of action	Consistent and open communication Focus on building trust	Separate organisation(s) with staff Resource and skills to convene and coordinate Participating organisations

FIGURE 1: The 5 Conditions of Collective Impact²

2. Inspired by www.fsg.org/blog/navigating-collective-impact

Collective impact efforts tend to transpire over 4 key phases

Components for Success	Governance & Infrastructure	Strategic Planning	Community Involvement	Evaluation & Improvement
Phase 1 Generating Ideas and Dialogue	Convene community stakeholders	Hold dialogue about issues, community context, and available resources	Facilitate community consensus / urgency to goal	Determining if there is consensus / urgency to move forward
Phase 2 Initiate Action	Identify champions and form cross-sector group	Map the landscape and use data to make case	Facilitate community outreach	Analyze baseline data to ID key issues and gaps
Phase 3 Organise for Impact	Create infrastructure (backbone and processes)	Create common agenda (common goals and strategy)	Engage community and build public will	Establish shared metrics (indicators, measurement, and approach)
Phase 4 Sustain Action and Impact	Facilitate and refine	Support implementation (alignment to goals and strategies)	Continue engagement and conduct advocacy	Collect, track, and report progress (process to learn and improve)

FIGURE 2: The 4 Key Phases of Collective Impact³

Develop a detailed community engagement plan

Is it essential to engage with diverse community members who can help illuminate different experiences, needs and aspirations for the local food system. Refer to your council's existing community engagement framework or guidelines. Community engagement is a planned process with the specific purpose of working with identified groups of people, whether they are connected by geographic location, special interest, or affiliation or identity, to address issues affecting their wellbeing.

In 2016 the City of Greater Bendigo published their [Community Engagement Guidelines and Toolkit](#) – a useful resource for community engagement processes by local government in Victoria. The guidelines outline the techniques and tools for engagement at levels outlined in Figure 3 below.

3. Inspired by www.dmeforpeace.org/media_gallery/me-thursday-talk-the-evolution-of-collective-impact/

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and applications are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to The Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed. Listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will keep you informed. Listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will look to you for advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice & recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.



FIGURE 3: Spectrum of community engagement and public participation⁴

Hot tip!

This phase should not be shorter than 6 months and, ideally, should last for at least 12 months. While this timeframe is considerably longer than a standard online and/or survey-based consultation process, it is recommended given the cross-cutting nature of the food system, as well as the diverse range of community members and organisations that need to be engaged to achieve the development and successful implementation of the food system strategy.

It may be helpful to review the case study on the City of Greater Bendigo on [page 38](#).

4. Source: IAP2 Foundation, Canada www.iap2canada.ca/foundations/

Develop a detailed community engagement plan cont.

The goals of community engagement in the development of a food systems strategy should focus on 'involve, collaborate and empower'.

Recommendations:

- Gather information, data and facts about the community's experiences of their local food system.
- Gather a range of perspectives and opinions from the community about the strengths and weaknesses of their local food system.
- Better understand the opportunities and concerns of the community about the local food system.
- Build alliances and relationships for the future to strengthen the local food system, as well as to guide and implement actions (e.g. through the formation of a Local Food Coalition).
- Bring different groups in the community together for a common outcome (e.g. around the shared vision and agenda for a healthy, sustainable and fair local food system).⁵

Ensure that the community engagement plan is developed with community members, including all members of the working group.

It should be as inclusive as possible. Invite the participation of a broad representation of the community (e.g. representatives of youth networks, early years centres and maternal and child health services, First Nations representatives, primary and secondary schools, food relief agencies, farmer groups, community gardeners and others, and local organisations representing people experiencing homelessness or food insecurity).

Ensure that:

- community networks and groups are fully briefed and included in the process as early as possible so that they can encourage their members and networks to participate.
- adequate time is planned for the community engagement process to allow the conversation to unfold at the community level, for ideas and suggestions to circulate and for levels of understanding (food systems literacy) to build.

Hot tip!

This step could also be consistent with the Collective Impact and Assets-based approach to community development outlined on in [Topic in Focus: Guiding principles for better food systems](#).

In terms of engaging with and involving people who have direct lived experience of food insecurity, the [Council to Homeless Persons Peer Education Support Program](#) offers a facilitated process for local government to raise awareness about homelessness and related issues including food insecurity and family violence.

5. Bendigo Community Engagement Policy, p21.

Implement the engagement plan

To support the implementation of the engagement plan, ensure that:

- all facilitators receive adequate briefings and training about facilitation techniques such as active and respectful listening
- a range of participation and engagement methods are made available, including community meetings, kitchen table talks, focus groups, online surveys, listening posts, pop-up stalls at markets and brief phone interviews
- the engagement process is supported by a social media campaign and website resources.

Collect responses in a central location and organise the information in a way that it can be processed, reviewed and is informative to the working group.

Record feedback and close the loop

Read through the feedback received during the engagement plan. Communicate the findings and common themes in a discussion document that summarises and synthesises the information. Present this to the working group and, later, the community. Share this widely through all available channels and networks, and invite further comment and feedback.

Produce a high-level draft

Draft the strategy with the working group. It should distil the 4 or 5 key themes that have emerged during the consultation and engagement, as well as the top 4 to 6 key priority actions. Share this widely through all available channels and networks, and invite further comment and feedback. Convene 1 or 2 key partner and stakeholder workshops to test the draft strategy.

Further refine the draft strategy

With the working group, refine the final draft that is to be signed off by council for public exhibition and comment.



Review and embed

Obtain endorsement by council

When the public exhibition period has ended, work through feedback with the working group and relevant council leaders to adopt changes where appropriate. Follow council processes for formal council endorsement of the strategy.

Celebrate with a public launch!

Organise an event to showcase the council's and community's hard work. This will help to create a sense of community ownership and build the social glue that facilitates future collaboration. If budget permits, produce a video to use as a public communications tool.

Recommended resources

- [Greater Bendigo's Food System Strategy 2020–2030 and launch video](#)
- [Cardinia Community Food Strategy](#) – launched at a Food Forum in February 2019 and [captured on the Cardinia Food Movement website](#)
- [City of Moreland Food System Strategy](#)
- [NorthEast Local Food Strategy](#)
- [Food-sensitive planning and urban design](#) (Heart Foundation/Victorian Eco-Innovation Lab)

Case study

City of Greater Bendigo Food System Strategy – Community engagement

During the council's 3-month community engagement process, staff spoke with more than 1,000 community members and groups using the following methods:

- online survey
- stakeholder workshop
- face-to-face meetings
- telephone interviews with farmers and producers
- listening posts
- engagement stalls
- focus groups
- community sessions.

The benefits of effective community engagement outlined in the Greater Bendigo Community Engagement Guidelines, Toolkit and Policy include:

- improved quality of the policy being developed – in this case, a food system strategy
- more resilient relationships with the community
- enhancement of council's reputation (and ability to check that council is meeting local needs)

- increased understanding of community issues and concerns
- better shared partnerships and networks
- enhanced capacity to deal with complex and emerging issues
- opportunities for diverse voices to be heard – especially among vulnerable and marginalised members and sectors of the community
- communities identifying priorities themselves and owning the solutions.

Specific efforts were made to include the voices of children and youth, for example through the involvement of the University Student Association. The key partners and stakeholders included over 30 local partners, all of whom committed to specific actions as part of the implementation of the food system strategy, consistent with the Collective Impact approach.

Following the conclusion of the initial phase of consultation, council staff drafted an Issues and Opportunities Report. That report was circulated with key partners and stakeholders, which then led to an action planning workshop with representatives of those groups. Feedback from that workshop informed the development of the draft strategy. The draft strategy was then released for public comment and further revised.



Case study

Cardinia Community Food Strategy –Community engagement

The community engagement for Cardinia’s food strategy was based on Kitchen Table Talks, a participatory process undertaken for the creation of [A People’s Food Policy for Canada](#).

The Cardinia Food Circles team recruited a team of community food animators and scribes to host kitchen table talks and document the discussions. The Food Circles team synthesised this information into key findings and recommendations, which in turn formed the draft of the strategy. The kitchen table talks were complemented by an Ideas Harvest campaign that included stalls at community events and other listening posts.

This engagement informed 4 key themes of the Cardinia Community Food Strategy:

1. a healthy food system that promotes the health of people and enhances the natural environment
2. a sustainable food system that strengthens our local economy and builds the capacity and resilience of our communities
3. a delicious food system that nourishes, celebrates and enjoys a diverse range of local food and cultures
4. a fair food system that makes nutritious food accessible and affordable to everyone across our communities.

The strategy had 4 priority action areas to guide its implementation, corresponding to the 4 themes above:

1. protect and use fertile land as a source of fresh food for current and future generations
2. grow a vibrant local food economy that supports growers and enables people to access locally produced food
3. enhance food knowledge, skills and culture within schools, workplaces, clubs and the wider community
4. reduce and divert food waste from landfill and reuse water to grow food.

Some of the principal resources may be useful for councils undertaking similar work:

[Cardinia Kitchen Table Talks Discussion Paper – Overview of the process](#)

[Cardinia Kitchen Table Talks – Handbook for animators](#)

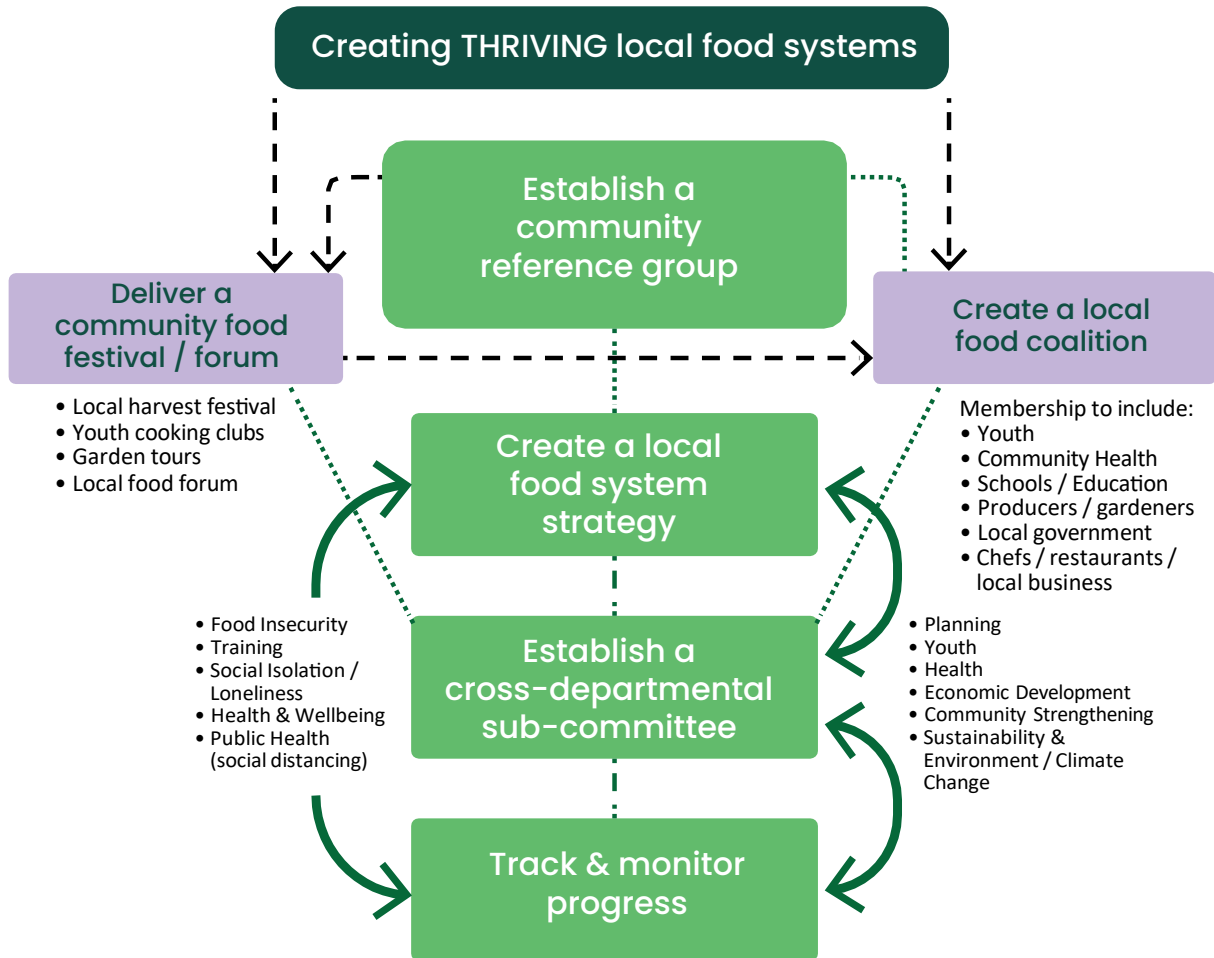
[Cardinia Kitchen Table Talks – Guide for scribes](#)



Hot tip!

For councils keen to expand beyond one activity, the above recommended activities can work together to build on and complement each other for a strong food system.

BUILDING BETTER FOOD SYSTEMS FOR HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES



Impact stream:

Embedding healthy food and drink in council owned and operated spaces and services

To complete the impact stream 'Embedding healthy food and drink in council owned and operated spaces and services', councils will select from:

Quick win: *Create healthy drinks environments in council settings*

Quick win: *Register council-owned spaces as 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' facilities*

Step up: *Create breastfeeding-friendly spaces across council-owned settings*

Step up: *Create healthy food retail environments in council-owned settings*

Step up: *Provide first foods professional development for local early childhood workforce*

Ambitious: *Adopt a healthy food policy approach for council*

Local governments can lead by example in creating healthy food retail environments across council-owned facilities to support the health and wellbeing of their community. Creating healthy food retail environments can drive positive change in the local food system by encouraging community demand for healthier food and drink options.

Food companies saturate food environments with supply and promotion of unhealthy food and drinks, and this is having a significant impact on children and young peoples' preferences, food purchasing and what products they pester their parents for. Victorian children are consuming up to 40% of their daily intake from discretionary options like biscuits, cakes, confectionery, ice cream, pastries and soft drinks.⁶

Food companies heavily promote these food and drinks and ensure they're easily available in places that children and young people frequent, such as sports and recreation facilities, cultural and community arts centres, libraries and sports clubs, normalising their consumption and contributing to poor diets.

This impact stream supports councils to implement policies and practices to provide healthy food retail environments in council-owned facilities.

Victorian local governments have access to dedicated support to create healthier food and drink environments through a range of programs, campaigns and support services, developed by nutrition experts specifically for the Victorian context. While working through the processes outlined in this impact stream, councils can identify the programs and support services highlighted in the guides and additional resources sections that best match their needs of the local community and the goals they want to achieve.

6. Department of Health. Victoria's health: The Chief Health Officer's report 2014. 2016. <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/publications/researchandreports/cho-report-2014>

In this impact stream, councils should consider how babies and young children experience these food environments. Councils can create spaces where breastfeeding is welcomed and breastfeeding parents are made comfortable, food and drinks sold are appropriate for young children, and families can have a positive food experience when enjoying their local community facilities.

Hot tip!

Healthy food and drinks in early childhood services

While this impact stream focuses on retail environments in council-owned facilities, early childhood services are also important places to provide healthy food environments for children.

- Long day care services are required to provide healthy menus that meet the Victorian Government [Menu planning guidelines for long day care](#).
- Detailed support to address healthy eating and oral health in early childhood services is also available through the [Victorian Government's Achievement Program](#).
- Early childhood services can access support from the Healthy Eating Advisory Service to ensure they meet the guidelines and to promote healthy eating to young children. See the [Healthy Eating Advisory Service website](#) for more information.

Quick note

In this impact stream, the quick win 'Create healthy drink environments in council settings' implementation action encourages councils to start out by focusing on drinks, while the step up 'Create healthy food retail environments in council-owned settings' implementation actions encourages councils to focus on food.

The implementation actions are presented in this way to offer options that suit councils of different capacity and can help to focus and simplify the key messages, stakeholders and suppliers required to complete the action. Councils could combine these actions as one if there is great appetite for change by the community and facilities.

Priority initiatives

This activity refers to a number of additional resources:

- [Vic Kids Eat Well](#) supports community settings to provide healthier food environments for children and young people. It is delivered by Cancer Council Victoria's Achievement Program in partnership with Nutrition Australia's Healthy Eating Advisory Service. Register for support at vickidseatwell.health.vic.gov.au
- The Victorian Government's [FoodChecker](#), which uses the [Victorian Government's Healthy Choices Guidelines](#) to identify foods and drinks that are considered best choice (green), should be chosen carefully (amber) or should be limited (red).
- The Healthy Eating Advisory Service ['For organisations with vending machines' resource](#)
- VicHealth's [Toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environments in community food retail outlets](#)
- VicHealth's [Provision of drinking water fountains in public areas resource](#)

Intended outcomes

Councils undertaking this impact stream can expect to:

- increase children and young peoples' access to healthy food and drink options in council-owned facilities
- consider the food environment needs of babies and young children including a focus on breastfeeding and suitable food options for young children
- increase community desire and expectations for healthy food retail environments, making it the norm in spaces frequented by children and young people
- build connections with local producers, suppliers and caterers to support the local economy
- increase commitment to sourcing and purchasing more local and sustainable food.

Minimum deliverables

To complete the impact stream 'Embedding healthy food and drink in council owned and operated spaces and services', councils will have:

- identified the council owned and managed spaces frequented by children and young people that will be the focus of change
- met the healthy food and/or drink environment changes relevant to the selected implementation action
- adopted a new policy/ies that ensure improvements to council food environments achieved through this impact stream are sustained
- demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.





Quick win

Create healthy drinks environments in council settings

Focusing on healthy drinks environments can be a good way for councils to make changes that benefit children and young peoples' health and wellbeing. Sugary drinks have no place in children and young peoples' diets as they provide no nutritional value and are a key driver of high sugar intake and dental caries.

By reducing the availability and promotion of sugary drinks across the municipality, councils can support children and young people to opt for water as the drink of choice.

For this implementation action, councils should aim to increase the availability of free drinking water and healthy 'green' drink options like bottled water, and reduce the availability and promotion of sugary 'red' drinks in council-owned facilities frequented by children and young people. This may include:

- Sports and recreation facilities
- Libraries
- Cultural and community arts centres
- Sports clubs

[This how-to guide also refers to VicHealth's Toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environments in community food retail environments.](#)

It is strongly recommended that councils work progressively towards meeting the [Healthy Choices Guidelines](#) standards for drinks in priority settings. Vic Kids Eat Well is designed to help settings improve their food environments and meet the Healthy Choices Guidelines by offering support, incentives and recognition along the way. Alongside this, councils should create a plan to continue implementing healthy drinks environments across all council-owned settings, including council catering for staff and visitors, and aim to incorporate this as standard council practice.

The healthy habits of parents, carers and adults can be a strong influence on the habits of children and young people, meaning the proliferation of healthy drinks environments will have health benefits for the wider community.

By bringing together the relevant partners and raising community awareness of the value of creating healthy drinks environments, councils can garner momentum and support to create healthy food environments.



How-to guide to:

Create healthy drinks environments in council settings

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include health planning and promotion, family and youth services, and facility and asset management. Councils should also include representatives from the identified facilities.

Community-facing activities provide robust opportunities to work with children, young people and their families as well as community partners with similar goals, such as community health services.

Involve council departments

Form a working group that brings together council staff from diverse areas including health promotion, procurement, environmental sustainability, children and youth services and departments overseeing the target settings (for example, the sports and recreation facility). The working group will be responsible for developing a strategic, phased approach to implementing healthy drinks changes across all council-owned settings.

