

## INTRODUCTION

There is a growing demand for more nutritious and convenient food options where people live, work, and play.

- While Americans consume an average of 25% of their calories from snacks and sugary beverages, 74% of consumers are trying to eat healthier.
- Providing healthy vending choices can improve the health and productivity of staff and demonstrate an organization's commitment to wellness.



In King County, Washington, the Board of Health adopted the [King County Healthy Vending Guidelines](#) (KCHVG) in April 2011 to support organizations in their efforts to promote healthful food environments. Based on the American Dietary Guidelines 2010, the KCHVG distinguish between healthy nutrient-rich whole foods and highly processed items loaded with added fat, salt, and sugar.

The KCHVG and its corresponding [King County Healthy Vending Implementation Toolkit](#) have been regarded as models nationwide. In October 2013, the governor of Washington, Jay Inslee, passed an [Executive Order](#) requiring healthful food in all state facilities, with standards similar to the KCHVG.

## WHAT CAN ORGANIZATIONS DO?

### ✓Implement healthy vending today

Put healthy food and beverages within reach of staff and visitors. For resources, check out: <http://copcwa.org/healthy-vending/healthy-vending-resources/>.

### ✓Follow the King County Healthy Vending Guidelines

<http://tinyurl.com/HealthyVendingGuidelines>

### ✓Take the Hydrate for Health pledge at <http://www.hydrateforhealth.org>.

Make healthy drink choices easy for staff, patrons and the community.

Contact: [info@hydrateforhealth.org](mailto:info@hydrateforhealth.org) or (206) 910-7643.

### ✓Use best practices:

- PARTNERSHIP: Work together with current vendors to ensure a successful and mutually beneficial implementation.
- PARTICIPATION: Ask the target audience for their feedback on what healthy items they would buy through surveys and taste tests.
- POLICY: Develop a healthy vending policy and contract that is binding.
- PLACEMENT: Ask vendors to label and place healthy items together at eye level.
- PRICE: Price healthy options so that they are cheaper or at least the same price.
- PROMOTION: Promote the new, tasty options through [marketing materials](#) around the vending machines, in key locations, and in e-mails, newsletters, social media, etc.

## HEALTHY VENDING CHANGES IN KING COUNTY

In 2013, the Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition provided technical support to King County agencies interested in promoting healthy food and beverage environments. Below is a list of organizations that took action to make healthful vending changes:

| Type                         | Agency                               | Actions Taken/Changes Made                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Reach                                                                                                                                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Government                   | City of Seattle                      | After the City passed a 50% healthy vending <a href="#">ordinance</a> based on the KCHVG, trainings were held for the departments and vending companies. A process evaluation found the need for a better understanding of what specific products meet the KCHVG by staff and vendors and for more advertising, so a <a href="#">product list</a> and <a href="#">marketing materials</a> were developed. | First year: 6 departments with 39 sites (74 machines total) from 12 vendors                                                                    |
|                              | Renton Community Center              | Staff asked their vendor to put in healthful vending options from the KCHVG <a href="#">product list</a> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | 1 site, 2 machines                                                                                                                             |
| Low-Income Housing Providers | Low-Income Housing Institute (LIHI)  | LIHI is in the process of implementing a new healthy food and beverage policy ( <a href="#">draft</a> ), which includes 50% KCHVG healthy vending. Resident outreach on these policies will happen throughout 2014.                                                                                                                                                                                       | Wellness policies: 125 staff and 4,000+ residents;<br>Healthy vending policy: 6 residential sites with 11 machines                             |
|                              | Seattle Housing Authority (SHA)      | SHA issued a <a href="#">Request for Proposals</a> for 50% healthy vending based on the KCHVG in July. They are evaluating the proposals and hope to have a new vendor on board in early 2014. Residents have been providing feedback throughout the entire implementation process.                                                                                                                       | RFP covers 41 sites total, 83 machines total - 36 residential, 4 administrative; Affects 460 employees and residents in 3200+ low-income units |
|                              | King County Housing Authority (KCHA) | KCHA asked their vendor to put in more healthy vending options in their administrative building.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | 2 machines at the central administrative building                                                                                              |
| Family-Based Agencies        | Youngstown Cultural Arts Center      | The director contacted multiple vendors about wanting 100% healthy vending based on the USDA Smart Snack in School Standards. Vendors have not been very responsive.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | 1 site with a potential set of vending machines; estimated 15,000 visitors per year                                                            |
|                              | Sea Mar Community Health Centers     | Sea Mar is looking to increase their healthful vending options in their staff break room. They are surveying staff and thinking about switching to a self-run vending program.                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | The Seattle Medical clinic in South Park with about 60 staff and a break room snack/beverage machine                                           |

## CASE STUDIES

Making healthy vending change can look very different depending on an organization's staffing structure, who it serves, and the number of machines and vendors and contracts it has. These case studies highlight some of the different ways agencies can adopt healthy vending.

