

# Leveraging Community Coalitions to Increase Access to Healthy Food through PSE Initiatives

**Public Health Law Center**

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**New Sector RISE Fellowship**

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# The Public Health Law Center



# Public Health Law Center Legal Technical Assistance

-  Legal Research
-  Policy Development
-  Publications
-  Trainings
-  Direct Representation
-  Lobby



# Objectives

- Provide overview of PHLC work with local Minnesota food coalitions working on healthy food access.
- Explore what is meant by policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change as it relates to community food coalitions.
- Understand the potential impact of PSE strategies on increasing access to healthy food.
- Consider the feasibility of PSE strategies to increase access to nutritious foods through community food coalitions.

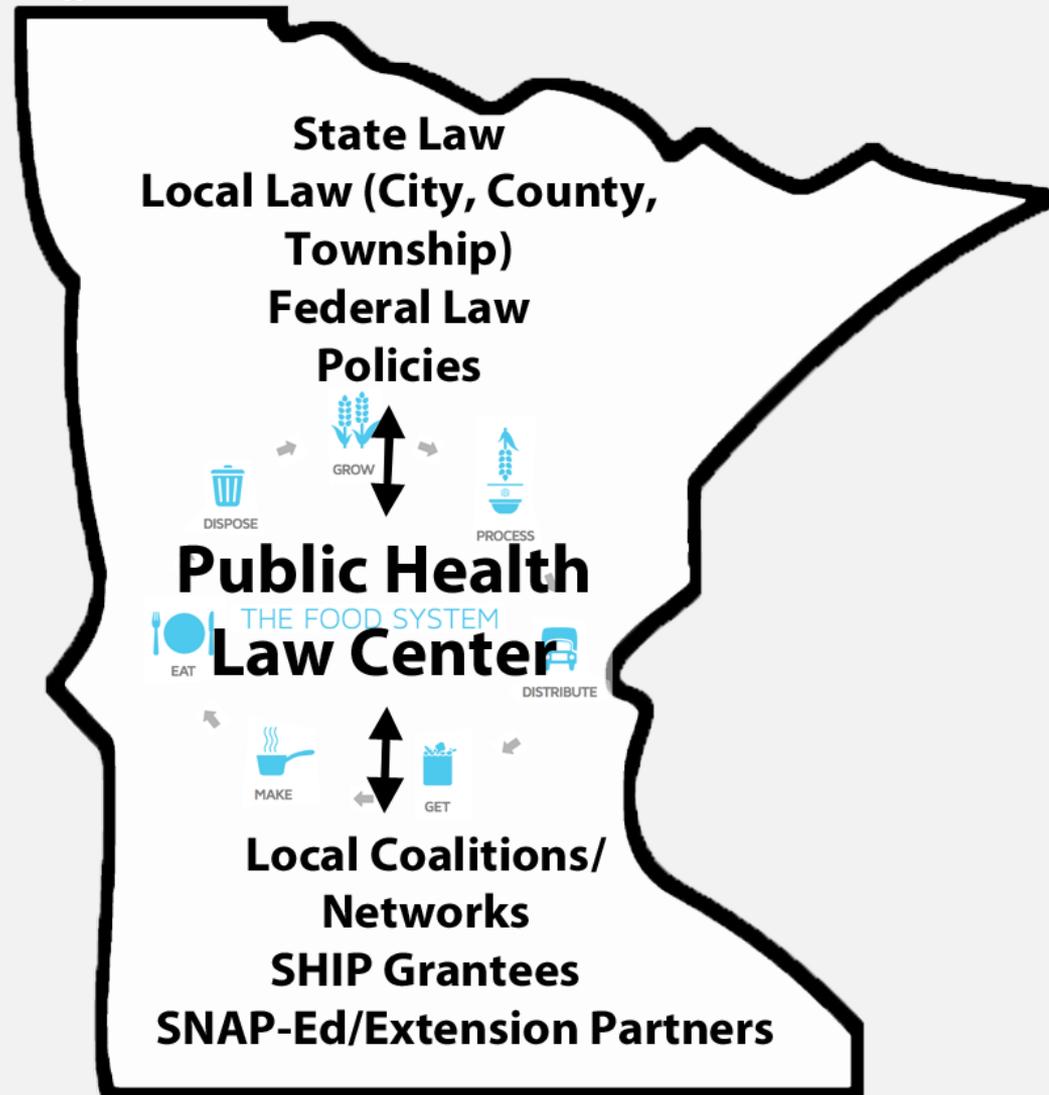


**Equality**

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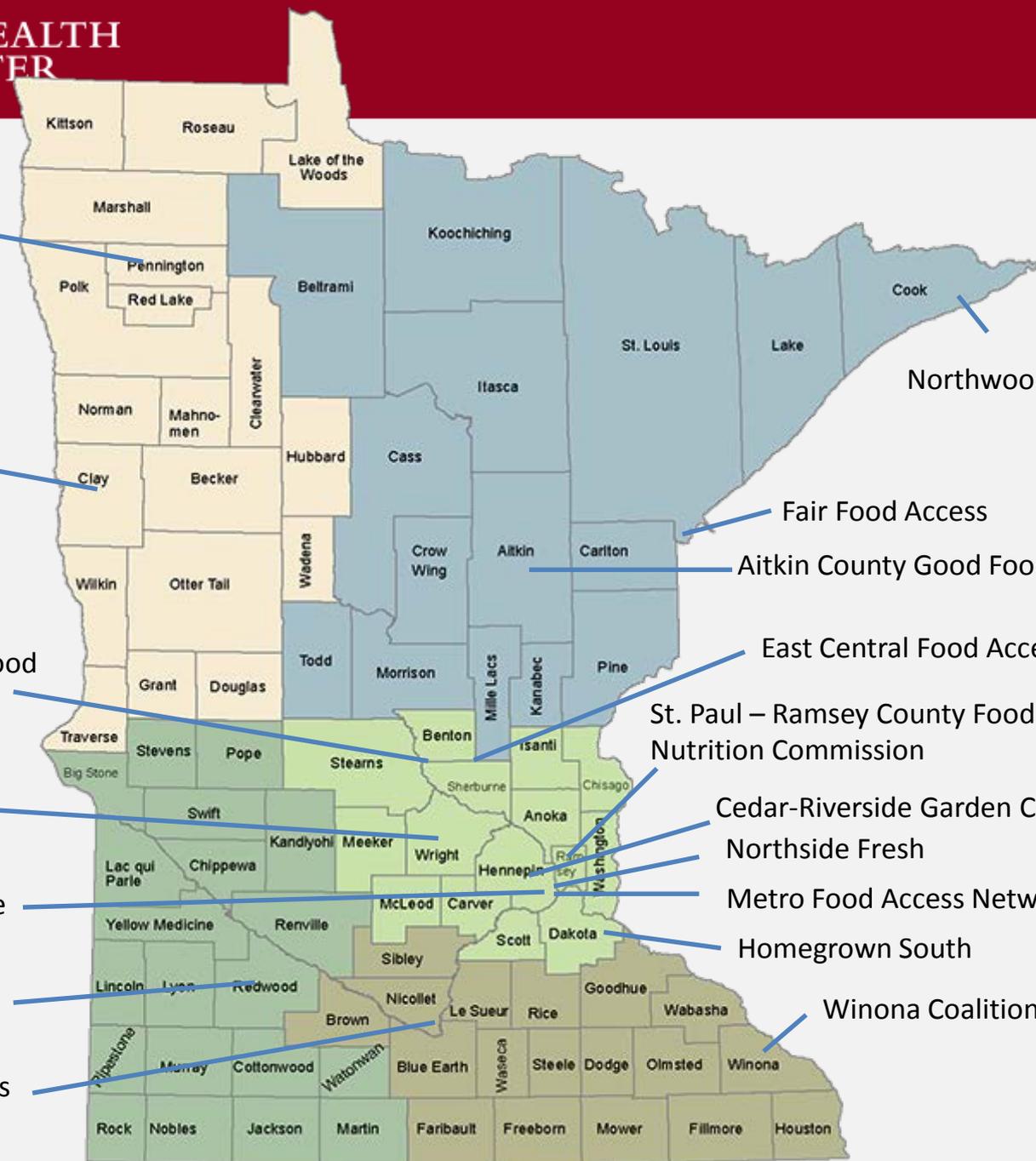
# Supporting Minnesota Food Coalitions





# PHLC Support for Food Coalitions and Networks to Increase Food Access

- Identify coalitions and networks focusing on increasing access to healthy food by SNAP-eligible individuals
- Assess local and state policy landscape and legal framework and provide background information
- Identify strategic policy levers to address coalition priorities
- Provide assistance navigating policy barriers
- Identify common challenges and needs
- Provide direction to develop education-based PSE work plan