Agree on a goal for this work and develop an implementation plan that sets out how the working group will:

- integrate this work into the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- develop internal council policies and procedures
- engage councillors by using an infographic template to demonstrate the need/issue for healthy drinks environments
- develop relationships with retailers and local catering and food businesses
- prioritise long-term maintenance planning to sustain the healthy changes made in council-owned settings.

Identify priority settings

Prioritise the following settings, facilities and spaces. Set targets for the number or type of settings you will work on during the course of the action, relevant to the needs in your community.

Think about settings such as:

- council owned, operated or managed settings that sell food and drinks to children and young people (e.g. sport and recreation facilities, community centres)
- settings with food retail outlets
- settings with drink supplier contracts in place
- settings with retail outlet employees.

Engage with champions to support change

Early on, build relationships with key people in the priority facilities identified. Meet with relevant managers or leaders with responsibility for the facility and communicate the project goals, rationale and strategic context.

Identify key staff or volunteers who can support the activity as champions. Also identify children and young people in the community who can act as champions. They should frequent the food retail outlet regularly and be on board with the goals of the activity.



Assess

Analyse capacity for change

Understand the setting's capabilities to make changes by using Table 1.4 of the VicHealth [Toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environments in community food retail outlets](#).

Assess the existing drink environment

Before making any changes, use [Resource 2: Step-by-step photo audit](#) and [Resource 3: Food and drink environment audit](#) to audit the current drink environment. This includes understanding the drinks available for sale in the retail outlet/s and any vending machines on site.

Input relevant data about the current drinks fridges into [FoodChecker](#) to understand the baseline starting point.

Priority initiative



Register for [Vic Kids Eat Well](#) and get support (via phone or in-person) to help you assess your drinks environment.

Design

Engage community participants

Communicating with customers and staff during implementation and asking for feedback may also help them feel part of the change and gain their support.

From the VicHealth [toolkit use Resource 5: Customer and staff surveys](#) to understand customer and staff perspectives.

Surveying customers with a questionnaire or informally speaking with them can be a valuable way to understand the perspectives of those who purchase drinks from the setting. Prioritise children and young people – this is a good opportunity to seek their views and bring them along on the journey.

Findings can be used to demonstrate support for healthy food retail environments to council and the retail outlet's management.

Use the VicHealth [toolkit Resource 6: Survey results infographic template](#) to help communicate results. Findings from the survey can inform the type of changes to drinks the outlet will make.

Deliver

Trial initial changes

Now that the context in which the food retail outlet operates and their current drink offerings is understood, begin to make changes. Start by trialling small 'easy wins' as these are unlikely to have any significant negative impact on revenue:

- ensure free drinking water is easily available and promoted
- place 'green'/healthier drinks at eye-level for children and young people
- place 'red'/sugary drinks out of sight of children and young people (e.g. behind the counter)
- cover all 'red'/sugary drinks with a healthy drinks promotional poster
- only promote 'green'/healthier drinks and brands featuring 'green'/healthier drinks.

Use [Resource 4a: Drink fridge traffic light strip labels](#) and [Resource 4c: Water promotion poster](#).

Recommended resource

[FoodChecker](#) is a free online tool that supports individuals and businesses to classify their products, recipes and menus. You will receive a report showing the proportion of 'green', 'amber' and 'red' items in your outlet based on the Victorian Government Healthy Choices Guidelines.

Collaborate with young community members to promote the changes

Engage with the children and young people who attend the setting to design posters that can be used for promotion or as fridge decals to cover red drinks in the retail outlets. For example, contact local early childhood services and primary schools, run a local competition or reach out to sports and recreation facility groups that children and young people frequent.

Build capacity of staff within the setting

Work with food retail outlet staff to identify opportunities to provide training and supporting resources to increase their knowledge and understanding about healthy drinks. Basic training in the Healthy Choices Guidelines will support this and help sustain long-term change.

Tailored training that meets the goals and objectives of the specific outlet will enhance the session. Use [Resource 8: Retail outlet training template](#) to guide this training.

Direct staff and volunteers operating the retail outlet to the [Healthy Eating Advisory Service's](#) online training modules for [retail outlet staff](#). [Vic Kids Eat Well](#) can also connect you to trained health promoters who can offer one-on-one support and may have access to localised training opportunities.

Involve local suppliers

Working with drinks suppliers to make changes can be valuable. Councils should encourage the retail outlet manager or champion to notify the supplier that the outlet will be making changes to the drinks offered and request they provide a fridge planogram that promotes their healthier options.

When working with multiple retail outlets, encourage the outlets to create a cooperative buyers' group to reduce the costs of healthier drink orders. A buyers' group enables outlets to demonstrate demand and purchase products in bulk, often at a discounted rate.

Seek advice from the Healthy Eating Advisory Service if support is required in engaging suppliers. Open communication with the supplier, including a brief overview of the Healthy Choices Guidelines, will help the supplier understand what food and/or drinks to supply to the outlet. Use [Resource 9: Email template to supplier](#).

Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate

Ongoing monitoring and maintenance of changes is important to:

- determine whether the changes have been successfully implemented
- identify ways to improve the changes
- justify the use of resources
- allow the changes to be adapted.

In the early stages, more frequent and intensive monitoring, for example every 2 weeks, can ensure early identification of any concerns. However, as the setting begins to implement changes, councils should opt for less frequent monitoring, for example every 6 months.

Use [Resource 2: Step by step photo audit](#) to collect data to support monitoring and maintenance of changes and the [FoodChecker](#) to classify drink products.

Celebrate

Recognise the achievements and progress of individual outlets towards providing healthier drinks. Acknowledge their efforts with awards and a formal thank-you from leadership, or use council websites and social media to highlight the changes.

Contact VicHealth and the [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#) to see if they can promote the changes via their social media channels. Register for [Vic Kids Eat Well](#) to receive incentives and toolkits to help you celebrate.

Recommended resources

[See page 7 of the toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environments in community food retail outlets.](#)

[Case study – Greater Shepparton KidsTown reduce sugary drinks](#)

[Case study – Gippsland Regional Sport Complex](#)

See the Healthy Eating Advisory Service case studies of [Winchelsea Swimming Pool](#) and [Lara Pool Kiosk](#) for examples of engaging children in healthy changes to retail outlets.



Step up: *Create healthy food retail environments in council-owned settings*

Councils should ensure healthy food environments are provided in council-owned facilities so that children and young people's health and wellbeing are supported when they are out and about in the community.

Unhealthy food options are often readily available in council settings, which undermines activities provided by councils to support physical activity, social connection and mental wellbeing.

Providing healthy food environments in council-owned facilities sends a strong message that council is committed to promoting health and wellbeing for the community.

For this implementation action, councils should aim to make healthy food retail environments the norm in council-owned settings by increasing access to healthy food options and reducing the availability of unhealthy foods from retail outlets in council-owned settings. Councils should prioritise facilities that are commonly used by children, young people and their families.

Councils have access to a range of dedicated support to create healthier food and drink environments. This includes programs, campaigns, resources and support services developed by nutrition experts specifically for the Victorian context – see the [Priority initiatives overview](#).

Councils should aim to work progressively towards meeting the Victorian Government's Healthy Choices Guidelines standards for food. Vic Kids Eat Well is a key resource councils can use. It is designed to help settings improve their food environments and meet the Healthy Choices Guidelines by offering support, incentives and recognition along the way.

Alongside this, councils should create a plan to continue implementing healthy food retail environments across all council-owned settings, including catering for staff and visitors, and incorporate this as standard council practice. The healthy habits of parents, carers and adults can be a strong influence on the habits of children and young people, meaning the proliferation of healthy food retail environments will have health benefits for the wider community.



Priority initiatives

Resources to increase healthy food and drink

Settings this resource is designed for:

Resources

Community organisations
Sports clubs
Schools
Outside hours school care

The [Vic Kids Eat Well](#) program is a key resource councils can use in facilities where families and children spend their time. It is designed to help settings improve their food environments by offering support, incentives and recognition along the way.

[Vic Kids Eat Well](#) is an exciting state-wide movement that's focused on transforming the food and drink environments where kids spend their time. Vic Kids Eat Well encourages four actions:

- **Refresh the fridge** – give sugary drinks the boot and let water take the spotlight
- **Switch up the snacks** – ditch the sweets and offer delicious healthy snacks that give kids the fuel they need
- **Change up the menu** – give fruit and vegies a chance to shine
- **Put the 'fun' into fundraising and marketing** – add health appeal to meal deals or healthy fundraising like walkathons or readathons.

The [Vic Kids Eat Well](#) website has extensive resources guiding actions to improve the food and drink environments in council facilities. You can join Vic Kids Eat Well [here](#).

Long day care (suitable for council-operated and private)

Long day care services are required to provide healthy menus that meet the Victorian Government [Menu planning guidelines for long day care](#).

Vic Kids Eat Well is not offered to long day care settings, where service providers have specific obligations to ensure meals and snacks are healthy and meet children's nutrition requirements while they are at care.

As with other settings, the Healthy Eating Advisory Service offers free tailored support for early childhood services in meeting these guidelines.

Although this action focuses on retail environments in council-owned facilities, early childhood services are also important places to provide healthy food environments for young children. Detailed support to address healthy eating and oral health in early childhood services is available through the [Achievement Program](#) and the [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#).

Cafes and other food retail in council owned facilities such as:

- sport, aquatic and recreation centres
- cultural and community arts, theatre, and galleries venues
- libraries
- customer service and other civic facilities

Catering at council workplace or community events

VicHealth's [Toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environment in community food retail outlets](#), the [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#), [Healthy Choices Guidelines](#) and the [FoodChecker](#) tool are other key resources that provide guidance and support for creating healthy food retail environments.

Promoting healthy food in the first 2,000 days

Younger children are often overlooked when it comes to thinking about the food options sold in retail environments. While 'healthy foods' for younger children are no different to people of other ages – needing a colourful mixture of vegetables, fruits, wholegrains and proteins – the portion sizes, presentation, and marketing of healthy options in food retail environments are often aimed at adults. The availability and promotion of unhealthy products influences the types of food young children prefer and pester their parents for.

When taking a first 2,000 days approach, councils also have a responsibility to ensure that food and drink options available are appealing to young children, offered in suitable portions and at prices that families on the go can afford.





How-to guide to:

Create healthy food retail environments in council-owned settings

Quick note

The steps outlined below are similar to '[Quick win: Create healthy drinks environments in council settings](#)'. If you have already implemented healthy drinks changes in settings, continue to work with those facilities on increasing access to healthy food options before moving onto additional settings.

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include health planning and promotion, family and youth services, facility and asset management, and representatives from the facilities identified.

Community-facing action provides robust opportunities to work with children, young people and their families as well as community partners with similar goals, such as community health services.

This is an excellent opportunity for councils to lead the way in offering affordable healthy food and drink options to children and their families at council-owned facilities and modelling the importance of healthy eating for children's health and wellbeing. In sports and recreation centres, this can help promote to children and families the important association between healthy eating and sport and physical activity.

Councils can involve families in co-designing healthy food and drink options that will be suitable, manageable, appealing and delicious-tasting for children. Families can also champion healthy changes at council-owned facilities and settings and provide feedback on healthy changes implemented.

Councils can involve children in providing ideas, tasting and giving their views on healthy food options, and in designing materials, such as posters, to promote healthy changes.

Involve council and community partners

Council will need to work closely with staff and representatives from the facilities who procure and prepare food at retail outlets to understand what changes are possible, and to co-design affordable, suitable and appealing healthy food options for young children.

Council will also need to involve the range of council departments that oversee the facilities in this action – such as sport and recreation and arts and culture – and seek input, buy-in and support across council teams and leadership. Engage council teams with useful expertise and perspectives on creating healthy food and drink environments and procuring and planning healthy menu options for young children. These include health planning and promotion, children and youth services, maternal and child health services, and procurement. Consult council's environmental sustainability team for guidance on providing sustainable food options and minimising packaging.

Form a working group that brings together those required to implement the changes. The working group will be responsible for developing a strategic, phased approach to implementing healthy food changes across all council-owned settings.

Case Study

Lara Pool kiosk

As part of Healthy Together Victoria, the City of Greater Geelong worked to improve the availability and promotion of healthy food and drink options for children and families at the Lara Pool kiosk in Geelong. A healthier kiosk menu was developed, with a range of fresh healthy options such as sandwiches, wraps, yoghurt, fruit tubs, and sushi. Local kindergarten, schools and families were invited to participate in the project, and children were asked 'What does health mean to you?' Children provided ideas for a new canteen name and helped design graphics, marketing materials and simple messages – 'Hungry? Thirsty? Need Energy? Choose Green' – that were displayed around the kiosk and pool. Promotion of unhealthy food and drinks was removed. Training and support were provided to kiosk staff on how to display food on shelves and in fridges, and how to promote the new healthy menu.

A survey of customers found that 86 per cent of respondents were happy with the kiosk menu changes. Healthy changes to the kiosk menu resulted in a 45 per cent reduction in energy (kilojoules) and a 72 per cent reduction in saturated fat provided to customers during the year the changes were introduced, compared to the previous year. A key lesson was that engaging local children and families in the project helped to encourage community acceptance and satisfaction with the menu changes.

Case Study

Eat Well Feel Good Ballarat

Eat Well Feel Good Ballarat is a partnership between Ballarat Community Health (BCH) and City of Ballarat (CoB) to support healthy food environments within council owned facilities. BCH worked closely with the café operator and suppliers at Selkirk Stadium to initiate a healthy drinks fridge and new healthy menu items. CoB engaged with students from Mt Clear Primary School to co-design new marketing materials including character designs to support the initiative. Along with this, healthy rewards will be distributed to clubs within the facility for participants to redeem at the café. Eat Well Feel Good will also be implemented at council's outdoor pools and other facilities to ensure consistent messaging.





Plan

Develop an implementation plan

Priority initiative



Register for Vic Kids Eat Well and get support (via phone or in-person) to help you assess your food

The implementation plan should set out strategies to:

- integrate into the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan
- develop internal council policies and procedures
- engage councillors
- develop relationships with local retailers, caterers, suppliers and food businesses
- prioritise long-term maintenance planning to sustain the healthy changes made in council-owned settings.

Engage with champions to support change

Create or build on existing relationships with key people in the priority facilities. Meet with relevant managers or leaders with responsibility for the facility and communicate the project goals and rationale.

Identify key staff or volunteers, as well as local children, young people or parents and carers, who can support the activity as champions. Your champions should frequent the facilities regularly and understand and support the objectives of the action.

Identify priority settings

If you have already implemented healthy drinks changes in facilities, you should continue to work with them on increasing access to healthy food options before moving onto additional settings.

Identify which council settings, facilities or spaces to prioritise. Set a target for the number or type of facilities that are relevant to the needs in the community.

Councils should prioritise:

- council owned, operated or managed settings that sell food and drinks to children and young people (e.g. sport and recreation facilities, community centres, libraries with onsite cafes)
- settings with food retail outlets
- settings with drink supplier contracts in place
- settings with retail outlet employees.

Engage with champions to support the change

Build relationships with key people in the facilities early in the change process. Meet with relevant managers or leaders with responsibility over the council settings that have been identified and communicate the goals, rationale and strategic context for the project.

Assess

Analyse capacity for change

Understand the setting's capabilities to make changes by using Table 1.4 of the VicHealth [Toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environments in community food retail outlets](#).

Assess the existing food environment

Before making any changes, use [Resource 2: Step by step photo audit](#) and [Resource 3: Food and drink environment audit](#) to audit the current food retail environment.

This includes understanding the foods available for sale in the retail outlet and any vending machines on site. Input relevant data about the current food and drinks available into [FoodChecker](#) to understand the baseline starting point.

In conducting the audit, you may need to consider the types of food portions, preferences and presentation that appeal to young children. Consider if Maternal and Child Health nurses and specialists in early childhood health and nutrition can advise.

Design

Engage community participants

Look for opportunities to involve children, young people or their families as well as the food retail or facility staff in planning which healthy food and drink option could suit the needs of the retail setting you are working with.

Communicating with customers and staff during implementation and asking for feedback may also help them feel part of the change and gain their support.

Use [Resource 5: Customer and staff surveys](#) to understand customer and staff perspectives. Surveying customers with a questionnaire or informally by speaking with them can be a valuable way to understand the perspectives of those who purchase food and drinks from the setting.

Prioritise children and young people when surveying customers – this is a good opportunity to seek their views and bring them along on the journey.

Findings can be used to demonstrate support for healthy food retail environments to council and the retail outlet's management. Use [Resource 6: Survey results infographic template](#) to help communicate results. Findings can also help inform the type of changes to food and drinks the outlet will make.

Priority initiatives

Register for Vic Kids Eat Well and get support via phone or in person to help you assess your food.

Vic Kids Eat Well resources for council-owned facilities provide 'how to guides' on switching to healthy food options for children, much of which is relevant for young children. See the following resources in particular:

- [Change up the menu in council and community facilities](#)
- [Switch up the snacks in council and community facilities: switch to healthier snacks](#)
- [Switch up the snacks in council and community facilities: keep confectionary and unhealthy snacks out of sight](#)
- [Refresh the fridge in council and community facilities: reduce sugary drinks](#)

The Healthy Eating Advisory Service has a range of resources and tools to help early childhood services provide and promote healthy drinks, which may also provide useful information to guide development of healthy food and drink options for young children.

Recommended resources

See the [South Australian Healthy Kids Menu Initiative](#) and the [Queensland Healthy Kids Menu Initiative](#) for guidance and resources for creating healthy kids' menus at retail outlets. See in particular the [South Australian Healthy Kids Menu Guide for Business](#) and the [Queensland Healthy Kids Menu Guide for Business](#).

The Inner East Primary Care Partnership consulted with Maternal and Child Health nurses to develop '[Let's Talk Sugar](#)' resources for parents/carers of young children. The resources, consisting of a brochure and poster, highlight the problems with children having too much sugar and explain how to interpret food labels to avoid hidden sugar. These resources can be displayed in council-owned settings to provide helpful information to support children's health.

Hot tip!

Food ideas for young children

Design options suitable for toddlers (1-3 years) and young children (3-5 years), considering appropriate food types and portion sizes, and ways to make healthy food delicious, fun and appealing.

Food ideas for young children include:

- fruit cups, cut fruit and whole fruit
- small containers of yoghurt
- veggie sticks and dip
- eggs and wholegrain toast soldiers
- salad sandwiches and wraps cut into small portions
- pita bread pizzas
- small sushi rolls or pieces
- vegetable soup in small containers with wholegrain toast soldiers
- healthy pasta in small containers
- low sugar fruit or vegetable muffins
- real fruit and yoghurt ice blocks.

See the [Raising Children website](#) for healthy and appealing food ideas for young children.

While it may not be feasible for council retail facilities to provide or sell food for babies, they can consider how they make their environments comfortable or suitable for families who are in the facilities with young babies.

To learn about the types of foods families may be feeding children from around 6 months of age, see the Royal Children's Hospital's [Guide to foods; baby's first year](#).

Trial initial changes

Now that the context in which the food retail outlet operates and their current food offerings are understood, begin to make changes. Start by trialing small 'easy wins' as these are unlikely to have any significant negative impact on revenue:

- remove confectionery from point-of-sale and place it in a less visible area (e.g. behind the counter)
- place 'green' foods in prominent locations: at point-of-sale, the main entrance and eye-level on shelves
- if supplying 'red' foods and drinks, supply smaller sizes where possible
- increase the price of 'red' foods and drinks to subsidise a decrease in price of 'green' foods and drinks
- only promote 'green' foods and drinks and brands featuring 'green' foods and drinks (see [Resource 4a: Drink fridge traffic light strip labels](#), [Resource 4b: Traffic light food labels](#) and [Resource 4c: Water promotion poster](#))
- remove branding and promotional materials featuring 'red' foods and drinks
- remove specials and meal deals featuring 'red' foods and drinks and only offer those featuring healthier options.