### ADOPTING A WELLNESS POLICY

#### Low-Income Housing Institute

The [Low Income Housing Institute](#) (LIHI) developed, owns and operates residential sites in six counties throughout the Puget Sound region for the benefit of low-income, homeless and formerly homeless people. LIHI also provides a variety of supportive services to help residents maintain their housing and develop self-sufficiency. When first approached about having a healthy vending and food policy by the Community Engagement and Advocacy Manager, the Executive Director was immediately supportive.

#### Doing the Research

Little was known about which residential sites had vending machines so all site managers were contacted. LIHI learned that there were six sites with a total of 11 machines from different vendors, and that the machines were used by veterans, adults, seniors, people with disabilities, and youth.

There was a range of views from managers – both supportive and indifferent to healthy vending. One site coordinator responded: “I don't have vending machines...That's my contribution to NO OBESITY. I do not want to contribute in any way to the children eating or drinking more sugar. I have several children on my property who have diabetes.”

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-Site Coordinator

#### Policy Engagement Process

After being provided a sample healthy food and beverage policy with healthy vending language and a movement policy modeled from the [Bay Area Nutrition & Physical Activity Collaborative](#), staff were asked for their feedback on the draft policies.

The wellness policies will affect LIHI's main administrative building that houses 25 staff, plus 100 staff spread throughout the six residential sites, as well as 39 low-income housing sites (1700 units, including 700 units for families with children) serving 4,000 residents.

With so many sites, LIHI will engage residents and get their feedback on the [draft policy](#) throughout all of 2014 with support from resident leaders, volunteers and nursing students. In particular, interns “could take on some nutrition education programming at our sites to spread the word about our healthy vending and movement initiative”.

## A CITY WORKING WITH MULTIPLE SITES AND VENDORS

### City of Seattle

In 2012, the [City of Seattle](#) organized a healthy vending workgroup and determined which departments had vending. In March of 2013, Seattle City Council passed an [ordinance](#) requiring all vending machines operated on city property to stock at least 50% of items that meet the “healthiest” and “healthier” criteria of the KCHVG.

In the first year of implementation, the focus was on six departments with a total of 39 sites, 75 machines and 12 different vendors. Vendors were asked to comply with the healthy vending ordinance by mid-June 2013. The Mayor’s Office and Public Health – Seattle King County (PHSKC) jointly held training sessions with vendors and the liaisons for each affected city department.

#### Process Evaluation

During the summer, a University of Washington graduate student conducted a process evaluation. Department contacts were asked to answer a series of questions, to fill out a survey, and to provide photos of their machines. Some department contacts were more responsive and had more capacity and time than others.

Some department contacts felt that the healthy vending ordinance did not make much of a difference in improving healthy food access, and that it would be ideal if healthy vending was just a piece of a larger wellness program for city employees.

Of the 15 vending sites that were monitored for compliance, none of the snack machines and only several beverage machines were in compliance. Department liaisons expressed in the interviews that both the city departments and vendors were challenged with limited capacity and resources and that it was not clear which specific products in the machines actually met the KCHVG. Some department contacts felt that the healthy vending ordinance did not make much of a difference in improving healthy food access, and that it would be ideal if healthy vending was just a piece of a larger wellness program for city employees.

#### Providing Resources and Tools

As a result, COPC and PHSKC developed product lists and marketing materials for the managers and vendors, which can be found here: <http://copcwa.org/healthy-vending/healthy-vending-resources/>. In addition, a meeting organized jointly with King County government was held for vendors and department staff in October to provide a healthy vending taste test and a discussion.

The vending machines were again monitored in December 2013 to see whether the product list made a difference in compliance. While most vendors did not change much in their machines, at least one vendor stocked their machines with at least 50% healthful snacks and some vendors continued to be compliant with their beverage machines. The compliant vendor shared sales data from August – November 2013. On average, 62% of beverage items purchased in 4 machines and 51% of snack items bought in 3 machines were healthful based on the KCHVG. A healthy vending workgroup reconvened in December to discuss next steps.

## ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

### Seattle Housing Authority

[Seattle Housing Authority](#) (SHA) provides long-term rental housing and rental assistance to people with low incomes with a mission to create and sustain decent, safe and affordable living environments that foster stability and increase self-sufficiency.

Residents had multiple opportunities to give feedback: at their joint policy committee meetings, through taste tests and surveys, and by serving on the pilot workgroup and on the proposal evaluation committee.