Growing Forward  
Thief River Falls

Cass Clay Food  
Systems Initiative

United Way Access to Food

Crow River Local Foods  
Advisory Council

Mobile Food Shelf Task Force

Community of Practice

Roots, Shoots, and Boots

Northwoods Food Project

Fair Food Access

Aitkin County Good Foods

East Central Food Access Network

St. Paul – Ramsey County Food and  
Nutrition Commission

Cedar-Riverside Garden Coalition

Northside Fresh

Metro Food Access Network

Homegrown South

Winona Coalition



# Common Themes

- Understanding PSE
- Understanding Levels of Regulation
- Coalition Priorities
- Equitable Engagement
- Utilizing Food Charter Strategies

# Common Themes: Understanding PSE

- Envisioning how policy complements programmatic work
- Identifying policy's power for long-term change
- Being comfortable with uncertainty

# Common Themes: Understanding Levels of Regulation

**Federal**



**State**



**Local**



**Internal  
Policy/  
Rules**



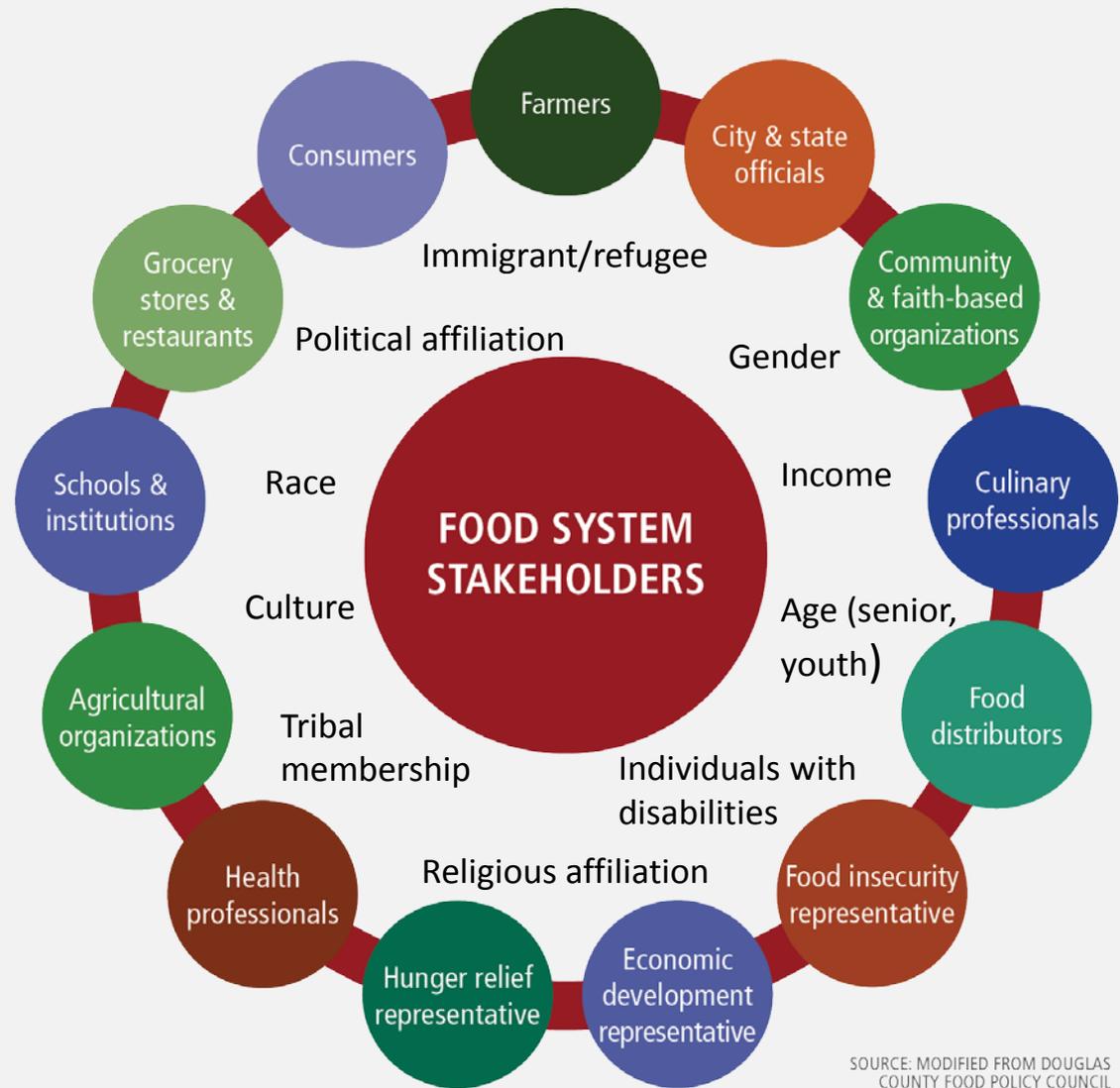
# Local Government Policies and Laws Impacting Healthy Food Access and Walking/Bicycling