For additional suggestions, see page 7 of the VicHealth [Toolkit](#) for creating healthy food and drink environments in community food retail outlets.

Collaborate with local children and young people to promote the changes

Engage children and young people to design promotional posters in the retail outlet. Contact local early childhood services and primary schools, run a local competition or reach out to sports and recreation facility groups that children and young people frequent.

Build capacity of staff within the facility

Work with food retail outlet staff to identify opportunities for training and provide resources to increase their knowledge and understanding about healthy food. Basic training in the Healthy Choices Guidelines will support this and help sustain long-term change.

Tailored training that meets the goals and objectives of the specific outlet will enhance the session.

Use [Resource 8: Retail outlet training template](#) to guide this training. You could also direct staff to the [Healthy Eating Advisory Service's](#) online training modules for [retail outlet staff](#).

[Vic Kids Eat Well](#) can also connect you to trained health promoters who can offer one-on-one support and may have access to localised training opportunities.

Involve local food suppliers

Working with food suppliers to make changes can be useful. Encourage the retail outlet manager or champion to notify the supplier that the outlet will be making changes to the foods offered. Open communication with the supplier, including a brief overview of the Healthy Choices Guidelines, will help the supplier understand what food and/or drinks to supply to the outlet (see [Resource 9: Email template to supplier](#)).

When working with multiple retail outlets, encourage the outlets to create a cooperative buyers' group to reduce the costs of healthier food orders. A buyers' group enables outlets to demonstrate demand and purchase products in bulk, often at a discounted rate.

Expand support to other settings

Establish a local community of practice to share and build new knowledge, resources and support among community food retail outlets within your local government and surrounding areas.



Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate

Regularly monitor the settings to determine whether changes have been successfully implemented, evaluate the food and drinks options for young children, identify opportunities for improvements, and offer support to the settings.

Ongoing monitoring and maintenance of changes is important to:

- determine whether the change has been successfully implemented
- identify ways to improve the change
- justify the use of resources
- allow the change to be adapted.

In the early stages, more frequent and intensive monitoring (e.g. every 2 weeks) can ensure early identification of any concerns. However, as the setting begins to implement changes, councils should opt for less frequent monitoring (e.g. every 6 months).

Use [Resource 2: Step by step photo audit](#) to collect data to support monitoring and maintenance of changes, and [FoodChecker](#) to classify food products.

Communicate with staff as changes are implemented and following the changes. Ask for their feedback to help them feel part of the changes, gain their support, and identify improvements.

Survey parents/carers who visit the settings or speak with them informally to get their ideas, perspectives and feedback on the food retail environments and food and drink options for young children, identify changes, and help bring them along on the journey.

Findings can be used to demonstrate support for healthy food retail options and environments for young children to council and the facility's management

Use [Resource 6: Survey results infographic template](#) in the VicHealth [Toolkit for creating healthy food and drink environment in community food retail outlets](#) to help communicate results.

Celebrate

Recognise the achievements and progress of individual outlets towards providing healthier food and drinks. Acknowledge their efforts with awards and a formal thank-you from leadership, or use council websites and social media to highlight the changes. Vic Kids Eat Well offers support, incentives and recognition along the way to celebrate achievements.

Contact VicHealth and the Healthy Eating Advisory Service to see if they can promote the changes via their social media channels.



Quick win:

Register council-owned spaces as 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' facilities

This 'quick win' involves increasing the number of council-owned or managed spaces registered as ['Breastfeeding Welcome Here'](#) venues and promoting them as spaces that welcome and support breastfeeding to visitors and breastfeeding parents in the community.

Breastfeeding Welcome Here is an Australian Breastfeeding Association program. Registering as a Breastfeeding Welcome Here venue is straightforward.

The criteria are:

- space to move a pram
- a welcoming attitude from staff
- a smoke-free environment.

Venues that register for the program receive Breastfeeding Welcome Here stickers to display. Breastfeeding Welcome Here venues are listed on the [Australian Breastfeeding Association website](#).

Working to increase and promote council-owned or managed 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' spaces is a 'quick win' that councils can implement to help support breastfeeding parents, make them feel more confident and comfortable to breastfeed when out and about, and help encourage breastfeeding in public spaces to be seen as normal and supported by the community.

Councils can set targets for the number of council-owned spaces that will register as Breastfeeding Welcome Here venues during the project period and aim to continue expanding on this.





How-to guide to:

Register council-owned spaces as Breastfeeding Welcome Here facilities

Involve young children and families

Councils can promote Breastfeeding Welcome Here venues to local parents, helping them to find spaces where they can bring their babies and young children, and breastfeed in a comfortable, inclusive and supportive environment.

Involving council

Councils will encourage as many council-owned facilities and settings as possible to register as Breastfeeding Welcome Here venues and to promote to visitors and parents that they welcome and support breastfeeding.



Plan

Make a list of current council-owned or managed Breastfeeding Welcome Here venues in the local area. A list of Breastfeeding Welcome Here venues can be found [here](#). This can be searched by state/territory, suburb and postcode.

Make a list of council-owned or managed facilities or settings in the local community that could register as Breastfeeding Welcome Here venues, focusing on facilities and settings likely to be used or visited by parents with babies and young children. These include sport and recreation centres and facilities, libraries and arts centres, community hubs and centres, neighbourhood houses, community halls and council-owned early childhood services. Identify existing networks, such as local INFANT programs or parent groups connected with maternal and child health services.

Set a target and timeline for the number of facilities you will register as part of the project.

Consider information and materials that council can provide to support the facilities and venues, such as information for staff on how to welcome and support breastfeeding. Ask the [Australian Breastfeeding Association](#) for guidance and resources.

Plan promotional materials and communications channels that council will use to promote Breastfeeding Welcome Here spaces to visitors and local parents. This may include:

- information about Breastfeeding Welcome Here facilities on council's website, newsletters, social media and other channels
- posters and information for staff at the Breastfeeding Welcome Here facilities and venues.



Assess

Consider conducting an online survey of local breastfeeding parents on whether they have seen Breastfeeding Welcome Here stickers at council facilities and other venues in the community, and whether they would feel more comfortable to breastfeed at those venues. Ask whether they have previously breastfed in any 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' venues and whether they were made to feel welcome and comfortable.

Visit or contact council facilities to determine whether they have sufficient space for prams and meet the criteria for registering.



Design

Work with relevant managers or leaders who oversee council facilities to seek their support for this work. Then, contact council facilities and venues to provide information about the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program. Be available to answer any questions and provide information or connect them to relevant support to meet the criteria, particularly in relation to staff showing a welcoming attitude to breastfeeding.

Deliver

Register the facilities or support them to register for the program.

Disseminate promotional materials, resources and information to facilities that register.

Promote council-owned Breastfeeding Welcome Here facilities, using the materials and channels planned at the Plan stage. Ensure council maintains an up-to-date list of Breastfeeding Welcome Here facilities on its own website and the Australian Breastfeeding Association website.

Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate the reach and success of the action

Review the number of council facilities registered as Breastfeeding Welcome Here venues during the project timeline and compare this to the target. Continue to track the number of Breastfeeding Welcome Here facilities, and work to ensure that all facilities that breastfeeding parents may visit are eventually registered.

Work with staff who have community-facing roles (such as Maternal and Child Health Nurses and parent group coordinators) to conduct a follow up survey of local parents, and review against survey results at the Assess stage. Identify whether more parents have seen Breastfeeding Welcome Here stickers at council facilities and in the community, and whether they feel more welcome and comfortable breastfeeding at council facilities.

Promote the increase in Breastfeeding Welcome Here venues to council leaders and the community and use results to support the case to expand on this project with further actions to support breastfeeding in the community.

Recommended resources

- [Breastfeeding Welcome Here program](#)
- [Australian Breastfeeding Association website](#)
- [Research evaluating the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program in Victoria](#)



Step up: *Create breastfeeding-friendly spaces across council-owned settings*

Councils can create community spaces that make it easier and more comfortable for families to breastfeed or feed young children.

This 'step up' action builds on the 'Promote Breastfeeding Welcome Here spaces across council-owned settings' quick win.

It requires councils to consider how priority council-owned or managed settings used or visited by families with babies and toddlers can provide welcoming, supportive and comfortable spaces for breastfeeding, formula feeding or feeding solid foods to babies and toddlers. Councils should prioritise settings that provide community programs and services for families and young children (e.g. libraries, sport and recreation centres, art centres and community health centres). However, this action can be considered across the range of council settings and services.

Councils will work with families to co-design and deliver changes to the settings to provide more welcoming environments and spaces for families and children, and help make it easier for parents and carers to feed their babies and toddlers in the spaces. This should be focused on providing spaces that are comfortable, pleasant and safe for families to feed babies and young children.

This could include providing:

- suitable and comfortable furniture, such as chairs for breastfeeding and formula feeding, highchairs, and toddler-height tables and chairs
- facilities and equipment, such as a microwave for heating bottles or food, drinking water and a sink for rinsing bottles and utensils, and baby change facilities
- spaces where children can play and be supervised easily, including older children, while parents and carers are feeding babies or toddlers
- toys and play equipment for children.

Council will also consider actions to help create broader support for breastfeeding and formula feeding in the community.

Making settings more welcoming for breastfeeding does not need to be limited to providing private or dedicated breastfeeding spaces; it can also include ensuring comfortable seating that can be used for breastfeeding is incorporated in a range of settings and infrastructure. While some parents might prefer private spaces, providing this as the only option for breastfeeding can reinforce a perception that breastfeeding is a hidden activity; also, dedicated spaces may not be possible or practical in all settings.⁷

Key qualities for spaces to be breastfeeding friendly are that they:

- are dignified, physically comfortable and safe
- are accessible
- are compatible with user needs and other responsibilities (such as supervising older children)
- offer a high level of amenity.⁸

For more information see this [Conversation article on breastfeeding-friendly design principles](#).

7. Donovan J, Rudner J, Amir L. Here's how to make our cities breastfeeding-friendly, The Conversation, 20 June 2019, <https://theconversation.com/heres-how-to-make-our-cities-breastfeeding-friendly-110176>.

8. Donovan J, Rudner J, Amir L. Here's how to make our cities breastfeeding-friendly, The Conversation, 20 June 2019, <https://theconversation.com/heres-how-to-make-our-cities-breastfeeding-friendly-110176>.



How-to guide to:

Create breastfeeding-friendly spaces across council-owned settings

Involving young children and families

This is an opportunity for councils to co-design spaces with local families, so that council-owned or managed settings can make them feel welcome and supported to breastfeed or feed their babies and children, and spaces, furniture and facilities that address their practical needs are provided.

Council can also promote to local families the availability of welcoming and supportive spaces for feeding babies and children.

Involving council

Council should work with the range of council departments that own relevant settings to create friendly and supportive environments and spaces for families to breastfeed or feed babies and children. This may include staff or contractors responsible for building design, upgrades or planning of new council facilities and spaces.

This should include training staff on the needs of families, including breastfeeding parents, and how they can help them feel welcome and supported.

Crossover opportunity

This action could be undertaken following [‘Step up: Create a local food coalition’](#) if suitable local experts are supporting that action.



Plan

Consider establishing a working group or committee. This should include:

- local parent or carer representatives/champions, including people who can provide diverse perspectives or share cultural knowledge and experiences
- management or staff from council-owned settings
- council departments overseeing the settings
- maternal and child health nurses, including those with cultural knowledge or experience
- stakeholders or experts, such as the Australian Breastfeeding Association and the Healthy Eating Advisory Service.

Engage with champions to support change

Create or build on existing relationships with key people in the priority settings. Meet with relevant managers or leaders and communicate the project goals and rationale.

Identify key staff or volunteers, as well as local parents and carers, who can support the activity as champions. Parent or carer champions should frequent the facilities regularly and understand and support the objectives of the action.

Priority initiative

INFANT

Engage local families who regularly attend the priority settings, or via local [INFANT programs](#) or parent groups connected with maternal and child health services.

Plan the audit of priority settings

Plan priority council-owned or managed settings to audit on whether they currently provide welcoming and supportive environments for families to feed young children.

Implementation plan

After conducting the audits of priority settings, develop an implementation plan for delivering identified changes and actions at the settings. The implementation plan should outline:

- goals and objectives
- existing policy or strategy objectives that identify a need to support breastfeeding and healthy eating
- priority settings
- changes or actions needed at the settings
- resources and information to support staff at the settings
- helpful information and resources that can be provided for families at the settings
- persons responsible for delivering actions
- resource and budget requirements
- a timeline that outlines how and when changes to settings will be delivered.

Communication plan

Develop a plan for communication needed as part of this project.

If council is working on or has completed 'Quick win: Register council-owned spaces as 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' facilities', this could be part of or build on any promotional activities undertaken.

The plan should outline:

- promotional materials and communication channels that will be used, including council's website, newsletter and social media
- strategies and channels for promoting the changes delivered through the project to support feeding at council-owned settings to local parents and the community.

- helpful information and resources about feeding for parents who visit the settings, such as poster and flyers. (See the [Recommended Resources](#) section for resources that can be drawn on to prepare this information.)

Gather required information sources that you will draw from to promote through the communication plan. This could include information on:

- breastfeeding and formula feeding
- drinks for children older than 12 months (emphasising that water and milk are best), starting solids and healthy first foods
- health and nutrition for young children
- translated information for people from communities who are likely to visit the settings
- information and resources to educate staff at facilities on how to welcome and support parents feeding babies and young children.

Council should consider and plan communication strategies, such as a campaign, to help create broader community support for breastfeeding in public spaces, and to raise community awareness of the importance of healthy foods in the first years.

If planning a campaign, develop a campaign plan setting out:

- objectives
- audiences
- campaign resources that will be developed
- communication channels that will be used
- timelines for delivery of the campaign.

Consult with a range of local community members, including local parents and carers, and people who can provide diverse perspectives or offer cultural knowledge or experience.

Assess

Conduct an online survey of local parents and carers with babies and young children. Design survey questions to assess:

- how comfortable and supported they currently feel to feed their babies and toddlers in council-owned settings
- to what extent they believe council-owned services and facilities provide welcoming, safe, comfortable and accessible spaces for breastfeeding, formula feeding and expressing milk
- what challenges or barriers they experience
- suggestions for changes that could be made to spaces, facilities, amenity and support that could be provided to improve this
- perceptions or experiences of community attitudes to breastfeeding and other types of feeding in locations and spaces in the community.

If council has completed 'Quick win: Register council-owned spaces as 'Breastfeeding Welcome Here' facilities', the survey can tie in with or build on any survey conducted as part of this action.

Conduct planned onsite audits of council-owned settings. This should include assessing the environment and physical facilities for families, as well as speaking to staff. Review the audit results, and consider changes and actions needed at each setting.

If planning communication strategies or a campaign to help create supportive community attitudes and normalise feeding babies in public spaces, consider conducting a broader survey of the local community to collect baseline data on existing attitudes.

Design

Design a checklist of key things to observe and investigate to guide audits of settings. Consult with local families, maternal and child health nurses, and stakeholders such as the Australian Breastfeeding Association, to inform and co-design the audit checklist.

Review the audit results and survey data. Use this information and work with local families to co-design changes and actions needed at each setting. This might include changes to the built environment of spaces (e.g. to provide comfortable seating, and to make it easier to supervise children), provision of facilities, such as furniture and equipment for feeding, and training and resources for staff.

Consult the [Australian Breastfeeding Association](#) and local maternal and child health services for information on how facilities can create welcoming and supportive environments for breastfeeding parents and their children. Refer to this Conversation article on [breastfeeding-friendly design principles](#) for ideas for changes to the built environment of settings.

Deliver

Work closely with management and staff from council-owned settings to create spaces and implement changes or actions developed at the Design stage. Work with council's budget processes to secure funding as required.

Prepare and disseminate information and educational resources to the settings for staff and deliver promotional activities according to the Communication plan.

Continue to be available to settings to answer questions, provide information and support them to make changes, improve spaces and facilities and educate staff.

Deliver planned communication/campaign activities to help create supportive community attitudes and normalise baby and young child feeding in public spaces.



Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate impact and reach

Evaluate the priority settings to assess whether they have improved in offering supportive spaces and environments for families to feed babies and children. Identify any further changes required, and work with settings to implement them.

Work with staff who have community-facing roles (such as Maternal and Child Health Nurses and parent group coordinators) to conduct a follow-up survey of local families, and review results against the survey results at the Assess stage. Identify whether there have been improvements in families' perceptions of the environments at council-owned settings for feeding babies and young children, any barriers they still encounter, and their perceptions or experiences of community attitudes.

Evaluate any communication or campaign strategies that have been delivered to help create supportive community attitudes and raise awareness in relation to healthy baby and young child feeding. Review the evaluation and consider whether there is a need to modify or extend the communication/campaign strategies.

Publish any key results or changes using the channels identified in the communication/campaign plan. Consider highlighting actions that could be undertaken to achieve longer term change.

Work with council budget processes and request an ongoing budget from council leaders to continue to invest in actions and facilities to support baby and toddler feeding in council-owned spaces and more broadly in the local community. This could include ongoing investment in activities and communications strategies to work with and educate the community, raise awareness about healthy baby and toddler feeding, and help create supportive community attitudes.

Celebrate

Acknowledge the achievements and progress of the priority settings towards welcoming baby and young child feeding with awards and a thank you from leadership.

Highlight the changes they have made on council websites and social media. Ask partners such as VicHealth to share and promote the changes on social media.

Recommended resources

- [Breastfeeding Welcome Here program](#)
- [Australian Breastfeeding Association](#)
- [Research evaluating the Breastfeeding Welcome Here program in Victoria](#)
- Murdoch Children's Research Institute fact sheets:
 - [Introducing your baby to solids](#)
 - [Healthy eating 0-5 years](#)
- Raising children website – information on [feeding babies](#) and [nutrition for toddlers](#)
- [Conversation article on breastfeeding friendly design principles](#)
- [Local Government Areas where INFANT operates](#)



Step up: *Provide first foods professional development for local early childhood workforces*

The first 2,000 days of a child's life are a critical period for establishing healthy eating environments, cultures, attitudes and habits that can have lifelong health benefits.

Councils offer a variety of community groups and services for babies, young children and families, including playgroups, childcare, family day care, kindergarten, maternal and child health services and new-parent groups.

The collective workforce and volunteers of these early childhood services are a powerful force in supporting healthy first food messages. People who work in early childhood services are trusted sources of knowledge and advice for families and may be directly involved in creating environments where young children eat, play and grow.

This 'step up' action requires councils to work with a range of council-operated early childhood services to identify and deliver appropriate healthy first foods and early childhood nutrition training and professional development for different categories of people who work at the services, and embed this in the relevant curriculum. Some suitable training opportunities are explored in this how-to guide, with further general information about these initiatives outlined in the Topic In Focus sections of this module.

Councils will identify different categories of people who work at early childhood services who may be involved in creating healthy food environments or promoting healthy eating messages at early childhood services, and suitable training opportunities for these workers to build knowledge and capacity in relation to healthy first foods and early childhood nutrition. They will work within council to secure ongoing investment for the training, work with early childhood services and training providers to design and deliver the training and identify opportunities to embed it in the training and professional development curriculum.

Priority initiatives

INFANT and the Healthy Eating Advisory Service are priority healthy eating programs and services funded by the Victorian Government. Victorian councils undertaking this module implementation action are encouraged to consider options for including these initiatives as part of the Victorian Government's collective impact approach to healthier food systems, and ensure all communities can access the benefits of these initiatives.