Throughout SHA's implementation process, residents had multiple opportunities to give feedback: at their joint policy committee meetings, through taste tests and surveys, and by serving on the pilot workgroup and on the proposal evaluation committee.

### Piloting Healthy Choices

After residents and community stakeholders expressed an interest in having healthy choices in their vending machines, SHA formed a healthy vending pilot workgroup and got resident feedback at their policy meetings, building council meetings, and through surveying and taste tests. A resident serving on the pilot committee said in the resident newspaper, [Voice](#), "What we have now is loaded with salt and fat, what can you do? For me, I have high blood pressure, diabetes and heart problems. If I can get healthy choices, it would be a whole lot easier on me. I think others would choose healthier snacks once they know how good they taste."

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- SHA Resident

Based on what it heard from residents, SHA asked its vendor to work with them on piloting healthy vending at six residential sites and four administrative buildings at 30% healthy vending based on the KCHVG. While there was no change in total sales or healthy beverage sales, there was a 10% increase in the sales of healthy snacks in the residential buildings and a 24% increase in healthy snack sales in the administrative buildings.

### Issuing a Request for Proposals

As a result of the success of the pilot and to align with the City of Seattle healthy vending ordinance, when the contract was up, SHA worked with Public Health on developing healthy vending language to insert into its 2013 vending concessionaire [Request for Proposals](#) (RFP). This RFP requires its next contracted vendor to adhere to a minimum of 50% healthy vending in all of its residential and administrative buildings. SHA should have a new contract and vendor in the beginning of 2014, which will cover vending machines in 36 residential buildings with 3,200 low-income public housing units and 4 administrative buildings of 460 employees. The negotiated contact will last a year, with the possibility to extend the contract up to 7 years.

## GOING 100% USING SCHOOL STANDARDS

### Youngstown Cultural Arts Center

[Youngstown Cultural Arts Center](#) is made up of 36 live and work studios for artists and 25,000 square feet of public space, which houses the Southwest Interagency Academy (an alternative high school) and many cultural arts and youth-focused organizations. The building receives about 15,000 visitors annually.

Currently, there is no place to buy food and beverages at Youngstown and building users have asked the director for an onsite vending machine. The director wanted to be sure that if there was to be a vending machine at Youngstown, that it would contain only healthful items. As a youth-centered space, it should not have junk food and sugary beverages.

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Given that most of the users of the building are youth, it was recommended that Youngstown look for a vendor that could provide 100% healthy vending based on the [USDA Smart Snacks in School Standards](#) that are to be implemented in schools nationwide in July 2014. The director has contacted several vendors known to have healthy and natural product lines, but has not gotten much of an enthusiastic response from any of them. Youngstown is hoping to make progress providing healthy snack options to students and event attendees in 2014.

#### WHAT VENDING COMPANIES CONSIDER:

- ❖ [FitPick](#) is the vending industry standard of healthy, and most vendors use the FitPick product list when asked for healthful items. In [comparison](#), FitPick focuses just on sugar and fat levels, while the KCHVG and Smart Snacks in School Standards also look at nutrition content, sodium levels, and calories.
- ❖ Vendors usually have a small profit margin, so they are highly motivated to put in the most popular products that have the highest profit margins.
- ❖ Healthful products tend to be more expensive and have less brand recognition, which is why marketing of healthy items is so essential.
- ❖ Healthful foods tend to have shorter shelf lives than highly processed foods. If items are not bought by their “sell-by-date”, they have to be thrown away at a financial loss to the vendor.
- ❖ To maximize profits, machines are ideally placed in the most visible, high traffic location.
- ❖ Most vending agreements include profit sharing between the vendor and the client. While it is negotiable, the more sales commission a client wants, the higher the prices will be for the end user.
- ❖ Vendors with machines in public government buildings must give a percentage of these profits to the Department of Services for the Blind according to the [Randolph Sheppard Act](#).

## CHALLENGES TO OVERCOME

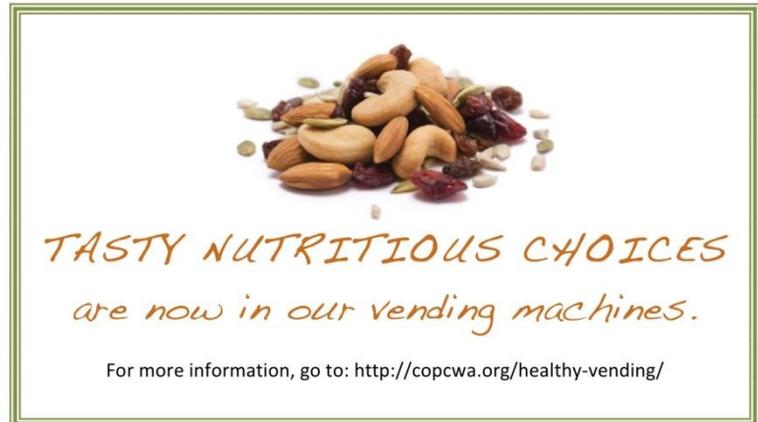
There will be hurdles along the way, but there are definitely ways to navigate around them. Here is a summary of the main challenges that King County organizations encountered:

| Challenges                                                                                                                                                | Actions / Possible Solutions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>This is not a top priority for us right now. We do not have the staff capacity to focus on this.</i></b>                                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Keep it simple and commit to just two steps:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Ask the vendor to put in at least 50% healthy vending.</li> <li>2) Get the word out through <a href="#">promotional materials</a>.</li> </ol> </li> <li>➤ Make <a href="#">the case</a> to decision-makers as to why healthy food access should be prioritized.</li> <li>➤ Ask local public health entities for technical support and/or find funding to support staffing the change.</li> <li>➤ Partner with the employee wellness program, if the organization has one already.</li> <li>➤ Wait until a champion and lead is identified.</li> </ul> |
| <b><i>We have vending machines at many different sites serviced by different vendors.</i></b>                                                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Meet with all site managers and vendors together to talk about the healthy vending implementation process, and provide resources and support as needed.</li> <li>➤ Provide template <a href="#">healthy vending contract language</a> for all your vendor contracts.</li> <li>➤ Work towards having just one vendor for all sites.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b><i>Some of my staff are upset that we took their favorite snacks away, while others think that we are not doing enough.</i></b>                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Stick with a marketing message that this is about giving people more healthful choices.</li> <li>➤ Get feedback from staff by involving them in workgroups and through <a href="#">surveying</a> and <a href="#">taste tests</a>.</li> <li>➤ Make healthy vending a part of a larger organizational wellness initiative to bring about greater change.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b><i>Our vendors said that they put healthy vending items in, but I am not sure if the new items are actually healthful and meet our guidelines.</i></b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Provide a <a href="#">product list</a> of specific items that meet your healthy vending criteria.</li> <li>➤ Explain the <a href="#">why and what</a> of your healthy vending standards to the vendor.</li> <li>➤ Designate staff that know healthy vending to check machines for compliance.</li> <li>➤ Ask the vendor for itemized product sales data.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b><i>Our vendors are small business and they just don't have the capacity or time to focus on healthy vending.</i></b>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ As USDA Smart Snacks in School standards roll out in 2014, more vending size healthy snacks should be available through main suppliers and in greater demand.</li> <li>➤ Ask that healthy food placement, pricing, and promotion strategies be placed into your vending contract.</li> <li>➤ As a last resort, find another vendor that will be more responsive.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

## CONCLUSION

Currently, vending machines are the last places that people go to find healthy food choices. Organizations and governmental agencies can lead the way in making healthful vending and healthful food the easier choice.

Depending upon the nature of the organization, there are many different ways to make healthy vending happen. Organizations succeed when they get support from decision-makers, work with their vendors on promoting and marketing the healthful items, ask for feedback and involvement from those that have access to the machines, and include healthy vending language in their policies and vending contracts.



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Tool-kits and Implementation Tools

- [Healthier Choices for Public Places](#), Center for Science in the Public Interest (2013)
- [Tips for Better Vending](#), Public Health Law Center (2013)
- [Making Change: A Guide to Healthier Vending for Municipalities](#), ChangeLab Solutions (2012)
- [Healthy Vending Implementation Tool-kit](#), Seattle King County Public Health (2013)  
Sample survey tools: [Survey Sample – Appendix E](#), [Taste Test – Appendix F](#)
- [Healthy Vending in your Workplace](#), Mid-America Coalition on HealthCare (2012)
- [A Blueprint for Healthy Vending](#), Chicago Department of Public Health (2013)
- [Healthy Snack Vending: The Chicago Park District Experience and Resource Guide](#) (2012)

### Contract Language

- [Making Change: A Guide to Healthier Vending for Municipalities](#), ChangeLab Solutions (2012)  
Refer to Page 16 – Best Contracting Practices.
- [Model Healthy Municipal Snack and Beverage Vending Agreement](#), ChangeLab Solutions (2012)  
A comprehensive compilation of model contract language.
- [A Blueprint for Healthy Vending](#), Chicago Department of Public Health (2013)  
Refer to Appendix C – Sample Contracts and Negotiation Consideration.
- Seattle Housing Authority's [Request for Proposals – Vending Concessionaire](#) (2013)  
50% healthy criteria based on King County Guidelines, healthy vending language found on pages 5-6, 12-13, and 24-25.