- Ordinances
- Zoning Code
- Subdivision Code
- Capital Improvement Plan
- Local planning/small area plans
- Licensing, permitting, fees
- Procurement, contracting, bidding
- School District policies
- Internal organizational policies
- Taxes
- Resolutions

## Common Themes: Coalition Priorities

- Liability & food safety regarding farm to institution
- Liability & regulations for mobile food shelves
- Community based agriculture
- Food system policy scan
- EBT at Farmers Markets

# Common Themes: Equitable Engagement



# Common Themes: Utilizing Food Charter Strategies

- Embedding into food system policy scan
- Identifying most relevant strategies for local coalitions and networks



**Minnesota**  
**FOOD CHARTER**  
For Our Healthy Future



## FOOD AFFORDABILITY

### ENOUGH MONEY FOR ENOUGH HEALTHY FOOD

**WHAT IS FOOD AFFORDABILITY?**  
People can buy most or all of the healthy foods they want with the money they have available.

**GOAL**  
Healthy food for all people regardless of income.

**CHALLENGES**

**BUYING FOOD**  
Many jobs in Minnesota do not pay enough for everyone to afford healthy food.  
Some healthy foods can cost significantly more than unhealthy alternatives.

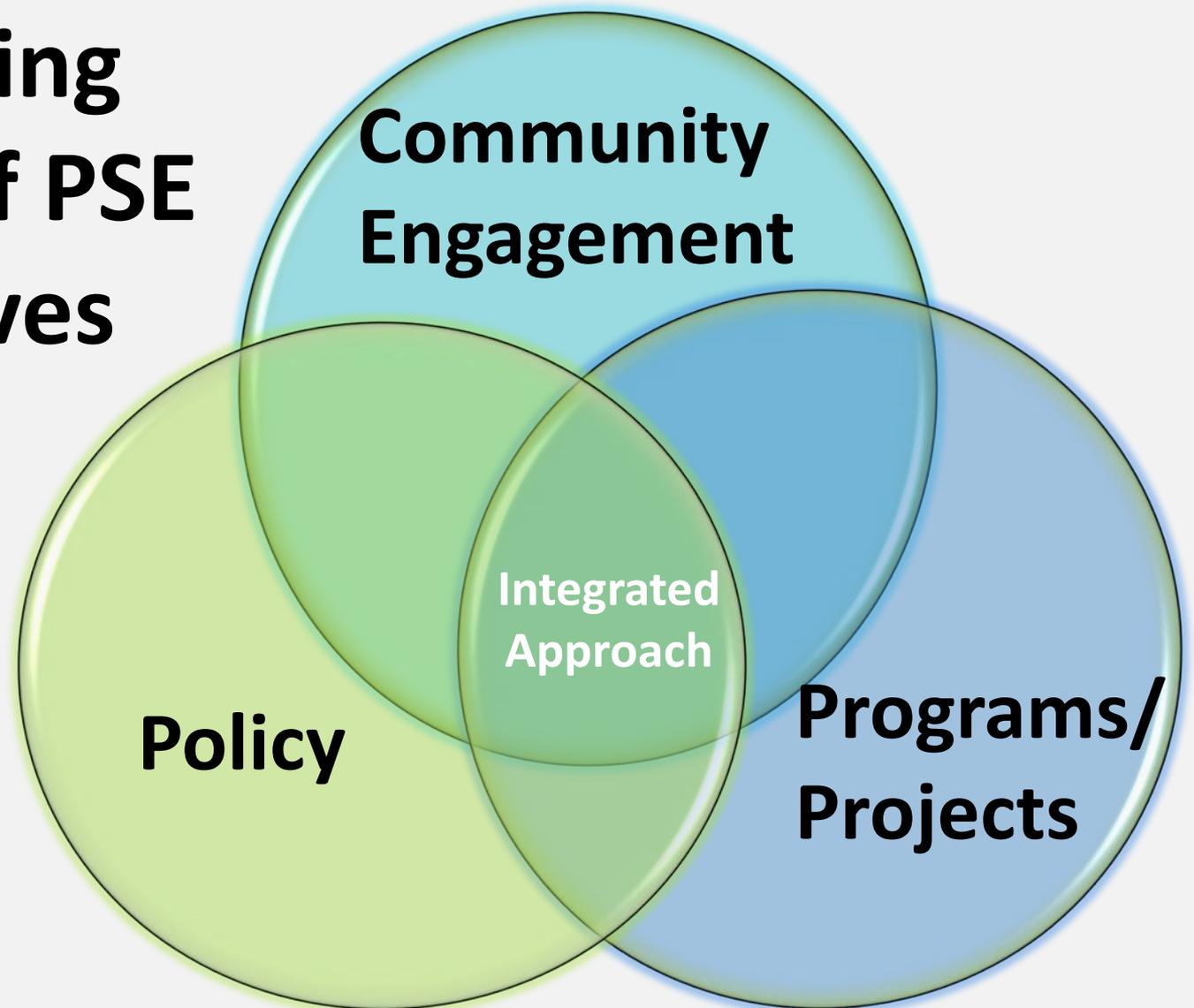
**SELLING FOOD**  
Food stores, such as small-town grocery stores, corner and convenience stores in low-income communities, as well as other types of vendors may offer limited amounts of healthy foods or offer healthy foods at high prices.  
Small, locally owned grocery stores can have difficulty beating the prices of healthy food options that large, national competitors can offer.