How-to guide to:

Provide first foods professional development for local early childhood workforces

Engage champions to support healthy eating training

Seek parent, carer and early childhood service representatives to act as champions of healthy first foods and early childhood nutrition training at early childhood services. Involve and consult them in the design and delivery of training and professional development programs. Consider engaging parents and carers and early childhood service representatives who can provide diverse perspectives and cultural knowledge and experience.

Involving council

Engage council departments that oversee early childhood services to seek their input and support for healthy first foods and early childhood nutrition training and professional development programs. Consult closely with early childhood specialists, such as maternal and child health nurses, and council teams with healthy eating expertise, including health planning and promotion. Seek their views on the categories of professionals, staff and volunteers at early childhood services that would benefit from training, and the issues and skills that training should cover.

Where council is the early childhood service provider, seek the support of council leadership, including councillors, to provide ongoing commitment and funding for healthy first foods and early childhood nutrition training in early childhood services.



Plan

Consider establishing a working group or committee of staff from relevant council teams, training providers and experts, early childhood services management, staff/workers and parent or carer champions.

Identify roles at early childhood services that might benefit from different training and professional development opportunities.

These roles might include:

- management and directors
- educators and aids
- carers
- health professionals, including maternal and

child health nurses, and community health service staff

- cooks, kitchen staff or other staff involved in planning menus and preparing food
- administrative and support staff
- parent and carer volunteers and other volunteers.

Plan the number of early childhood services in your municipality you will work with as part of this activity and identify priority services based on an assessment of local needs.

Plan training and professional development topics and opportunities that would benefit different categories of early childhood roles, according to their involvement in providing or supporting breastfeeding and healthy first foods for young children and families.

Healthy first foods environments and promotion

Suggested training and professional development topics for people involved in creating healthy first food environments and promoting healthy eating messages at early childhood services (e.g. management, directors, educators, aids, care providers, dietitians, administrative and support staff and volunteers) include:

- creating breastfeeding-friendly environments and providing support to breastfeeding parents
- healthy first foods for young children
- providing healthy foods in a fun and engaging way
- managing food refusal and fussy eating
- creating positive healthy eating environments
- promoting healthy eating to young children and families
- supporting and communicating with parents about healthy eating.

Suitable training opportunities for this group might include

- [‘Promoting healthy eating’ module of Healthy Eating Advisory Service training](#)
- [INFANT training for community implementation](#),
- [Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation professional development](#)
- [Confident and Understanding Parents Program](#)
- [Australian Breastfeeding Association Course in Community Breastfeeding Mentoring](#)

Healthy first foods menus and options

Training and professional development topics for people involved in creating healthy first foods menus or options at early childhood services (e.g. management and directors, dietitians, cooks, kitchen staff, administrative and support staff, volunteers) might include:

- planning healthy menus
- healthy first foods for young children
- managing needs such as allergies or cultural needs
- providing healthy menus within budgets.

The '[Planning healthy eating for long day care' module of Healthy Eating Advisory Service training](#) might be a suitable opportunity for staff in this category.

Healthy first foods support and advice

Training for people who provide support and advice to parents and families at early childhood services (e.g. maternal and child health nurses, other health professionals, community health service staff) could cover issues such as:

- evidence-based advice and support with breastfeeding and introduction of first foods
- latest research on breastfeeding
- latest research on healthy first foods and nutrition for young children
- communicating with and supporting breastfeeding parents
- communicating with and supporting parents and families in relation to healthy eating for young children.

Suitable professional development opportunities for staff working in early childhood services might include:

- [INFANT training program](#)
- [Confident and Understanding Parents Program](#)
- Australian Breastfeeding Association's [training programs for health professionals](#)
- [Course in Community Breastfeeding Mentoring](#).

Identify existing training and professional development programs and opportunities

The [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#) provides free online [training modules for early childhood services](#).

The 'Promoting healthy eating' module covers topics including:

- introducing foods to children in fun and engaging ways to help deal with food refusal and fussy eating
- role modelling healthy eating to children
- making healthy eating the norm, not the exception, in your room
- promoting healthy eating to families.

The 'Planning healthy menus for long day care' module covers topics such as:

- creating and planning healthy menus
- the Healthy Eating Advisory Service's Menu Planning Guidelines for Long Day Care
- healthy meal, snack and drink ideas
- managing challenges such as allergies and budgeting
- promoting healthy eating at mealtimes and playtimes.

The Healthy Eating Advisory Service can also deliver group online workshops for early childhood staff.

INFANT training

[INFANT](#) is an evidence-based program designed to help parents and families with healthy eating and active play from the start of their baby's life. INFANT is based on 15 years of research led by the Institute for Physical Activity and Nutrition (IPAN) at Deakin University and has grown from a randomised research trial across 15 Victorian local government areas in 2008.

INFANT promotes healthy eating, increased active play and reduced screen time for babies from birth until 2 years of age. It consists of 4 group sessions for parents and carers led by a nurse or other practitioner, with content reinforced via the My Baby Now app. INFANT can be integrated into existing maternal and child health programs and services

INFANT offers training for community implementation, designed for health professionals and staff interested in implementing the INFANT program in their community. This could include maternal and child health nurses, dietitians, health promotion officers, parent support workers, as well as managers, administration support staff and partner organisations.

The course covers the following topics:

- 'Learn about the content and delivery of INFANT'
- 'Apply program principles and resources to your own community context'
- 'Develop a plan for implementing INFANT in your community'.

The course is fully online and approximately 8 hours in length (self-paced over a 4-week period) with annual 1.5 hour refresher training. Course educators from Deakin University are available during the course to facilitate discussions, support learning and answer questions.

After training, ongoing access is provided to:

- session content and resources
- facilitation guidance
- support from a community of practice.

Confident and Understanding Parents program

The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne's [Confident and Understanding Parents](#) (CUPs) approach helps professionals establish partnerships with parents to support children's healthy eating and active play, including through supported playgroups.

The CUPs approach supports professionals in their work with families and young children. It includes:

- a 2-day training program providing professionals with the latest evidence about young children's nutrition and active play, and strategies for communicating with families from diverse backgrounds
- 10 evidence-based messages that professionals can tailor to the unique needs of families
- specialist resources for professionals
- mentoring to support professionals implementing the CUPs approach.

The CUPs approach can be an effective way to reach families who may not visit GPs or maternal and child health services, or who are at risk of vulnerability. CUP facilitators come from different professional backgrounds and include playgroup leaders and early childhood educators.

Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation professional development

The [Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program for Early Childhood Services](#) is a play-based, hands-on program that can be integrated into early

childhood services. It promotes a whole-service approach to teaching children about fresh, seasonal, delicious food.

The [Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation](#) provides [professional development](#) for educators to support them in establishing and delivering a kitchen garden program. This includes webinars and online workshops, face-to-face professional development and customised professional development.

Australian Breastfeeding Association training for health professionals

The Australian Breastfeeding Association offers a [Diploma of Breastfeeding Management](#), or standalone online [workshops](#) from the diploma designed for health professionals.

The diploma covers the following areas:

- anatomy and physiology of human lactation
- management of common breastfeeding problems
- providing counselling to support breastfeeding
- infant and maternal nutrition during lactation
- protecting and supporting breastfeeding
- evaluation of human lactation research.

Online workshops for health professionals include:

- 'Take lactation histories and conduct breastfeeding assessments'
- 'Managing breastfeeding situations and problems'
- 'Creating environments to protect, promote and support breastfeeding / Provide breastfeeding support within a legal and ethical framework'.

Course in Community Breastfeeding Mentoring

The Australian Breastfeeding Association's [Course in Community Breastfeeding Mentoring](#) is a nationally recognised short course designed to teach mentoring skills and basic breastfeeding information to people who support breastfeeding in communities. It is particularly suited for use with culturally and linguistically diverse and Indigenous community groups or people working with these groups.

Mentoring skills covered include:

- active listening
- empathy

- cultural respect
- confidentiality
- encouragement and support
- where to refer mothers for further support.

Breastfeeding knowledge covered includes:

- the importance of breastfeeding
- the establishment and maintenance of breastfeeding
- 'normal' infant behaviours
- identifying common breastfeeding problems and inaccurate breastfeeding information.

The course is delivered as an interactive workshop with small group learning activities.

This training would help early childhood services professionals and staff to develop knowledge of how to create breastfeeding-friendly environments at early childhood services, and support breastfeeding parents of babies and toddlers.

Training for volunteers

The Australian Breastfeeding Association offers volunteer traineeships that enable people to become qualified breastfeeding counsellors or breastfeeding educators.

Identify what support structures are required

Once the focus of the action is determined, work with representatives of these teams and services to understand what supports, systems and capacity needs might be required. Consider:

- what professional development strategies already exist
- whether additional staffing or backfill hours are required
- whether staff have capacity to take on new training or programming
- the extent that leadership support is required to embed the program
- whether suitable facilities are available for the training or the program itself
- whether consideration to scheduling is required.

Develop an implementation plan

Develop a plan to identify the types of training and professional development opportunities that would suit local early childhood services, and to design and deliver training programs. The plan should cover:

- a target for the number of priority early childhood services to work with
- an outline of the goals and objectives of training
- available training opportunities and programs
- suitability of training opportunities for different categories of roles at early childhood services
- working with early childhood services to undertake training needs analysis and identify available budgets
- funding opportunities and processes
- development of customised training programs and training schedules
- identifying facilitators and venues for face-to-face training as required
- training evaluation and review.

Recommended resources

[Achievement Program for early childhood services](#)

The Victorian Government's [Achievement Program](#) is an excellent source of support for early childhood services to establish a healthy eating environment.

The Achievement Program provides an evidence-based framework to create a healthy environment that supports the health and wellbeing of staff and children at the early childhood service. After services register with the program, they can access the online portal for a range of tools, resources and to receive the support needed along the way.

Early childhood services can join the program, work through the healthy eating and oral health best-practice benchmarks, access a range of tools, resources and support and gain Victorian Government Recognition.

Assess

Survey staff and families

Conduct surveys of people working with priority early childhood services and families at existing council-led programs such as new-parent groups. Design survey questions to identify existing knowledge, skills and learning needs with respect to breastfeeding and healthy first foods for children, such as:

- creating breastfeeding friendly environments and supporting breastfeeding parents
- healthy first foods for young children
- providing healthy foods in a fun and engaging way
- managing food refusal and fussy eating
- creating positive healthy eating environments
- promoting healthy eating to young children and families
- supporting families with healthy eating.

Conduct a training needs assessment

Review and analyse survey results. Identify opportunities to develop knowledge, capacity and confidence of people working at early childhood services in relation to supporting breastfeeding and healthy first foods for young children.

Assess what training or professional development is best suited for different categories of roles at early childhood services.

Review training opportunities and analyse the extent to which they meet identified needs, or whether there is a need to seek or design customised training.

Assess council policies and processes

Identify and review relevant council strategic policies and plans that support the ongoing delivery of first foods and healthy eating training programs for early childhood services. This might include, for example, the inclusion of [INFANT program delivery](#) as a strategy action in council's municipal public health and wellbeing plan and/or Municipal Early Years Plan.

Investigate council processes that will need to be engaged with to seek and embed funding for early childhood service training and professional development programs. Identify opportunities in council's budget process or grants programs to seek funding.

Design

Work with priority early childhood services, and staff and parent/carer champions, to design tailored training programs and schedules for each service that meet identified needs according to available budgets. Work with early childhood services, early childhood professionals and training providers to design customised training programs as required.

Training schedules/plans should detail:

- dates, format and length of training sessions, including whether sessions are face-to-face or online
- facilitators and venues for face-to-face training
- additional staffing requirements while staff are attending training (if within opening hours)
- training costs and budget.

When designing training schedules:

- consider advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face and online training. Face-to-face training might enable more useful discussion and deeper learning, whereas online training is likely to be more cost effective and efficient
- work with early childhood services to develop a detailed budget for delivering the training program (including the cost of any additional staffing required)
- consider opportunities to share or combine training opportunities between different early childhood services, for example by running training programs across several services, or by delivering council-wide training for early childhood services. This might help to reduce costs and create efficiencies, as well as provide opportunities for people working at different services to share knowledge and ideas, and learn from each other.

Deliver

Support early childhood services to deliver training programs according to the training schedules and plans developed. Be available to support services to work with training providers, or secure training facilitators and venues as needed.

Acknowledge participation of early childhood services in the training, such as by sharing on council's website or social media.

Encourage early childhood services to identify tools and resources to help workers apply and embed

their learning, including by registering with the [Achievement Program](#). Additional resources are available from the [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#), and via the Recommended Resources section below.

Promote healthy first foods and healthy eating training opportunities to other early childhood services in the municipality.

Recommended resources

[Let's Talk Sugar](#)

The Inner East Primary Care Partnership has recently piloted a small campaign in consultation with maternal child health nurses across the inner and outer east of Melbourne. It aims to educate young children and families on how crucial a child's nutrition in the first 1000 days is to support their future health.

The 'Let's Talk Sugar' resource targets the food system that can lead to poor health, by raising awareness of sugars that are added (or not easily recognised) in the production of infant and toddler foods. It provides guidance for families on interpreting food labels and identifying hidden sugars.

By focusing on an easily shareable poster and brochure as central campaign assets and engaging trusted maternal child health nurses to deliver important messages during appointments, 'Let's Talk Sugar' has created a fit-for-purpose campaign to help families with young children choose low-sugar foods to support children's health.





Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate impact and reach

Evaluate training

Seek evaluation and feedback from training and professional development participants after each session and at the conclusion of the program.

Review evaluation and feedback. Work with training providers and use this to refine and improve future training sessions and programs.

Repeat surveys of workers conducted at the Assess stage, allowing time (e.g. 3–6 months) after delivery of the training program for staff to implement their learning. Analyse whether workers report that training programs helped them to gain and implement knowledge, confidence and skills in relation to supporting breastfeeding and healthy first foods for young children.

Share results

Share and publish key results or improvements with early childhood services and via the council website and social media. Encourage early childhood services to share key results with families.

Share key results with council leadership to encourage funding and if the findings demonstrate a sustained need for healthy first foods training to be built into early childhood workforce development.

Embed

Work with early childhood services to embed first foods and healthy eating training programs in staff and volunteer orientation, and regular training and professional development curricula.

Encourage services to embed budgets for the training in their annual budgets.

Work within council and with council's budget processes to secure ongoing commitment and annual allocation of resources to support training in early childhood services.

Work to expand delivery of training programs to additional early childhood services in the municipality.

Recommended resources

- The [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#) website
- [INFANT](#) program website
- [Confident and Understanding Parents](#)
- Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Foundation's [Kitchen Garden Program for Early Childhood Services](#)
- [Australian Breastfeeding Association](#) website



Ambitious:

Adopt a healthy food policy approach for council

This action focuses on the development of a healthy food policy to ensure long-term sustainability of healthy food environments in council-owned facilities, settings and places. A healthy food policy will ensure that food and drinks provided and sold in council-owned facilities, settings and places are healthy and that local food procurement and sustainability measures are prioritised.

If council is adopting a healthy and sustainable food systems strategy through the 'Promoting healthy food policy in council practice' impact stream, aim to embed or link the healthy food policy to this strategy.

Local healthy food procurement represents a significant opportunity to support and drive local food production and availability in your area. Councils demonstrating leadership and commitment to locally sourced foods will also contribute to building community awareness of the importance of local and healthy food systems. Embedding sustainability measures such as banning single-use plastics will not only support community and environmental health but also the Victorian Government's commitment to ban single-use plastics.

The healthy food policy approach should emphasise the position of council to reinforce community health and wellbeing at all stages of life.

The policy/ies should:

- identify clear priority facilities, settings and places required to provide or sell healthy food and drinks
- include a commitment to healthy and more sustainable food procurement for council catering and events
- include a focus on adoption of healthy food and drink provision in council-owned early childhood services and supporting breastfeeding-friendly environments
- outline how future tenders, contracts and/or lease agreements for facilities will incorporate healthy food and drink provision
- include consideration of collective buying of food and drinks for facilities
- be developed in partnership with the community, including children and young people
- have the endorsement of council leaders
- be developed and operationalised across the organisation, for example through a cross-council implementation plan
- include consideration of sustained council oversight and governance for facilities to maintain healthy food retail environments.



How-to guide to:

Adopt a healthy food policy approach for council

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include representatives from council facilities with food retail and provision, health planning and promotion, procurement and contracts, environmental sustainability, family and youth services, and facility and asset management.

Council leaders and decision-makers can provide guidance and support for the implementation of food policy and should be engaged through the process.

Children and young people's right to healthy environments will be at the forefront of the policy development, and planning should identify when and how to include children and young people's voices and priorities in the process.



Plan

Involve council departments

Form a policy working group that brings together council staff from diverse areas including health promotion, procurement, and environmental sustainability, as well as local community food leaders, food businesses and caterers.

The working group will be responsible for a strategic, phased approach to developing the healthy food policy.

Develop an implementation plan

The implementation plan should set out:

- how the policies will be integrated into the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan and other relevant strategies
- timing for policy development, community engagement and implementation
- development of internal council policies and procedures to support the policy
- engagement of councillors, community and local food businesses and leaders
- development of relationships with retailers and local catering/food businesses.



Assess

Identify the existing policy context to determine how council policies and procurement agreements touch on or intersect with food provision, such as the Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plan, Council Plan, healthy and sustainable food systems strategy, sustainability, food waste and recycling, economic development strategies, contracts with food vendors and suppliers.

Identify if the policies conflict with or support the goals of the healthy food policy, and how these could be reviewed or addressed as part of this activity.



Design

Develop healthy food policy/ies

Depending on the level of council influence on food and drink provision, a one-size-fits-all policy may not suit the council's needs. A tiered policy approach can allow for different expectations depending on factors such as local government influence and capabilities.

A tiered approach may include the below categories, which should be tailored based on the type of community food retail outlets at the council.

Tier 1 settings may have a high level of council oversight as well as a high level of complexity, including accountability, corporate responsibility, community safety, compliance, and/or quality standards implications. For example, council-managed facilities including sports and recreation, early childhood services, cultural settings and community hubs and council-run events.

Tier 2 settings may have a lower level of council influence, and complexity/risk than Tier 1. For example:

- council venues and services where food and beverages are provided, available for purchase, or used as a means of program delivery by council personnel
- council's community grants programs wherever food or beverages are directly supplied to grant recipients
- food-focused promotional activities, programs and events funded (or co-funded) by council.

Tier 1 and 2 settings would be required to develop a procedure outlining how they will implement and monitor the healthy food policy in their setting.

Tier 3 settings may be council-owned or managed premises that are leased to external parties or partner agencies (although operating at arm's length from council) and typically used for their own purposes. For example:

- council's sport and recreation facilities managed by community, volunteer or semi-professional sports clubs or commercial entities
- commercially operated cafes, restaurants or function centres, operating from a council-owned or managed property
- casual hire of council-owned or managed venues or facilities, for self-catered events.

These settings would be encouraged to implement the policy, but it would not be enforced.

Additional things to consider including in your healthy food policy/ies:

- offering financial incentives for adoption and maintenance of healthy food and drink provision, such as fee exemptions for healthy food outlets; eligibility for funding and/or grants; and/or a reduction in rent for user groups
- monitoring healthy food and drink provision alongside routine site monitoring (e.g. incorporating a healthy food and drink check with regular food safety audits).

Engage your community and incorporate feedback

Prioritise children and young people so their input is included. Consider engaging local schools or community groups to support engagement with children and young people. Collate and share your findings with the community, including people who contributed. Incorporate feedback the community provided into the draft policy.