Many people and institutions would like to purchase substantial quantities of foods grown nearby or using sustainable production methods, but these foods can be too costly.  
Some stores and farmers markets don't accept WIC or SNAP/EBT, making it difficult for limited-resource shoppers to afford healthy foods.  
Not enough farmers' markets offer a financial incentive promotional program for SNAP/EBT users, which can help make healthy foods more affordable for low-income customers.

# Challenges

- Coalitions and networks are dynamic w/shifting leadership and priorities
- Identifying best-suited opportunities
- Not all coalitions are focused on meeting needs of low-income Minnesotans/SNAP eligible populations

# Increasing Impact of PSE Initiatives





# Public Health Definition

Public Health:

“What we as a society do collectively to assure the conditions for people to be healthy.”

“Fulfilling society’s interest in assuring conditions in which people can be healthy.”

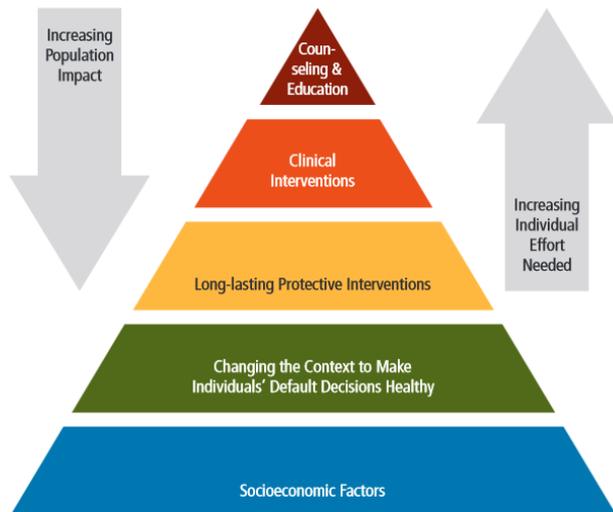
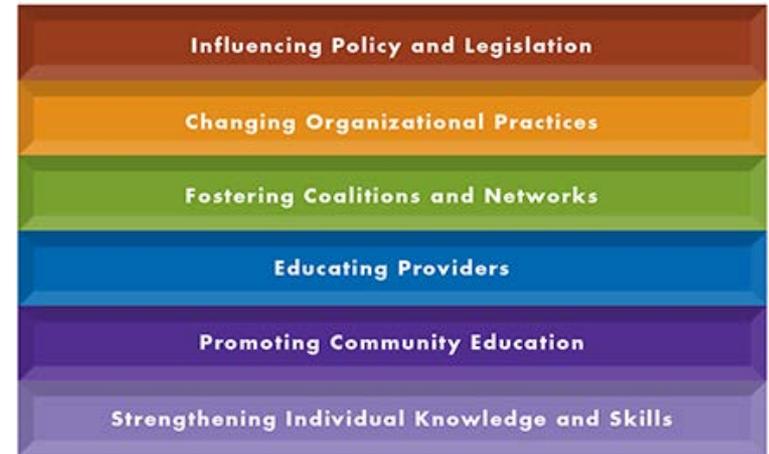
# Why PSE change?

- Major health problems will not be solved solely by individual actions
- Health problems are influenced by societal policies and environments that promote unhealthy behaviors or fail to foster healthier choices
- Chronic disease prevention requires an “upstream” approach that improves the environments where we live, work, learn, play, and receive health care



# Spectrum of Prevention

## THE SPECTRUM OF PREVENTION



**FIGURE 1:**  
**The Health Impact Pyramid.**

*Interventions that affect socioeconomic factors (such as poverty, education, housing, racism, and other inequities) are likely to have the greatest public health impact.*

Source: Thomas R. Frieden, A Framework For Public Health Action: The Health Impact Pyramid, 100 Am. J. Pub. Health 590, 591 (2010).

# Health Impact Pyramid

# Policy

Any **written** plan or course of action designed to **influence** and determine decisions



# What is an effective policy?

- Easy to understand and follow
- Easy to enforce
- Accomplishes goals
- Includes periodic evaluation







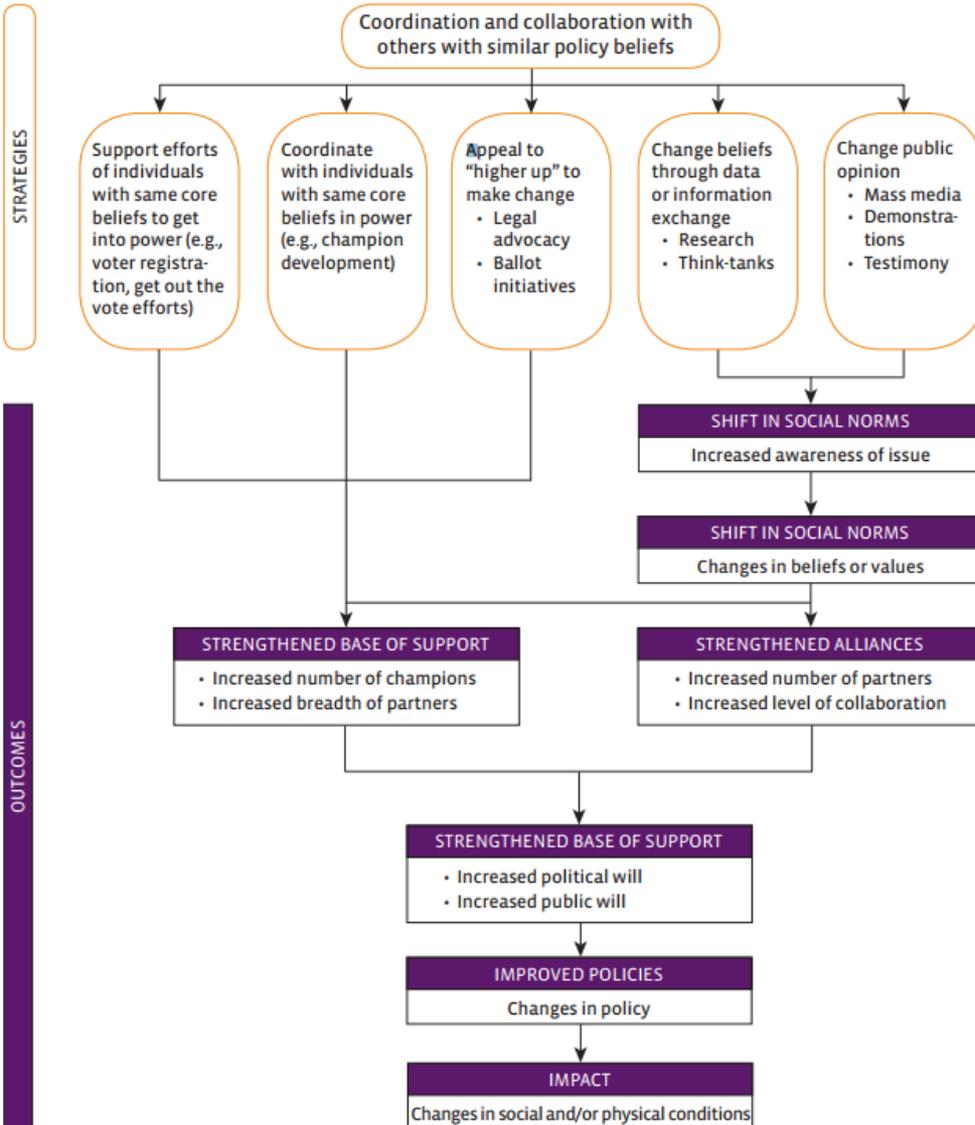
# What is a program?