Crossover opportunity

The [Kids Co-Designing Healthy Places toolkit](#) is part of the Leading the Way – Engaging young voices for change foundation module. It provides resources to engage, audit and co-design solutions for healthy places with and for children and young people in your community.

Deliver

Endorse and adopt the policy

The draft policy is now ready for council approval. Management may request that this policy is made available for public input a second time. Once you have obtained council approval, progress to final endorsement and sign-off.

Review and embed

Communicate and celebrate!

While the policy is going through the approval processes, develop a communications plan that covers internal and external promotion of the policy. Include the rationale, benefits and scope of the policy and communicate it to all council staff and across the community.

Recommended resources

Healthy Eating Advisory Service's [Organisational healthy food and drink policy template](#)

The [Achievement Program](#) (see [Extra Implementation Support Resources](#)) can support you to implement healthy food policies in your council and in council-owned facilities and early childhood services. You can also gain Victorian Government recognition as a healthy early childhood service or workplace.

Victorian Government recognition is also available through the Achievement Program to promote the adopted policy where it applies to council facilities including libraries, sports facilities, community centres and early childhood services.



Impact stream:

Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities

To complete the impact stream 'Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities', councils will select from:

Quick win: *Implement a healthy rewards program*

Quick win: *Create and run a local healthy foods for children campaign for community events and activities*

Step up: *Implement a healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events*

Ambitious: *Phase out alcohol and unhealthy food advertising on council-owned or run assets and spaces*

Many community organisations, groups, clubs and venues have sponsorship arrangements with brands and companies who profit from products that harm health and wellbeing, including alcohol and unhealthy food and drink ('harmful industries').

These arrangements result in the advertising and promotion of unhealthy and harmful products to children and young people through, for example, sponsorship, venue naming rights and product giveaways.

The distribution of fast-food vouchers for use as rewards in sport is rife. Among 500 Victorian parents surveyed in 2020, half said their children had received a voucher from a large fast-food company at their sports club, and 42% had received one for a local fast-food outlet. Fast food companies use vouchers to draw families into their restaurants, making them a lot of money at the expense of children's health.

Rewarding children with vouchers for fast food during sport or promoting unhealthy food and drink products and brands at venues and events builds powerful brand associations at a young age and contributes to poor health, now and into adulthood.

These practices exploit children's vulnerabilities by creating positive norms and misinformation around the consumption of unhealthy food and drink.

Sponsorship arrangements that promote harmful industry brands and products at council-run events or in council-owned public spaces directly undermine council obligations under the [Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008](#) to improve and promote public health and wellbeing within the municipal district.

Campaigns can be an effective tactic to educate young children and their families about the lifelong benefits of healthy food in early childhood. They can also be instrumental in helping council persuade local organisations and community groups to commit to enacting changes to protect the right of our youngest citizens to eat healthy food.

Councils are also uniquely positioned to enable, encourage and support grassroots clubs and other organisations to involve children and young people in sports, cultural activities or the arts in an active and healthy way, free from the promotion of unhealthy products.

Intended outcomes

Councils undertaking this impact stream can expect to:

- reduce the exposure of unhealthy food, drink and alcohol marketing to children, young people and families
- ensure that council-run community initiatives aren't undermined by engagement with companies that produce and promote products that are harmful to health and wellbeing
- see a reduced reliance by community groups on incentives from unhealthy food and drink providers
- offer support to grassroots clubs and other organisations to celebrate children's involvement in sports, cultural activities or the arts in an active and healthy way.

Minimum deliverables

To complete the impact stream 'Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities', councils will have:

- identified local high-impact settings, spaces or policy opportunities to focus on for the chosen intervention
- increased healthy rewards and/or sponsorships or decreased unhealthy rewards and/or sponsorships in those settings, spaces or policies
- demonstrated change in settings, spaces or policy that centre around children and young people
- demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.





Quick win: *Implement a healthy rewards program*

This implementation action aims to phase out unhealthy food vouchers in children and young people’s community activities.

To complete this action, council will provide healthy rewards for use by local not-for-profit clubs and organisations who provide recreation, arts or cultural opportunities for children and young people.

Vouchers can include free or discounted access to sport, leisure, arts or cultural facilities and events – anything that provides the opportunity to celebrate children and young people’s achievements in an active, engaging and healthy way.



How-to guide to: *Implement a healthy rewards program*

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include sport and recreation, family and youth services, and managers of council facilities.

Ideally, such rewards will be made available to a range of not-for-profit organisations such as sporting clubs, and community art, theatre or dance organisations. As a starting point, councils can provide healthy rewards for one category of organisation and then expand this over time.

Rewards and vouchers should provide free or discounted access to sport, leisure, arts or cultural facilities and events. This could span both council-owned and non-council-owned facilities. These should be age-appropriate and continue the goal of promoting local opportunities for children and young people to be healthy and connected. Such vouchers could include:

- pools, gym, fitness classes, court hire, inflatable play equipment, rock climbing or trampoline sessions
- arts centres, concerts or events
- museums and galleries
- school holiday programs offered through libraries, arts venues, youth services
- Freeza and other youth-oriented events
- kids traffic school/traffic school birthday parties.



Plan

Obtain vouchers from facilities or venues

Identify facilities to approach by talking to relevant council departments. There may be existing arrangements between council and local facilities to provide vouchers that council can use. If there are no existing arrangements or if the facility is not council-owned you will need to meet with the facility/business manager to discuss the project and negotiate vouchers.

The vouchers should:

- provide free or discounted access to the facility
- include as many facilities as possible so you can provide rewards to as many children as possible
- be recorded by the facility when used so you can follow-up and assess popularity.

Rural councils should consider facilities in surrounding local government areas if there are limited options within the municipality.

Design

Promote healthy rewards to local organisations

Create a webpage that provides an overview of healthy rewards and allows clubs and community groups to submit their expression of interest or request access to vouchers.

Develop communications about healthy rewards to the local organisations you are targeting. In the case of sport, this could include approaching local associations to send an email or social media post to clubs. Having these communication channels set up also reinforces council's priority of fostering healthier relationships and demonstrates leadership action.

Set some basic criteria in order for organisations to access vouchers. For example, they must:

- be a not-for-profit entity
- demonstrate they provide recreation, cultural or arts opportunities for children and young people
- provide opportunities within the local government area.

Depending on the number of vouchers available, councils could apply an expression of interest closing date.

Deliver

Provide healthy rewards

Expressions of interest may be assessed on a first-come, first-serve basis. When deciding on the number of vouchers to provide to organisations, council may want to take into consideration the number of clubs or groups and participants.

Lower value rewards (e.g. player of the day) could be provided in higher volumes and higher value rewards (e.g. player of the year) in lower volumes.

The rewards may be in the form of a council-branded template, or simply vouchers provided by the facility or owner.

Recommended resources

(See also the [Implementation Templates](#) provided for this module)

- [Sample expression of interest template](#)
- [Sample communications](#)
- [Sample voucher](#)
- [Media release for VicHealth's healthy sports rewards launch](#)



Quick win:

Create and run a local healthy first foods campaign for community events and activities

This implementation action involves developing and running a local healthy first foods campaign for community events and activities.

The local healthy first foods campaign aims to seek and demonstrate support from community groups and leaders who will commit to providing an environment that protects young children's right to eat healthy foods.

The primary audience for this campaign is the adults responsible for developing and running community events and activities. The campaign should motivate them to create family-friendly spaces that can be enjoyed without exposure to harmful messages and unhealthy promotion.

Recommended resources

To create an effective local healthy first foods campaign, council should consider 'values-based framing' to develop effective campaign messages.

Council can [register to access](#) guides providing helpful and effective messaging developed by VicHealth and Common Cause Australia, exploring a variety of health promotion themes. Based on decades of research from the fields of social psychology and cognitive linguistics, a values-based approach to messaging involves engaging people's deeply held values to motivate concern and action.





How-to guide to:

Create and run a local healthy first foods campaign for community events and activities

Involve young children and families

This 'quick win' is a great opportunity for councils to involve young children and families by offering them opportunities to contribute to campaign messages.

The campaign should aim to reach young children and their families in the local area, at maternal child health services, early childhood services, playgroups and other spaces where young children and their families gather.

Involving council

Involve communications and marketing, maternal and child health services, early childhood services teams and specialists to help inform, design and deliver the campaign. Other council teams that could contribute include sport and recreation, parks and youth services, who may hold key relationships and access to community groups and leaders that can help deliver this action.

Involving community groups and leaders

The healthy first foods campaign should target community groups and leaders to amplify key messages and secure commitment to providing environments protecting the right of young children to eat healthy foods.

Involving community groups and leaders in the design of the campaign can help ensure an appropriate tone of voice and messaging. It can create campaign assets that are user friendly and reflect the communication preferences of their intended audience.



Plan

Prepare a campaign plan

The campaign plan should set out:

Objectives:

- Provide families with community events that are free from unhealthy foods/marketing
- motivate community groups and leaders to commit to providing an environment that protects the right of young children to eat healthy foods
- amplify the right of parents and young children to healthy spaces

Audiences:

- local community groups, leaders and event organisers
- local young children and their families
- early childhood services and playgroups

Consultation plan:

- identify opportunities to engage with audiences to ensure campaign messages are relevant and compelling
- campaign resources that will be developed might include videos, posters, flyers, fact sheets, seminars and communication templates
- campaign resources should be designed to support local community groups, leaders and event organisers to deliver and celebrate their healthy spaces. They can range from practical how-to guides to resources that celebrate and demonstrate their commitment to healthy spaces (e.g. certificates to display)
- timelines for delivery of the campaign, including promotional opportunities linked to key events or dates

Communication channels:

- social media and event organisation Facebook groups
- council's communication channels, including council website and social media
- media articles in relevant local publications
- displays and marketing materials at relevant industry events
- early childhood services, maternal child health services, playgroups, schools, libraries and other community centres and facilities.

Consider planning a campaign launch event such as a healthy or sustainable food festival or community event celebrating physical activity.

Assess

Review existing resources that promote healthy first foods and environments. If possible, use these resources in focus tests or surveys to ascertain their relevance at a local level.

Consult with young children and families via online surveys or interviews.

Design surveys to understand families' knowledge of the importance of healthy first foods, the types of environments they frequent, and the types of health promotion messages they notice and respond to.

Hot tip!

Leveraging campaigns

Leverage existing statewide or national healthy food initiatives to amplify the impact of campaign messages and provide ready-made resources and materials.

For example, by joining the [Vic Kids Eat Well](#) movement, local council can access support for campaigns aimed at transforming the food and drink environments where children spend their time.

Council staff who register to become Vic Kids Eat Well Health Promoters will gain access to onboarding training and development, a comprehensive range of resources and an extensive support framework to help promote, support and implement changes to create healthy food and drink environments for children and young people in the local community.

Design

Design campaign messages and materials to promote the benefits of healthy first foods for children, and share the campaign with educators and local community groups and leaders.

Work with maternal child health services, early childhood services and specialists to develop campaign materials focusing on healthy first foods. Assess and integrate their feedback as valued campaign partners on resources as they are developed.

Work with local community groups, event organisers and leaders to workshop and design promotions that suit the target audience, utilising channels and messages that meet the needs and interests of young children in the local community.

Use these collaborative co-design meetings to confirm commitments from the groups to provide environments that protect the right of young children to eat healthy foods.

Consider filming some short campaign videos that will resonate with the young people in the target audience.

Ensure council staff are well informed about the campaign so they can appropriately direct enquiries.

Quick note

Developing and maintaining a digital campaign hub ensures supporters and campaign advocates use appropriate materials and always have access to the most up-to-date campaign materials. The healthy first foods campaign hub may include:

- a campaign supporter toolkit, including key messages and brand guidelines
- ready-to-use and editable campaign posters to print and display
- ready-to-use digital banners to be displayed on websites and e-newsletters
- social media including ready-to-use posts that councils, clubs and providers can share
- media release templates.

Deliver

Follow the campaign plan to deliver the campaign.

Seek support from a wide range of child-friendly facilities and services to promote the campaign and activities.

During the campaign period, ensure enquiries or feedback are promptly responded to. Check in regularly with campaign partners and advocates, providers and young children and their families to get a sense of how the campaign is tracking.

Work closely with maternal and child health services and early childhood services to encourage them to promote and support the campaign.

Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate impact and reach

Where possible, support providers to seek feedback from community members at key locations where the campaign is visible and actively being promoted. If budget allows, consider evaluation mechanisms and indicators to determine which channels were most effective and if target audiences have changed behaviour or knowledge in relation to healthy first foods.

A key measure of success will be the number of local organisations and community groups that cater for young children that have committed to protecting their right to healthy first foods and have modified their environments to reflect this.

Recommended resources

[Vic Kids Eat Well](#)

[Put the 'fun' into fundraising and marketing in council and community facilities](#)

[Kids are sweet enough](#)

[Let's Talk Sugar](#)



Step up:

Implement a healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events

This action aims to protect children and young people from advertising that alcohol and unhealthy food and drinks companies use to promote harmful products at council-run events.

To constitute successful completion, council should develop and implement a healthy sponsorship policy to not engage unhealthy food and drink or alcohol sponsors for council-run events where families, children or young people are present. If suitable, the policy could be integrated into an existing council policy such as an events policy.

This would not include vendor retail relationships (e.g. sale of food or alcohol at events where the vendor could advertise at point-of-sale / immediate service area only).



How-to guide to:

Implement a healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include sport and recreation, family and youth services, and festivals and events. Seek in-principle support for the approach from leaders of relevant teams.

Below are some key considerations to take into account when developing the healthy sponsorship policy. Consult widely with the relevant teams in your council and with trusted partners to come up with an approach that will work.



Plan

Determine your healthy sponsorship policy scope

Is the policy standalone or will be the principles be integrated into existing policies, including:

- procurement policy
- sponsorship policy
- children and youth strategy
- Council Plan (this would allow high-level endorsement).

Allow for retail arrangements whereby alcohol or unhealthy food vendors can sell products and advertise at the immediate point-of-sale, but not be sponsors of the event/s (noting that the sale of alcohol products at events primarily targeting children isn't appropriate).

It would also only be relevant to a sponsorship arrangement between the council and a company and wouldn't include existing semi or permanent advertising at event venues and spaces.

There are 2 options that council can consider for defining harmful industries.

Broad

Include all food, beverage and alcohol industries. For example in the case of alcohol, all producers (brands on alcohol products, brewers, wineries), alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise), retailers (bottle shops) and on-premise providers (pubs, clubs). And then apply a risk or principles-based approach to decision-making (see below).

Limited

Include only industries associated with the most harm and whose sole or predominant activity is the sale of alcohol or unhealthy food and drink. For example:

- Alcohol producers (brands which produce alcohol products), alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise) and retailers (bottle shops). This would not include on-premise providers (pubs, clubs) or broader retailers who also sell alcohol (supermarket chains).
- All types of confectionery (including lollies and chocolate) and sugar-sweetened drink (including soft drinks, sports drinks, fruit drinks with less than 99% fruit, cordials and energy drinks) brands and fast food/ chain food businesses.⁹ This may not include other processed food brands (cereals) or local businesses such as a pizza shop.

FIGURE 4: Defining harmful industries

Articulate what events the policy applies to. For example, it may apply to all council-run events (including festivals, exhibitions, markets, music concerts) or council may limit the scope to include only those events that are targeted primarily towards families, young people or children (e.g. exclude certain exhibitions or music concerts targeting those aged over 18 years).

Applying it across all council-run events provides a consistent approach. However, it may be easier to get buy-in by framing the policy specific to family, children and youth events.



9. A chain food business (fast food outlet) is a food premises that sells at least 1 standard food item (ready-to-eat that is standardised for size and content) available in at least 2 chain food premises. A chain food business has 20 or more outlets in Victoria, or 50 or more outlets nationally, including at least one outlet in Victoria.

Develop your decision-making process

If choosing a limited definition about which harmful industries are included in the policy scope (as per Figure 4 above), apply a black-and-white decision-making approach that the council will not enter into sponsorships with those companies for any events primarily targeting families, young people or children that are run or commissioned by the council.

If choosing a broad definition (as per Figure 4 above), develop a decision-making guide. This can be approached using principles, risk assessments and/or matrixes.

Some examples of different approaches:

- Healthway Co-sponsorship [Policy](#) and [Procedure](#)
- South Metro Junior Football League [Healthy Sponsorship Guide](#)
- VicHealth harmful industry relationship funding and procurement [policy](#)



Design & Deliver

Write and implement the policy

Write up your healthy sponsorship policy ([see the handy template provided](#)) and progress the approval and implementation of the policy.

Consider alternative sponsors

Seek sponsorship for council-run events from companies that do not seek to profit from products that are harmful to health and wellbeing. These include:

- health service providers (e.g. physiotherapy, dental services, allied health)
- gardening or trades businesses (e.g. building, plumbing, landscaping)
- sport, homeware, furniture, clothing, equipment retailers
- sport and recreation centres
- banks, real estate.

If council has an approved provider list, consider adding these types of companies and removing harmful industries.



Ambitious:

Phase out alcohol and unhealthy food advertising on council-owned or run assets and spaces

Creating ways for community and council to work together on shared goals is key to bringing healthy policy to life.

To complete this action, it is assumed councils will already have a healthy advertising policy in place, such as the one described in '[Step up: Implement a healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events](#)', plus phasing-out alcohol and unhealthy food and drink advertising on council-owned and operated public spaces such as sporting grounds and council land. When a council-owned facility is leased, licensed or hired, the applicant tenant must abide by conditions set by the council in regard to alcohol and unhealthy food and drink advertising.

This would not include advertising at the point-of-sale such as the immediate service area at canteens or a bar.



How-to guide to:

Phase out alcohol and unhealthy food advertising on council-owned or run assets and spaces

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include sport and recreation, public health, family and youth services, local laws, facilities and asset, and festivals and events. Seek in-principle support from leaders of relevant teams.

Consult widely with relevant business units within council and with trusted partners to come up with an approach that will work.



Assess

Determine your policy scope

Identify the council-owned facilities or spaces where council has sufficient ownership or oversight to implement the changes. This could include a public space that is owned or controlled by the council but has private operators who own the infrastructure where advertising may appear (e.g. permanent signage at a football ground). Where council is unable to renegotiate private infrastructure arrangements, these may need to be excluded from scope.

Some variations in these agreement types include:

- council owns the building or facility and oversees operation of all services
- council owns the building or facility and contracts another organisation to operate services
- contracted organisations may subcontract additional suppliers to operate certain aspects of the services (e.g. onsite food retail and/or catering, allied health services, sessional education)
- council owns the building/facility and leases to different tenants seasonally (e.g. summer and winter sports clubs)
- council participates on the management committee of crown assets or manages other non- council-owned assets.

Where council does have control of the advertising infrastructure and space, there may be existing agreements with private companies, or organisations who are leasing the spaces may have such arrangements. These may need to be honoured until those agreements expire.

As council will have already endorsed a healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events it may make most sense to apply the same approach in terms of the policy scope outlined at [Figure 4: Defining harmful industries](#).

Deliver

Develop your decision-making process

In terms of decision-making process (principles, risk-based), it makes sense to apply the same approach as 'The step up: Implement a healthy sponsorship for council-run events'.

Write and implement the policy

Draft your healthy sponsorship policy. Consider the timeframe required to fully phase out harmful advertising at council-owned and operated spaces. Progress the approval and implementation of the policy in line with the usual processes.

Recommended resources

[Sample policy relating to alcohol advertising on council-owned or leased land that can be adapted to also include unhealthy food](#)

Case study: [City of Mandurah \(Western Australia\) banned outdoor advertising for unhealthy products in the areas it controls](#)

Impact stream: *Enabling healthy partnerships*

To complete the impact stream 'Enabling healthy partnerships', councils will select from:

Quick win: *Build awareness of healthy partnerships*

Step up: *Develop a fresh food incentive program*

Step up: *Create a standard for healthy partnerships to protect a healthy first 2,000 days*

Step up: *Support healthy partnerships through community grants programs*

Ambitious: *Create healthy partnerships through grants – a more comprehensive approach*

This impact stream requires councils to undertake action to guide community organisations and grant applicants toward healthier partnerships such as sponsorship deals, contracts and donations.

Brands and companies who profit from products that harm health and wellbeing, including alcohol and unhealthy food ('harmful industries'), often seek partnerships with community organisations, groups, clubs and venues.

Processed food companies also market their unnecessary food products towards families of young children, often including misleading messages about the necessity or purported health benefits of their products. These industries also form relationships with family-oriented information providers to create a health halo for their products.

This allows them to promote harmful products to children and young people and drive sales through proven marketing tactics such as sponsorship, advertising and product giveaways. And it works – research has shown that the marketing of these products influences people's consumption, attitudes and behaviours.

It also makes these harmful brands and products much more recognisable across the community.

As leaders in the community, councils are reasonably expected to partner only with organisations committed to protecting the health of young children and families. Through a policy approach, councils can set a higher standard and create an environment where community organisations and grant applicants seek healthier partnerships, increasing local demand for healthy options in all areas of life.

It is also important for councils to be able to assess and manage the risks that grant recipient partnerships with harmful industries pose in terms of undermining council obligations under the [Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008](#) to improve and promote public health and wellbeing within the municipal district.

Intended outcomes

Councils undertaking this impact stream can expect to:

- set a standard for the type of partnerships and relationships council and community organisations should accept
- make community organisations and grant applicants more aware of the negative attitude towards, and harms caused by, harmful industry partnerships in the community
- ensure that community organisations and grant applicants prioritise healthy partnerships over harmful industry partnerships
- develop and start to implement a harmful industry funding policy that allows council to take into account applicant partnerships with harmful industries when assessing community grant applications or all grant applications across council.

Minimum deliverables

To complete the impact stream 'Enabling healthy partnerships', councils will have:

- identified and outlined the scope, key settings/space, partners and audience to address through the relevant implementation action
- engaged with, and received endorsement from, the relevant council and community leaders who oversee the identified settings/space or partners to complete the implementation action (e.g. the leader participates in the communication effort or the council endorses the relevant policy/ies)
- prioritised change in settings, spaces or policy that centre around children and young people
- demonstrated succession planning outlining how the activity will contribute to the outcomes of current and future Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans.





Quick win: *Build awareness of healthy partnerships*

Local community activities and facilities support people to be active, healthy and socially connected.

Yet many community organisations, groups, clubs and venues providing these activities have partnerships with alcohol and unhealthy food industries. Councils can play a role in supporting these community organisations, groups, clubs and venues to strengthen the health and wellbeing of their members, participants and community by prioritising healthy partnerships.

This action builds awareness among community partners such as sports clubs, arts and cultural organisations, and community venues about the benefits of not engaging in alcohol and unhealthy food industry partnerships and the resources available to them to support this.



How-to guide to:

Build awareness of healthy partnerships

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include sport and recreation, community development, family and youth services, economic development, and festivals and events.



Plan

Identify a target sector

Focus your awareness-building on a particular sector within the local community. Identify a sector that has existing harmful industry partnerships in the community or prioritise a sector that has strong reach within the community or which exposes children and young people or those most vulnerable to harms.

For example:

- sports clubs
- arts and cultural facilities (e.g. galleries)
- community groups and clubs (e.g. youth groups)
- kindergartens and early childhood programs.



Develop an engagement and communication plan

Plan how to best engage and communicate with the identified sector. Consider the sector's current attitudes towards harmful industry partnerships. Tailor the initial communications accordingly, and work with any council teams or staff with an existing relationship with the sector.

What mechanisms are already available to communicate with that sector and how can you leverage these? Where there are few existing mechanisms, consider other strategies and incentives to engage clubs and community groups from the sector.

We recommend using at least 2 approaches to ensure good reach:

- publish an article in your newsletters or send emails to the sector
- host a webinar
- dedicate time during one of your scheduled meetings with the sector
- develop a resource page on your council website
- promote content via your council's social media channels.

Develop or adapt content

Develop new material or adapt existing content to communicate to the sector via the channels identified in the engagement and communication plan.

Aim to:

- raise awareness about harms and community attitudes
- show links between harmful industry advertising/promotion and harm to children and young people
- share existing research to show that the Victorian community generally has negative attitudes towards harmful industry partnerships
- undertake and share locally relevant research or polls on community attitudes or concerns about harmful industry partnerships.

Recommended resources

- Sample newsletter item ([see the Templates section provided in this module](#))
- Evidence summary – the prevalence, impact and community perceptions of alcohol and unhealthy food partnerships ([see Topic in focus](#))
- [VicHealth's position on healthy sport sponsorship](#)

Enhance and encourage partnerships with non-harmful industries

Encourage sectors to seek alternative partnerships from companies that do not seek to profit from products that are harmful to health and wellbeing. These include:

- health services (e.g. physiotherapy, dental services or allied health providers)
- sport, fitness or recreation providers
- sport, homeware, furniture or clothing retailers

local businesses such as real estate agents, accounting/legal firms, gardening supplies or trades
Useful resources and case studies:

- [Healthy Sports Reward initiative](#)
- [VicHealth's position on healthy sport sponsorship](#)
- [VicSport Promoting Healthy Eating](#)



Step up: *Develop a fresh food incentive program*

The food children are exposed to and eat from an early age influences their future eating habits and their overall health and wellbeing for life. A balanced, varied and nutritious diet with plenty of vegetables and fruit is vital for energy, brain function, growth and development.

Local grocers, cooperatives and other produce sellers play a vital role in creating healthy and sustainable food systems. This 'step up' action can help shape the earliest experiences children have with food, connecting them more closely with locally produced foods and ensuring there is availability of fresh foods to eat.

In this action, councils will establish an incentive program to engage local grocers or other suitable produce sellers to provide discounted fresh produce appropriate for young children to community venues and spaces they often visit.

These incentives could include:

- discounts on applicable licences
- free advertising and promotional opportunities through council channels
- council-subsidised vouchers
- participation in a council endorsement or accreditation program.

In this action, councils will celebrate local grocers and acknowledge their key role in the provision of fresh, healthy food to young children, with a view to expanding markets for local fresh foods and increasing residents' ability to purchase these products.

The beneficial effects of incentive programs may be particularly meaningful when these programs have a specific focus on children, encouraging the youngest community members to actively participate in food selection and preparation.

Key terms

'Local grocers' is used in this module to generally refer to local grocers, food cooperatives or other produce sellers. In this action, consider which of this group could potentially participate in line with any relevant council policies.

Quick note

This action is designed to increase access for young children to whole, healthy, suitable foods as part of their daily lives while also strengthening positive local partnerships in the community.

Vegetables and fruit have great nutritional value in all their forms – frozen, dried or otherwise. It may be valuable to reiterate this message and celebrate vegetables and fruit in all their forms as part of your program design.



How-to guide to:

Develop a fresh food incentive program

Involve young children and families

Key people to involve in this incentive program are local children and their families. As well as being the beneficiary of the supply of fresh, healthy foods, children and families can be involved in promoting, coordinating and supporting the program.

Involve council

Councils should contact venues in the local area that cater for or have specific programs designed for young children to ask them to be involved in the provision of fresh foods, and to promote the benefits to children and families.

Seek the commitment and involvement of key people in these venues, including directors and staff.

Involve local grocers

Developing robust relationships with local grocers or other suitable food suppliers is the cornerstone of this 'step up' action. It is vital to discover what council can do to support these partners and consider how to translate their needs, where appropriate, into meaningful incentives as part of an overarching goal of strengthening a local, healthy and sustainable food system.

Open communication will help grocers and other food suppliers understand what food and/or drinks to supply to a venue. If the supplier provides a mixture of food types beyond vegetables and fruit, you may wish to provide a brief overview of the Healthy Choices Guidelines or similar resources.



Plan

Form a working group that brings together council staff or partners from diverse areas. The working group may need to work through or provide guidance on food safety issues, procurement, suitable foods for young children, and suitable partnership and incentive arrangements for council. This action could also be tasked to a group working on other food system initiatives.

With your working group, consider what types of food you would be seeking to have donated. These could be snack-sized fruits and vegetables to eat on the go, or directly connecting misshapen foods to venues that prepare snacks or meals for young children. This component might change over time as you engage grocers and venues and see what's possible. Keep in mind the goal of having young children connecting with and experiencing fresh, healthy food.

Make a contact list of values-aligned grocers, food cooperatives or other fresh food suppliers that are committed to sustainable and healthy food supply. Consider grocers who supply culturally suitable produce, are located near key facilities or demonstrate other attributes that would make them a suitable partner for council.

Consider initially scoping the action by contacting all local grocers to provide them with background to the action and surveying for information on their:

- approach to sustainability
- understanding of suitable foods for young children
- thoughts on potential incentives

Create a contact list the grocers can join and keep them informed and involved.

Hot tip!

Nourish Network Healthy Supermarkets Community of Practice

Nourish Network is a multi-sector collective working to increase demand, availability and access to healthy and sustainable food.

Council staff wanting to hear how other local government and community health staff in Australia and New Zealand have built effective relationships with food/supermarket co-operatives can consider joining the [Healthy Supermarkets Community of Practice](#).

Identify priority venues to be fresh food recipients

This action is designed to focus particularly on young children when they are out and about in their community. Consider venues or spaces in the local area that particularly appeal to young children and their families. This might include places like libraries, neighbourhood houses, or community centres or sport and recreation centres that have sections or activities for young children. The types of venues you prioritise might also guide the types of produce you are seeking.

Assess

Explore existing council incentive schemes with local retailers and determine whether these could be extended or modified to facilitate the provision of fresh foods to appropriate venues for a discounted price or free.

Assess the location of local grocers and consider prioritising relationships with those nearby venues catering for young children. Build formal program partnerships between the working group, grocers and venues to work towards the provision of fresh foods for young children.

Design

Develop a program of incentives benefiting local grocers that maintains a focus on the provision of fresh foods to young children, resulting in increased availability of healthy food, and supporting parents to provide different fruit and vegetables to their children.

Some examples of fresh food incentives are:

- discounts on applicable licences for grocers that provide discounted or no-cost fresh foods to venues catering for young children
- free advertising and promotional opportunities in marketing collateral for local grocers who provide discounted or no cost fresh foods to venues catering for young children. Social marketing can be integral to raising community awareness of local grocers and can include anything from fliers, articles and advertisements through the local media and newsletters, and billboards on council premises
- waiver of stallholder fees at council-managed farmers' markets for local grocers that contribute discounted or no-cost fresh foods to venues catering for young children
- council-subsidised vouchers distributed at venues catering for young children and their families to purchase fresh foods at local grocers.

Hot tip!

Consider the creation of a council endorsement or accreditation program for local grocers and food/supermarket cooperatives that provide fresh foods for young children to venues.

These local suppliers – providing discounted or no-cost fresh foods to venues catering for young people and families – could be formally recognised as 'Fresh food for <community name or your own program title>' services.

These services could be recognised with incentives, such as a council Fresh Food for <community> signs, a Fresh Food <community name> certificate and e-badge to add to their website and newsletters, as well as council support, resources and information.

Deliver

The delivery of this incentive program should also focus on practical steps to ensure availability of fresh foods in both retail settings and venues frequented by children and families. Delivery should also cover logistical considerations, including how fresh food will be delivered.

Establish partnerships with local grocery stores and food/supermarket cooperatives

- Establish partnerships with local grocers.
- Emphasise your common purpose: promoting availability of fresh food and the provision of healthy food options that can be accessed by children and their parents.
- Provide some context on the program and benefits for partners.

Communicate with the community and families of young children attending venues where the fresh foods are available

- Ensure staff at participating venues promote the fresh foods available.
- Let families know about the program. Use social media and newsletter announcements and include messaging on the importance of young children trying and experiencing different fresh foods.
- Raise awareness of the program locally, in settings frequented by families.

Distribute the fresh food

- Develop a system within the venues, or with the local grocers, that determines who can collect or deliver the fresh foods at agreed intervals.
- Decide where the fresh foods will be located in a venue. The food should be available where it is easy to access for young children and their families. It may be useful to locate the fresh foods in wet areas so children can wash their hands before eating.
- Consider including free education resources on food budgeting, the importance of fresh foods, and practical steps to preparing healthy options for little people.

Hot tip!

Join up with local programs to promote consistent messages on healthy foods for young children such as the [INFANT program](#), which provides evidence-informed advice and tips to support parents to 'colour every meal with veg and fruit' as one of 7 key messages on healthy eating and active play.

Quick note

If fresh foods are being supplied for free by grocers and food or supermarket cooperatives for young children, consider supervision and presentation – noting that every child's ability to self-feed is different.

In situations where healthy and fresh foods are provided free of charge for young children and their families to take, a system for distributing or disposing thoughtfully of leftover produce will need to be agreed. This should be developed to minimise food waste.

Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate impact and reach

It is important to monitor the program. Consider these options for monitoring and evaluating your program:

- Create avenues to deliver real-time feedback; for example, ask participating local grocers to complete a regular pulse survey.
- It may be possible to monitor consumption of the fresh foods by doing a stock inventory prior to each new delivery at venues, noting when leftovers either increase or diminish, or when a new delivery is required sooner than anticipated.
- If subsidised vouchers or discount codes are among the incentives, local grocers and food/supermarket cooperatives can report on how many of these were then used at the point of sale. This data will demonstrate if the provision of fresh foods has converted to increased patronage of local food suppliers.

Schedule periodic reviews and use the insights captured to report back to the community on positive outcomes and to continuously improve and refresh the program to help participants stay interested.

Recommended resources

- [Royal Children's Hospital – Guide to first foods](#)
- [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#)
- [Healthy Supermarkets Community of Practice](#)
- [INFANT program](#)





Step up:

Create a standard for healthy partnerships to protect a healthy first 2,000 days

Councils can lead the way in healthy partnerships by developing guiding criteria for the types of local partners they will prioritise working with, using agreed standards that are expected to be met, and focusing on protecting a healthy first 2,000 days for young children.

Building partnerships takes time and commitment. Successful local partnerships are built on foundations of common goals and actions, with each partner willing to recognise the expertise of the others involved.

By creating a standard for healthy partnerships, councils ensure local collaborations are well managed, effective and maintain a central focus on preserving and enhancing a healthy start to life for young children.

The standard for creating healthy partnerships will set a common language for all partners to measure and evaluate performance, which can be implemented and used consistently so that materials, products, processes and services are consistent with protecting a healthy first 2,000 days for children.

This action should recognise the importance of involving families and children in any decisions on service provision or programs that aim to benefit them.

Quick note

A standard is intended as a living document and should be periodically reviewed and revised based on emerging research, evidence and practitioner experiences. It can provide guidelines and set a policy mandate for people in council who work in procurement, community partnerships or who source donations about the types of organisations that contribute to the health and wellbeing goals of the community.



How-to guide to:

Create a standard for healthy partnerships to protect a healthy first 2,000 days

Involve young children and families

The development of a partnership standard focusing on protecting a healthy first 2,000 days should involve children and their families and their families. This may be done by using surveys – distributed through facilities catering for young children and their families – to determine expectations that may be met by implementation of the standard. These may include specific questions about what businesses or industries families would not want to be involved in partnerships, or more open-ended questions relating to healthy food and preferences.

To create a robust standard, councils should engage with local families to find out about barriers and potential enablers to them participating in council-managed programs aimed at improving the health of young children.

To avoid overwhelming families with more surveys or feedback requests, council may consider integrating questions in already established engagement channels to identify these barriers or enablers. These may be as simple as “What prevents your family from taking part in council-led health programs?” or “What would encourage you to participate in a council program aimed at supporting the health of young children?”

Use networks, including engaging with parent groups, such as via local [INFANT programs](#) or parent groups connected with maternal and child health services.

Involve council and community

The whole of council should have buy-in and commitment to creating and complying with standards for healthy partnerships to protect children’s health in their first 2,000 days.

Councils should consult with representatives from long-term successful partnerships, and potential partners who can inform the standard.

As standards are typically created or reviewed by experts in the relevant field, it may be useful to form a technical committee including council leadership and staff with relevant expertise, early childhood services, families of young children, and relevant health promotion organisations or coalitions to oversee the creation of the standard.





Plan

The first step in creating the standard will be to gather information about what kind of partnership standards should apply, and create a process for how councils or the technical committee will decide what to include.

This action requires a thoughtful communications plan to achieve objectives, including:

- engaging leadership support and championing the standard within council
- clearly outlining the rationale and purpose of the standard to those who will employ it in their work
- providing supportive language that can be used to respond to partnership and relationship requests that don't meet the standard.

Here are some considerations when developing agreed standards for partnerships:

- Is there agreement on, and a clear description of, what is considered a relationship or partnership?
- What is the rationale for the standard, and can you provide an outline of what guidance it provides?
- What criteria will the standard use to define partnerships that are unhealthy or inconsistent with protecting a healthy first 2,000 days for children, and partnerships that promote a healthy first 2,000 days to prioritise?

- Don't form partnerships or relationships with businesses promoting or supplying unhealthy products to young children and families. This might include businesses offering harmful 'freebies' ('toddler' milks/flavoured milk samples) that promote or capitalise on parents and carers drinking alcohol (e.g. pubs with family rooms) or that target young children with unhealthy product deals (e.g. free ice cream for kids).
- Do form relationships with active play spaces, education and arts spaces, social enterprises and culturally friendly places.
- The partnering organisation must plan and designs its programs and services to meet community health needs based on protecting healthy first 2,000 days.
- The partnering organisation must, with council support, empower and build capacity within the community to promote and protect the health of young children and their families.

Quick note

Why are toddler milks not needed?

Infants under 12 months who are unable to be breastfed need specially developed infant formulas, which are fortified and nutritionally adequate – plain cow's milk is not appropriate. But after 12 months of age, plain cow's milk is appropriate along with regular family foods and breastfeeding. Formulas are no longer needed after 12 months.

Manufacturers use sophisticated marketing and claims to try to lure Australian families into believing 'toddler milk' products are 'essential' for their child's health.¹¹

[See VicHealth's statement on why toddler milks are not needed.](#)

10. <https://www.phaa.net.au/documents/item/1280>

Design

As part of the planning process the nominated technical committee should conduct preliminary research and create a draft outline of the new standard. The committee should review other council policies, strategies and contracts to ensure they are aligned.

Recommended resources

Councils can leverage [The Parents' Voice](#) partnership to support the creation of the standard. The Parents' Voice provides a platform for parents, grandparents and carers across Australia to express their opinions and advocate for improved children's food and physical activity environments.

As well as assisting parents to advocate for improvements at a local, state and national level in their children's schools, homes and outdoor environments, The Parents' Voice also acts as an information disseminator, breaking news and running campaigns on various health promotion initiatives.

Deliver

When a draft standard is developed, it may be useful for the technical committee to discuss and interrogate a standard that can be used for broader council and community consultation.

Council can decide the scope of consultation on the draft standard. It may be useful to publish the draft standard online and invite feedback from interested parties, using a template to ensure feedback is focused on the aim of protecting the health of children in their first 2,000 days.

Following the public review, the technical committee can review feedback and incorporate any amendments. This standard will now be ready for approval and implementation.

The standard should be published online and supported by a communications and stakeholder engagement plan to socialise its content, gain support from across council, and ensure it is applied in practice in deciding on council partnerships.

Review and embed

Monitor and evaluate impact and reach

The standard should be reviewed regularly to ensure it is clear, comprehensive and current.

To assist in reviewing the standard, it is helpful to:

- agree on a nominated time frame and cycle for standard review
- seek input from experts, including families of young children and key partners
- examine the adherence of partnerships to the standard. Are there any consistent issues that may indicate a need to revise the standard?
- consider if the standard's intent and language remain current.

Consider using a survey to investigate the experiences of partner organisations in meeting the requirements of the standard.

The survey could identify:

- whether any requirements of the standard are causing particular challenges or confusion for partners
- which actions required in the standard are the easiest to implement or demonstrate
- preferred options for future tools and resources to support partners.

Quick note

If the creation of the standard is methodical and engages appropriately with intended stakeholders, it is likely that revisions will be minor. If the review determines a need to overhaul the standard, it will be necessary to return to the planning and approval processes outlined in this document.

Embed

To successfully embed the standard for partnerships to protect a healthy first 2,000 days, prospective partners must fully understand and endorse the requirements outlined in the standard.

If embedded effectively, the standard will be a practical tool to support all partnership participants to work together to protect and promote healthy environments for young children and their families.

In embedding the standard, council can implement practical steps with partner organisations including:

- seeking agreement to use the standard from all those involved in the process
- nominating a key person to lead on the use of the standard
- prioritising the standard to reflect the purpose of the engagement and experience of community partners and agencies.

Recommended resources

The [VicHealth Partnerships analysis tool](#) helps organisations to better understand the reasons for partnering, reflect on the partnership and identify ways to strengthen partnerships. Wherever possible, member organisations should complete activities as a group.

[Standards Australia](#), an independent, non-government, not-for-profit standards organisation, has information available online that can help guide the process for developing a robust standard.





Step up: *Support healthy partnerships through community grants programs*

Harmful industries are prevalent across many of the sectors councils work with including sports, arts and culture. Councils risk having their health promotion efforts undermined when partners align with harmful industries that simultaneously promote harmful products, boosting and normalising their consumption in the community.

This action involves seeking declarations from applicants about partnerships they hold with the alcohol or unhealthy food industry that result in the promotion of harmful products to children and young people, when running community grant programs. This will allow council to assess and manage the risks that grant recipient partnerships with harmful industries pose in terms of undermining council obligations under the [Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008](#).

The process of accepting declarations will also support applicants to become more aware of the risks involved when partnering with harmful industries. They may consider such partnerships more carefully and prioritise healthier partnerships. Depending on how the policy is implemented, this can be done without eliminating applicants with existing harmful industry partnerships.



How-to guide to:

Support healthy partnerships through community grants programs

The policy development process will vary widely depending on your council's internal procedures. This how-to guide focuses on the considerations for council in determining the policy scope to apply to the community grants process.

Involving people

Council teams to involve in this action include community development and grants, family and youth services, economic development, festivals and events, those who have responsibility for procurement and risk, and trusted partners.

Below are some key considerations when developing your harmful industry funding policy.

What grants will the policy cover?

Options include:

- All community grants
- Apply a financial threshold (e.g. policy only applies to grants over a certain amount, for example, \$10,000)
- Policy covers only certain types of grants (e.g. health promotion grants).

What relationships do applicants need to declare?

Define 'partnerships' under this policy by articulating:

- the timeframe of relationships to be considered (e.g. current and planned partnerships only, past 12-months partnerships, past 5-year partnerships)
- whether the policy applies only to organisational partnerships or if it extends to personal relationships (e.g. applying organisation has a volunteer who also works for an alcohol company)
- if retail partnerships are excluded, recognising that many of the applying organisations will sell alcohol products, food and sugary drinks at venues or events including vending machines.

How will the council assess declarations?

Options include:

- black-and-white (i.e. assess if there is a partnership or no partnership)
- principles-based (i.e. assess the level of risk based on certain principles).

See the [VicHealth harmful industry relationship funding and procurement policy](#) for examples.

How will assessment of the declaration impact which grants council will fund?

Options include:

- Eliminate applicants if they have any high-risk harmful industry partnership. Given the prevalence of harmful industry partnerships among community partners, this approach may only be feasible if you have a narrower definition of harmful industries (e.g. chain food businesses).
- Prioritise applicants who do not have any high-risk partnership and/or downweigh applicants with any high-risk harmful industry partnerships.

Recommended resources

[VicHealth harmful industry relationship funding and procurement policy](#)

[VicHealth harmful industry relationships declaration form](#)

Healthway Co-sponsorship [Policy](#) and [Process](#)

South Metro Junior Football League [Healthy Sponsorships Policy Guidelines](#)



Ambitious:

Create healthy partnerships through grants – a more comprehensive approach

A comprehensive approach to fostering healthy partnerships right across council funding is a strong statement that council is putting people’s health and wellbeing first.

This action involves seeking declarations from applicants about relationships they have with the alcohol and unhealthy food industry that result in the advertising and promotion of unhealthy and harmful products to children and young people when running all council grant programs.



How-to guide to:

Create healthy partnerships through grants – a more comprehensive approach

See ‘The step up: Support healthy partnerships through community grants programs’ for guidance on how to develop a harmful industry funding policy. Take each of the key considerations into account.

To then build on your harmful industry funding policy, councils should extend the policy from community grants to also include council grants. Outlined below are some extra considerations to guide the process of extending the policy to all council grants.

Determine if there will be different considerations based on the type of grant

Options include:

- the policy applies the same way across all types of council grants
- different considerations (e.g. criteria or thresholds) apply to different types of grants (e.g. business, community).

For example, VicHealth considers the following types of funding differently under its policy:

1. Funding for health promotion purposes (e.g. health promotion projects, research)
2. Services to support VicHealth’s operating environment (e.g. IT, legal, systems)

Where funding is for health promotion purposes, VicHealth will eliminate applicants with a current, planned or past 5-year tobacco industry partnership. We would also consider any food, alcohol and gambling partnerships more high risk.

Where funding is for supporting VicHealth’s operating environment, VicHealth will consider applicants with a current, planned or past 5-year tobacco industry partnership. We may also consider any food, alcohol and gambling partnerships lower risk.

See the [VicHealth harmful industry relationship funding and procurement policy](#) for further details.



Topic in focus:

Guiding principles for developing better food systems

The starting point for local governments engaging with communities about food systems is the principles underpinning the Local Government Act 2020, described as [‘Moving from a prescriptive to a principles-based approach’](#).

The Act stipulates 5 key principles according to which local governments should operate, namely:

1. Community engagement – ensure that all Victorians have the opportunity to engage with their council on the future of their community.
2. Strategic planning – ensure that communities are involved in strategic planning and decision-making.
3. Financial management – undertake responsible spending and investment that ensures financial, social and environmental sustainability.
4. Public transparency – strive for openness, accountability and honesty. These are essential to build high levels of accountability and trust among citizens and enable fully informed engagement in the democratic process.
5. Service performance – ensure that councils deliver services to the community that are equitable, accessible, good value and meet the needs of their diverse communities.

All of these principles are directly relevant to local government actions and policy development in healthy, sustainable and fair food systems.

Where better food systems are being led by council, Collective Impact, Asset Based Community Development and Appreciative Inquiry methodologies provide ways for councils to facilitate co-design processes with the community for food system policy and program development and delivery.

Collective Impact frameworks build on local governments’ strengths in building connections between stakeholders. They also drive collaboration between stakeholders from talk into actions that are mutually aligned around a shared agenda and have measures to track progress. Used in collaboration with Collective Impact frameworks, Asset Based Community Development seeks to recognise and build upon a community’s unique set of skills and capacities and channel them for community development. In a similar vein, Appreciative Inquiry is a strategic method of evaluation that does not take deficits and problems as its starting point, focusing instead on enhancing the strengths of the community.

Recommended resources

Find out more about these methodologies to increase your capacity to develop the local food system with and for your local community:

[Collective Impact](#)

[Asset Based Community Development](#)

[Appreciative Inquiry](#)



Topic in focus:

Local government policy and program approaches to food security

The term food security can have many different meanings. Food security is talked about in local, national and global contexts. In relation to the Healthy Food Connect resource, food security is referred to as: consistent and equitable access (availability, affordability) to healthy, culturally appropriate foods (including fruit and vegetables) for all communities.

Food insecurity is a significant public health issue. When people are food insecure, they are more likely to have poor mental and physical health, diminished learning ability, reduced capacity to work and increased risk of chronic disease.¹²

Food insecurity negatively impacts young people in the short and long-term affecting their academic ability and contributing to health issues including obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

Although emergency food relief (e.g. redistributed food, food banks and soup kitchens) is critical in addressing hunger, it does not target the underlying causes of food insecurity, such as lack of financial security and physical access to nutritious food. Similarly, food programs such as community gardens can raise awareness and empower people to make healthier food choices, but in isolation, they do not guarantee food security in the longer term.¹³

Local government has a statutory function to ensure the public health and wellbeing of the community under the [Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008](#). Local government has various powers across the 4 environments for health to support increasing the supply of healthy foods and decreasing the supply of unhealthy foods across the municipality.¹² This may involve simple regulatory amendments that facilitate roadside/farm gate sales or more complex changes such as applying contractual conditions around healthy food and drink provision through retail outlets in public facilities. By supporting, facilitating and leading initiatives, local planning can be influential in improving healthy food access as shown in Figure 5.¹⁴

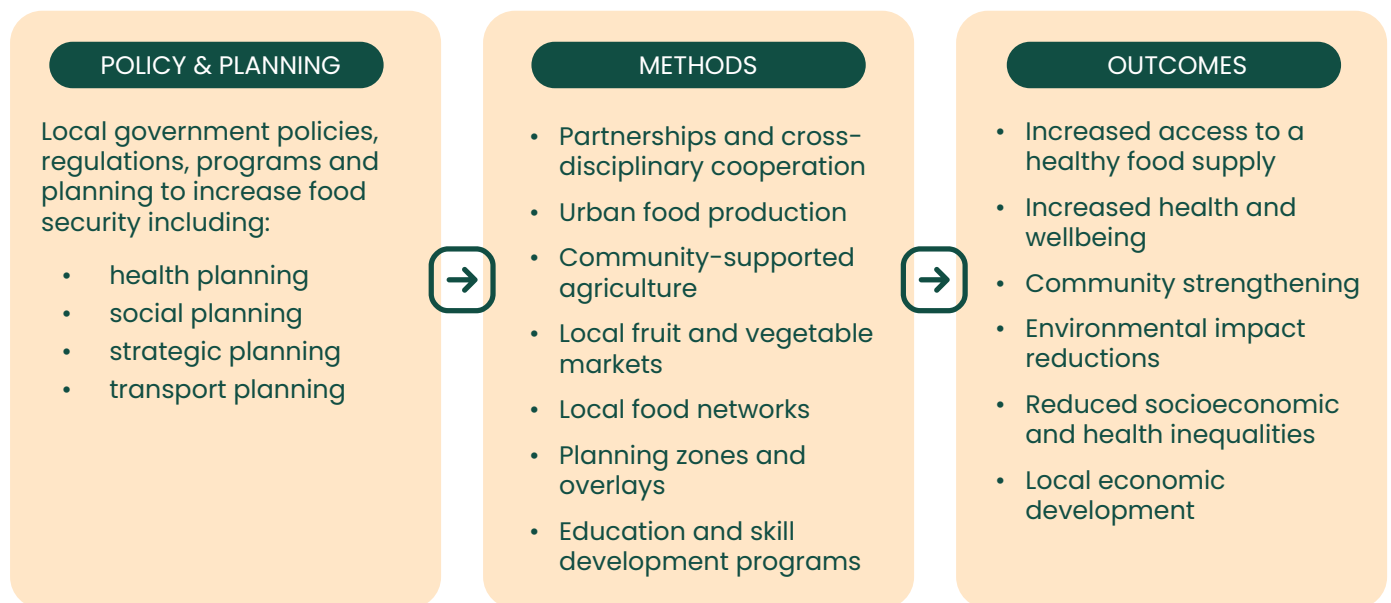


FIGURE 5: Increased community food availability and access through local government policy and planning

11. Rosier K. Food insecurity in Australia: What is it, who experiences it and how can child and family services support families experiencing it? 2011. Australian Institute of Family Studies.

12. The Right to Food Coalition. Submission to Moreland City Council on the Moreland Food System Strategy. 2017.

13. Healthy Food Connect. Department of Health 2014.

Community food security – consistent and equitable access to healthy, culturally appropriate food – has many determinants and sits within a broader regional, state, national and global food system.

Local government has limited power to address all of the determinants of healthy eating and it is important to be mindful of the additional factors that local government may find more challenging to influence. These include rising food, water and fuel costs.

Legislative powers of local government are shaped by state legislation and state planning frameworks, and the interaction between them is complex.¹⁵

Depending on the information you collect as part of your local food needs assessment and the key themes that emerge during the consultation and engagement steps of 'Ambitious: Implement a healthy and sustainable food system strategy' you may consider these examples of how local governments can address food security:

- maintain platforms that direct members of the community to emergency food relief providers in their local area (e.g. [Moreland City Council Food Access and Security](#) webpage)
- provide community transport to get people (particularly the elderly and those with limited mobility) to and from local shops or markets that sell fresh food
- adopt requirements for developers to undertake social or health impact statements that incorporate food access issues before development plans are approved
- consider how development contributions can be used for improving food security, such as investing in new community gardens, food hubs or other food-related infrastructure for the community.

Recommended resources

Consult VicHealth's [Food for All resource sheets and short videos](#) designed to support local governments in advancing a food security agenda.

Learn how [The Community Grocer](#) is increasing social, economic and physical access to fresh food through markets and programs.

Learn how Moreland City Council worked collaboratively with Jesuit Social Services through the [Ecological Justice Hub](#) to provide [food relief during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) and promote community-based waste conversion, composting and seasonal food planting, harvesting and cooking.

14. Healthy Food Connect. Department of Health 2014.



Topic in focus:

Evidence summary – the prevalence, impact and community perceptions of alcohol and unhealthy food partnerships

We all want our children to grow up in an environment surrounded by positive messages about health and wellbeing. However, alcohol and unhealthy food brands often seek partnerships and sponsorship arrangements with community organisations, groups, clubs, venues and events where children and young people socialise, play, learn and create.

This allows brands to promote unhealthy and harmful products to children and young people and drive sales through proven marketing tactics such as vouchers, product giveaways and displaying logos on uniforms and equipment. By bringing awareness to community organisations about the harms caused by alcohol and healthy food sponsorships, we can start to make healthy community sponsorship the norm across Victoria.

Prevalence of the problem

There is extensive research showing that alcohol and unhealthy food sponsorship is prevalent

across community sport in Australia and Victoria.^{16 17 18}

A 2020 audit of 216 Victorian junior community sports clubs showed 37.5% of clubs across all sporting codes accepted at least one unhealthy sponsorship from gambling, alcohol and unhealthy food brands. This was highest for football clubs at 70%. Clubs in lower socioeconomic and regional areas were also more likely to be affiliated with harmful sponsors.¹⁹

Outside sport, many unhealthy food and drink brands have corporate social responsibility arms that provide community grants, often targeted at children and young people.^{20 21} This allows these brands to promote their products to children and young people in other community settings and events.

Marketing through community sponsorships may take many forms, including:

- naming rights of events, competitions or clubs
- branding on uniforms and equipment –

particularly in children's sport

- banners and signage displayed across the facility/ground/stadium
- extensive branding on website, social media and communication materials (e.g. newsletters)
- access to club databases for direct marketing to members
- distribution of branded merchandise, free unhealthy products, vouchers or incentives.

15. Watson W et al. Sponsorship of junior sport development programs in Australia. *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*. 2016. 40(4): p.326-8.

16. Martino F et al. A state-wide audit of unhealthy sponsorship within junior sporting clubs in Victoria, Australia. *Public Health Nutrition*. 2021: p.1-21.

17. Kelly B et al. Food and drink sponsorship of children's sport in Australia: who pays? *Health Promotion International*. 2010. 26(2): p.188-195.

18. Backholer K, Martino F & Zorbas C. Unhealthy sponsorship of Victorian junior community sports. 2021. Unpublished report prepared for VicHealth by the Global Obesity Centre and the Institute for Health Transformation at Deakin University: Melbourne, Victoria.

19. The Coca Cola Foundation. Eligibility criteria for 2021 employee connected grants. n.d. [cited June 2021; Available from: https://ccaf.smartygrants.com.au/s/site/cocacola/files/Eligibility_Criteria_for_2021_Employee_Connected_grants.pdf

20. McDonald's Australia. Macca's in the Community. 2021 [cited June 2021; Available from: <https://mcdonalds.com.au/learn/responsibility/maccas-community/get-sponsored>

Impact of marketing

Marketing tactics work – it’s the reason the unhealthy food and alcohol industry spends billions of dollars on them every year. Children and young people are a target for companies’ marketing tactics because of their own spending ability, their influence on parent spending and because it fosters lifelong brand loyalty.²²

Research shows that the marketing of unhealthy food to children results in them preferring, buying more and eating more unhealthy food.²³ Similarly, exposure to alcohol marketing in teenagers is linked to an earlier onset of drinking for non-drinkers and increased drinking among those already drinking.²⁴

The harms of unhealthy food and alcohol marketing has been shown in sports sponsorship specifically. An Australian study of children participating in community sport has shown that children have a high level of recall of their club’s sport sponsors and a majority reported liking these sponsors.²⁵ Increased drinking in school children has also been linked to sport sponsorship.²⁶

Community perceptions

Australian studies, which have focused on community sport, consistently show the majority of the community have negative attitudes towards harmful sponsorship and support policies to restrict such sponsorship. These attitudes are present across parents of junior club members, adult club members, club officials and the Victorian community at large.^{27 28}

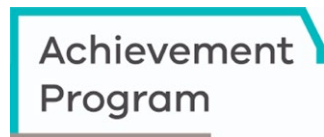
A 2020 representative survey of Victorians found 65% agreed with the statement ‘Community sport should prioritise or opt for healthier sponsors instead of sponsorship by industries who market alcohol, gambling or unhealthy food and sugary drink products’. The level of concern about these sponsorships was shared by both people involved in community sport and those who are not.²⁹

Another 2020 survey of 500 Victorian parents of junior club members found that 66% agreed that they wanted their children’s sports club to restrict alcohol sponsorship and 58% wanted the same for large food and drink company sponsorship.³⁰

21. Story M & French S. Food Advertising and Marketing Directed at Children and Adolescents in the US. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*. 2004. 1(1): p.3.
22. Cairns G, Angus K & Hastings G. The extent, nature and effects of food promotion to children: A review of the evidence to December 2008. 2009. World Health Organization: Geneva, Switzerland.
23. Anderson P et al. Impact of Alcohol Advertising and Media Exposure on Adolescent Alcohol Use: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*. 2009. 44(3): p. 229-243.
24. Kelly B et al. Food company sponsors are kind, generous and cool: (Mis)conceptions of junior sports players. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*. 2011. 8(1): p.95.
25. Brown K. Association Between Alcohol Sports Sponsorship and Consumption: A Systematic Review. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*. 2016. 51(6): p.747-755.
26. Donaldson A & Nicholson M. Attitudes of sports organisation members to junk food sponsorship. *Public Health*. 2020. 185: p.212-217.
27. Kelly B et al. Restricting unhealthy food sponsorship: Attitudes of the sporting community. *Health Policy*. 2012. 104(3): p.288-295.
28. Intuitive Solutions. Sponsorship of community sport by unhealthy industries: Feedback from the Victorian community. 2020. Unpublished report prepared for VicHealth by Intuitive Solutions: Melbourne, Victoria.
29. Backholer K, Martino F & Zorbas C. Unhealthy sponsorship of Victorian junior community sports. 2021. Unpublished report prepared for VicHealth by the Global Obesity Centre and the Institute for Health Transformation at Deakin University: Melbourne, Victoria.

Extra implementation support resources

Achievement Program



The Achievement Program supports Victorian workplaces, schools, early childhood services and community organisations to create healthy places for working, learning and living. Supported by the Victorian Government and delivered by Cancer Council Victoria, the Achievement Program is a free resource that supports health and wellbeing across a range of health areas including healthy eating. It provides support, targets to work towards and free tools and resources such as policy templates and how to guides. The Achievement Program can also acknowledge your healthy eating efforts and offer Victorian Government recognition to help you to celebrate your hard work and achievements.

More support can be found at:
www.achievementprogram.health.vic.gov.au

Healthy Eating Advisory Service



The Healthy Eating Advisory Service (HEAS) supports early childhood services, outside school hours care, schools, workplaces, hospitals, sport and recreation centres, tertiary education and parks to provide healthier foods and drinks in their menus and through catering, food outlets and vending. HEAS can also support food industry, food outlets, caterers, and suppliers.

HEAS can help you:

- take the steps to make healthy changes in your organisation
- understand how to apply government policies and guidelines
- train your cooks, chefs, food service and other key staff
- discover healthier recipes, food ideas and other helpful resources
- provide healthier menus and products.

HEAS is delivered by experienced nutritionists and dietitians at Nutrition Australia Vic Division, with support from the Victorian Government.

More support can be found at:
heas.health.vic.gov.au

INFANT



INFANT is an evidence-based program that shows we can, through supportive education and skills development, positively influence healthy eating and active play behaviours in both parents and their children across the first 5 years of life.

INFANT consists of 4 face-to-face or online group sessions for first-time parents with content reinforced via a mobile app for parents called My Baby Now. These 4 age-appropriate 90-minute sessions are run every 3 months until the infant is 12 months old. INFANT sessions aim to cover the 3 topic areas of nutrition/feeding; active play and limiting sedentary behaviour; and parents own lifestyle behaviours (diet, physical activity and sedentary time).

Traditionally maternal and child health nurses (MCHN) and dietitians facilitated the INFANT group sessions, individually or jointly. Both groups are well placed to facilitate INFANT given their knowledge base and expertise. However, other staff may be relevant to deliver INFANT, including health promotion officers, family support officers, midwives and welfare officers to name a few.

For more information go to: www.infantprogram.org or to get started see: www.infantprogram.org/getting-started/#firststeps

Sustain: The Australian Food Network



Sustain is a national sustainable food systems membership-based organisation, with a growing reputation for thought and practice leadership in urban agriculture, food policy and food system transformation. Sustain works with and alongside government, producers, business and community stakeholders as a local, state and national advocate for the development of healthy, ethical and sustainable food systems. Sustain's mission is to design and build better food systems: better for human health and wellbeing, better for ecological integrity, and fairer for farmers and food workers, realised through food systems events, research, network-building and consultancy services.

In 2021, Sustain launched a Local Government Food Systems Networking Forum. This is a facilitated peer-to-peer network for local government staff working on food system-related areas to share their work, celebrate successes, troubleshoot challenges, learn from each other and access new and specialised research through the network and its research and academic partners.

Councils involved include those that have already developed and are implementing food system strategies, so it provides a valuable structured learning and exchange forum to build confidence and capacity.

For more information go to: sustain.org.au

Vic Kids Eat Well



Vic Kids Eat Well is an exciting statewide movement boosting delicious and healthy food and drink options at venues where kids spend their time. The initiative is open to Victorian schools, sports clubs, community and council-owned facilities and outside school hours care. Organisations are supported by a local health promotion professional to take simple steps, including ditching sugary drinks, boosting healthy food options in canteens and encouraging healthy fundraising and rewards.

Vic Kids Eat Well celebrates progress and offers rewards for every small action (bite) achieved across 4 key action areas:

- Refresh the fridge – give sugary drinks the boot and let water take the spotlight.
- Switch up the snacks – ditch the sweets and offer delicious healthy snacks that give kids the fuel they need.
- Change up the menu – give fruit and veggies a chance to shine.
- Put the 'fun' into fundraising and marketing – add health appeal to meal deals, fundraising activities and sport rewards.

Vic Kids Eat Well is delivered by Cancer Council Victoria's Achievement Program, in partnership with Nutrition Australia's Healthy Eating Advisory Service. The initiative is supported by the Victorian Government and is underpinned by the Victorian Government's [Healthy Choices Guidelines](#), developed to ensure healthy food and drinks are available and promoted in a variety of settings.

For more information go to:
vickidseatwell.health.vic.gov.au



Community of Practice

A Community of Practice is provided to fast-track councils working through the health promotion modules, giving them the opportunity to share with, learn from and support each other through implementation. Together, councils with expert partners and young people will share experiences and insights about the suggested activities within the core modules. They will also look at topics related to the VicHealth Local Government Partnership more broadly and the development and adoption of Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans 2021–25.

Council staff interested in finding out more about participating in the Community of Practice and the VicHealth Local Government Partnership health promotion modules can get in touch with our team at lgp@vichealth.vic.gov.au.



Implementation templates

Here are a number of templates that will help you implement the 'Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities' and 'Enabling healthy partnerships' impact streams.

- Expression of Interest form for a Healthy Rewards program
- Letter/phone script for introducing a Healthy Rewards program
- Healthy Rewards program – communications example
- Healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events
- Harmful Partnerships initiative – communications example



Template

Expression of Interest form for a Healthy Rewards program

[Council name] Healthy Rewards program: Expression of interest

Children and families should be able to enjoy community activities free from the advertising that unhealthy food companies use to promote harmful products.

[Council name] is committed to supporting **[relevant setting, e.g. sporting clubs, arts and cultural settings]** in our community to be places that are active, healthy and socially connected. **[relevant setting, e.g. sporting clubs, arts and cultural settings]**, for children and young people particularly, should be free from unhealthy food and sugary drink sponsorship. That's why **[council name]** is taking a stand to put the health and wellbeing of our children first with the Healthy Rewards program.

Healthy Rewards offers an alternative to the unhealthy food vouchers often presented to **[relevant group, e.g. junior sporting club players, members]**. The vouchers will offer **[free or discounted] [activity relevant to your council's program, e.g. entry to local sports and recreation]** and are a great way to recognise the achievement of **[relevant group, e.g. junior sporting club players, members]** in your club!

To qualify for Healthy Rewards, your group must: **[eligibility criteria, for example:**

- **be a not-for-profit entity**
- **demonstrate that you provide recreation, cultural or arts opportunities for children and young people**
- **provide opportunities within the local government area.]**

Please note that all organisations and clubs who comply with the above criteria are eligible, regardless of any existing sponsorship arrangements. If your organisation or club is interested in receiving Healthy Rewards to give to your junior players, please complete the short expression of interest form **[insert link to form – questions below]** by **[closing date]**.

Healthy Rewards are limited, so be quick to express your interest.

For further information, please contact **[contact name]** at **[number/email]**.

[Signature]

Expression of Interest form for a Healthy Rewards program cont.

The following questions can be adapted and used in an electronic form (e.g. JotForm, Google Form) for organisations/clubs completing an EOI process for the **[Council name]** Healthy Rewards program.

ORGANISATIONS/CLUB INFORMATION

Name of organisation/club:

Address:

Main sport/activity:

Total participants/members:

Number of junior teams/groups:

Number of active junior participants/members:

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of organisation/club representative:

Organisation/club representative phone number:

Organisation/club representative email address:

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Does your organisation/club have any current sponsorship arrangements? (Yes/No) If yes, list and describe your organisation/club's current top 5 sponsors.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Does your organisation/club currently provide vouchers to participants as reward or recognition (**e.g. best in show, player of the match**)? (Yes/No)

If yes, briefly describe the type of voucher/s your club provides and how often they are provided to participants (**e.g. every game/show, once per season**).

(Please limit to 100 words)

Briefly describe how your club will use Healthy Rewards. (Please limit to 100 words)

Thank you! **[contact name]** will be in touch with you shortly.



Template

Letter/phone script for introducing a Healthy Rewards program

[Use this when approaching facilities and organisations about providing vouchers for a Healthy Rewards program.]

Dear **[insert name]**, **[introduce yourself]**

[Council name] is currently developing a new program called Healthy Rewards.

At the moment in **[area]**, we know that **[relevant sector(s), e.g. junior clubs, arts and cultural groups]** offer vouchers for fast food to children as rewards when participating in children's **[relevant Sector(s), e.g. sport, arts and cultural activities]**. We're concerned about this because these vouchers are very common and are a form of advertising used by fast food companies to build brand loyalty among consumers at a young age. They also draw families into their restaurants or encourage them to buy more products, making companies a lot of money at the expense of children's health.

Healthy Rewards offers kids a fun and active alternative to the unhealthy food vouchers. The vouchers offer free or discounted **[activity relevant to your Council's program, e.g. entry to local sports and recreation]** and are a great way to recognise **[relevant group, e.g. junior sporting club players, members]** as well as promote the fantastic activities available for families in our community.

We're looking for organisations/facilities like yours who would be willing to contribute vouchers for free or discounted **[activity relevant to facility/organisation, e.g. entry to local sports and recreation]**.

Some of the benefits for your organisation/facility to contribute are:

- **[let them know if council is able to make a financial contribution or offer a subsidy]**
- acknowledgement of your organisation/facility on council's website and in promotions about the Healthy Rewards program
- exposure of your organisation/facility to children and families, increasing the likelihood of return visits
- **[insert the following statement where you will not be offering vouchers for supervising parents and siblings. Note your council will need to consider the equity of this approach in your area (i.e. even if child has a free voucher, supervising parent may not be able to afford admission)]** financial benefit where accompanying family members to the child receiving a voucher will pay for admission/participation.

We are open to discussing with you how many vouchers you can reasonably provide, or a trial period if needed, to see how well the vouchers are used.

If you're interested in joining Healthy Rewards and teaming up to create a healthier place for our kids to grow, let us know. We'd love to discuss your involvement in this program.

Many thanks,

[insert name]



Template

Healthy Rewards program – communications example

[Council] project halts junk food vouchers in kids' **[insert sector, e.g. sport and arts]**

[Insert sectors, e.g. junior clubs, youth theatre] in **[local government area]** can take part in the Healthy Rewards program and replace vouchers for fast food and takeaway with fun and active options for **[insert arrangements, e.g. free or discounted access to a local pool or tennis court]**.

[Council] is launching a new Healthy Rewards program in a bid to phase out unhealthy food vouchers in kids' **[insert sector, e.g. sport and arts activities]**.

The Healthy Rewards program allows participating **[insert sectors, e.g. junior clubs, youth theatre]** to replace vouchers for fast food and takeaway with healthy and fun activities, like **[insert arrangements, e.g. free or discounted access to a local pool or tennis court]**.

[Insert following paragraph if program covers sporting clubs.] This much-needed program responds to VicHealth and Deakin University research, showing that 2 in 3 parents think kids' sports rewards should be healthy. Among the 500 Victorian parents surveyed, half said their children had received a voucher from a large fast-food company at their sports club, and 42% had received one for a local fast-food outlet.

Rewarding children and young people with vouchers for fast food builds powerful brand associations at a young age. It draws families into fast-food restaurants and encourages them to buy more products, making companies a lot of money at the expense of children's health.

We all want children and young people to grow up **[select all applicable: socialising, playing, learning and creating]** in healthy environments. This is a fantastic opportunity for **[council name]** and **[insert sectors, e.g. junior clubs, youth theatre]** to team up and protect children and young people from advertising, and put the health and wellbeing of children and young people above fast-food company profits.

[If applicable insert relevant quotes or case studies from parents, children, young people, participating organisations and/or leaders within council.]

How to get involved

If your organisation is interested in joining the Healthy Rewards program, please contact **[insert name and details]**.



Template

Healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events

Policy objective

This policy aims to reduce the negative health and social impacts of unhealthy food and alcohol marketing to children and young people by not accepting sponsorships from unhealthy food and alcohol companies for council-run events.

Policy rationale

Council has a responsibility to provide for the health and wellbeing of its municipal community. Children and young people in our community deserve to grow up in an environment that supports their healthy growth and development and protects them from marketing of harmful products.

Children and young people are targets of marketing because of their own spending ability, their influence on parent spending, and because it fosters their lifelong brand loyalty.³¹

Alcohol and unhealthy food brands seek sponsorship arrangements with community events where children and young people socialise, play, learn and create. This allows brands to promote harmful products to children and young people and increase product sales. And it works – research shows that marketing unhealthy food to children results in them preferring, buying more and eating more unhealthy food.³² Similarly, exposure to alcohol marketing in teenagers is linked to an earlier onset of drinking for non-drinkers and increased drinking among those already drinking.³³

This policy will reduce children's and young peoples exposure to harmful products such as unhealthy food and alcohol, and contribute to protecting their health, safety and wellbeing. Furthermore, this policy aligns with the objectives outlined in the **[municipal public health and wellbeing plan/council plan]** to support the health and wellbeing of our community including **[list relevant objectives here, e.g. reduced obesity rates, promoting healthy eating, reduced harm from alcohol, improved mental wellbeing, increased community safety]**.

Policy scope

This policy applies to unhealthy food and alcohol brand/company sponsorship (harmful sponsorship) of **[specify types of events, for example, it may apply to all council-run events (including festivals, exhibitions, markets, music concerts) or only those events that are targeted primarily towards families, young people or children (may not include certain exhibitions or music concerts targeting those aged over 18 years)]**. It does not include vendor retail relationships, for example sale of food or alcohol at events where the vendor could advertise at the point of sale (immediate service area) only.

Sponsorship is where companies support an event financially in exchange for brand exposure and promotion to attendees.

30. Story M & French S. Food Advertising and Marketing Directed at Children and Adolescents in the US. *International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity*. 2004. 1(1), p.3. doi:10.1186/1479-5868-1-3

31. Cairns G, Angus K & Hastings G. The extent, nature and effects of food promotion to children: A review of the evidence to December 2008. 2009. World Health Organization: Geneva, Switzerland.

32. Anderson P, de Bruijn A, Angus, K et al. Impact of Alcohol Advertising and Media Exposure on Adolescent Alcohol Use: A Systematic Review of Longitudinal Studies. *Alcohol and Alcoholism*. 2009. 44(3), 229-243. doi:10.1093/alcalc/agn115

Healthy sponsorship policy for council-run events (continued...)

[Choose from broad or limited definition below or devise your own]

[Example of broad definition]

Council will assess the potential harm of all food and beverage industries seeking to sponsor council events using [insert description of your risk or principles-based approach to decision-making outlined in the 'sponsor' approval process section of the module].

In the case of alcohol, all producers are considered harmful sponsorship, e.g. brands shown on alcohol products, brewers, wineries, alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise), retailers (bottle shops) and on-premise providers (pubs, clubs).

[Example of limited definition]

Harmful sponsorship is defined as marketing activities by food, beverage and alcohol industries associated with the most harm and whose sole or predominant activity is the sale of alcohol or unhealthy food and drink. This includes: [include from list or determine own]

- alcohol producers (brands that produce alcohol products), alcohol industry-funded foundations (Drinkwise) and retailers (bottle shops). This would not include on-premise providers (pubs, clubs) or broader retailers who also sell alcohol (supermarket chains)
- all types of confectionery (including lollies and chocolate), processed food brands (cereals) and sugar-sweetened drink (including soft drinks, sports drinks, fruit drinks with less than 99% fruit, cordials and energy drinks) brands and fast-food/chain food businesses⁴
- This does not include local businesses (such as a pizza shop).

Policy application

[Outline your council's administrative process for assessing and approving sponsors, including the key decision-makers.]

[If council is using a limited definition of harmful sponsorship in the policy scope] Where potential sponsors meet the definition of a harmful sponsor (as defined in the policy scope), council will not enter into a sponsorship arrangement with them.

[If council is using a broad definition of harmful sponsorship in the policy scope] Where potential sponsors meet the definition of harmful sponsorship, the council's risk assessment is applied and council will not enter into a sponsorship arrangement with a high-risk sponsor.

[Outline if there are other types of sponsorships that council will proactively seek, which may include a focus on healthy, local, ethical or other business types.]



Template

Harmful Partnerships initiative – communications example

[3] things [insert sector, e.g. sporting clubs] can do to improve the health of your [community/members]

We all want children and young people in **[name of area]** community to grow up in an environment that supports their health and development and protects them from harmful products. However, alcohol and unhealthy food brands often seek sponsorships with **[insert sector, e.g. sporting clubs]** where children and young people **[select all applicable: socialise, play, learn and create]**.

This allows brands to promote harmful products to children and young people and drive sales through proven marketing tactics such as vouchers, product giveaways and displaying logos on uniforms and equipment **[or add/remove marketing tactics as applicable to your chosen sector]**. And it works – research shows that marketing these products results in children and young people eating more unhealthy food and drinking more alcohol products. It also makes these harmful brands and products much more recognisable across the community.

What's more, communities want their local events to be free from unhealthy food and alcohol sponsors. A 2020 study of Victorian parents of junior sport club members showed 63% prefer that sporting clubs are only affiliated with sponsorship that aligns with good health³⁴ **[or insert community polling data on attitudes towards unhealthy food and alcohol sponsorship if available]**.

Your **[organisation/club/venue]** can set a higher standard and show your **[community/members]** that you stand to protect their health, safety and wellbeing by limiting sponsorship arrangements with unhealthy food and alcohol brands. Below are 3 ways you can get started.

Top tips [remove those not applicable]

1. Swap to healthy rewards

Swap out participation or achievement rewards from harmful brands (e.g. unhealthy food and drink vouchers, alcohol prizes) for healthy rewards by joining our Healthy Rewards program. **[Provide detail of the program if you have actioned 'Quick win: Implement a healthy rewards program' under the 'Using healthy rewards and sponsorships in community activities' impact stream.]**

2. Consider healthier sponsors

Look for healthier sponsors next time your sponsorship arrangements are up for review, and prioritise organisations and brands that do not profit from products that harm health and wellbeing, for example:

- health services, e.g. physiotherapy, dental services or allied health providers
- sport, fitness or recreation providers
- sport, homeware, furniture or clothing retailers
- local businesses such as real estate agents, accounting/legal firms, gardening supplies or trades.

33. Backholer K, Martino F & Zorbas C. Unhealthy sponsorship of Victorian junior community sports. 2021. Unpublished report prepared for VicHealth by the Global Obesity Centre and the Institute for Health Transformation at Deakin University: Melbourne, Victoria.

Harmful Partnerships initiative – communications example (continued...)

3. Place boundaries on harmful sponsors

If unhealthy food and alcohol sponsors are already in place, think about how you can put some boundaries in place to reduce their harm, for example:

- not activating harmful brands during junior events
- acknowledging harmful brands verbally or by text only, rather than displaying their logo or product.

Further information

To find out more, check out these resources: **[include if applicable]**

- Healthy Sports Reward program
- [VicHealth's position on healthy sport sponsorship](#)
- **[Include links to any other relevant council resources you have developed, e.g. webpage.]**



Further Information

Stay up to date with the VicHealth Local Government Partnership.

Visit: www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/programs-and-projects/local-government-partnership

For further information or enquiries, contact our Local Government team at lgp@vichealth.vic.gov.au or phone on 03 9667 1333.



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VicHealth acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land. We pay our respects to all Elders past, present and future.



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