- One-time event
- Focus on individual behavior
- Not written down
- Not enforceable to general community

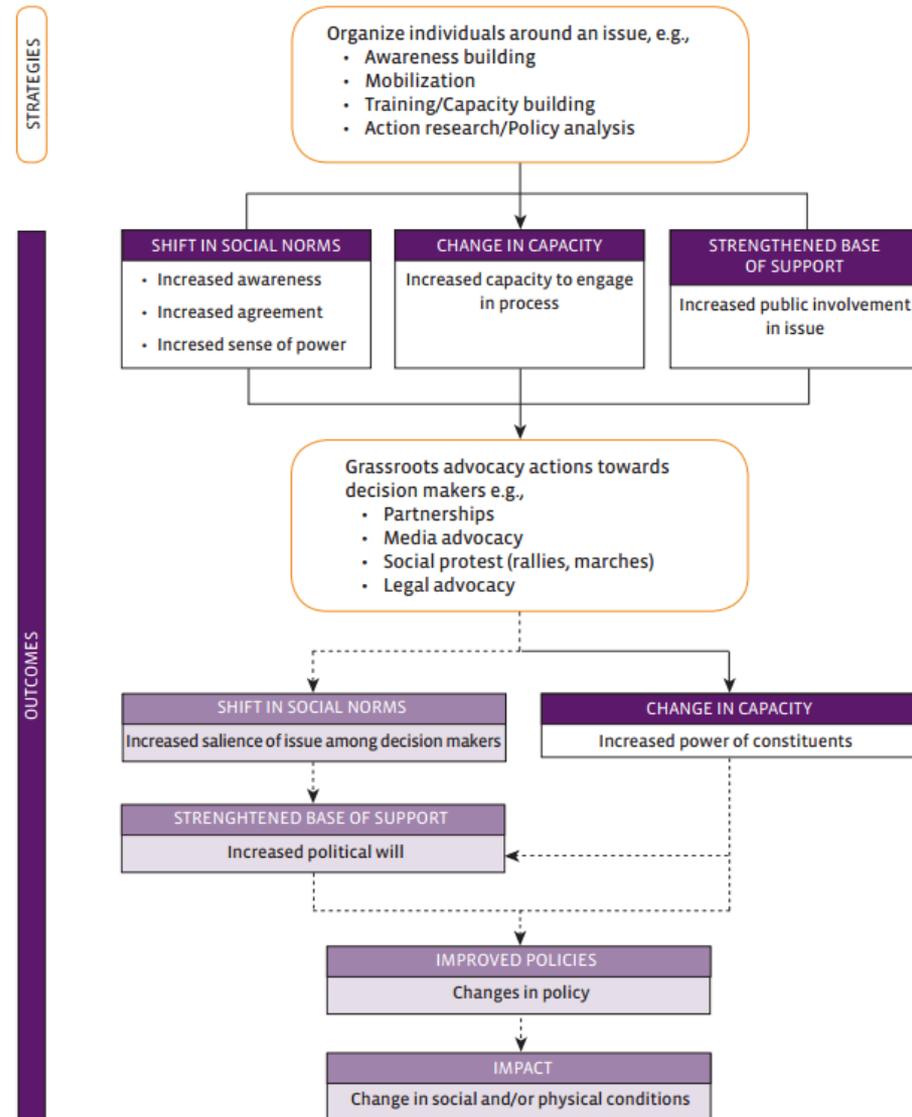




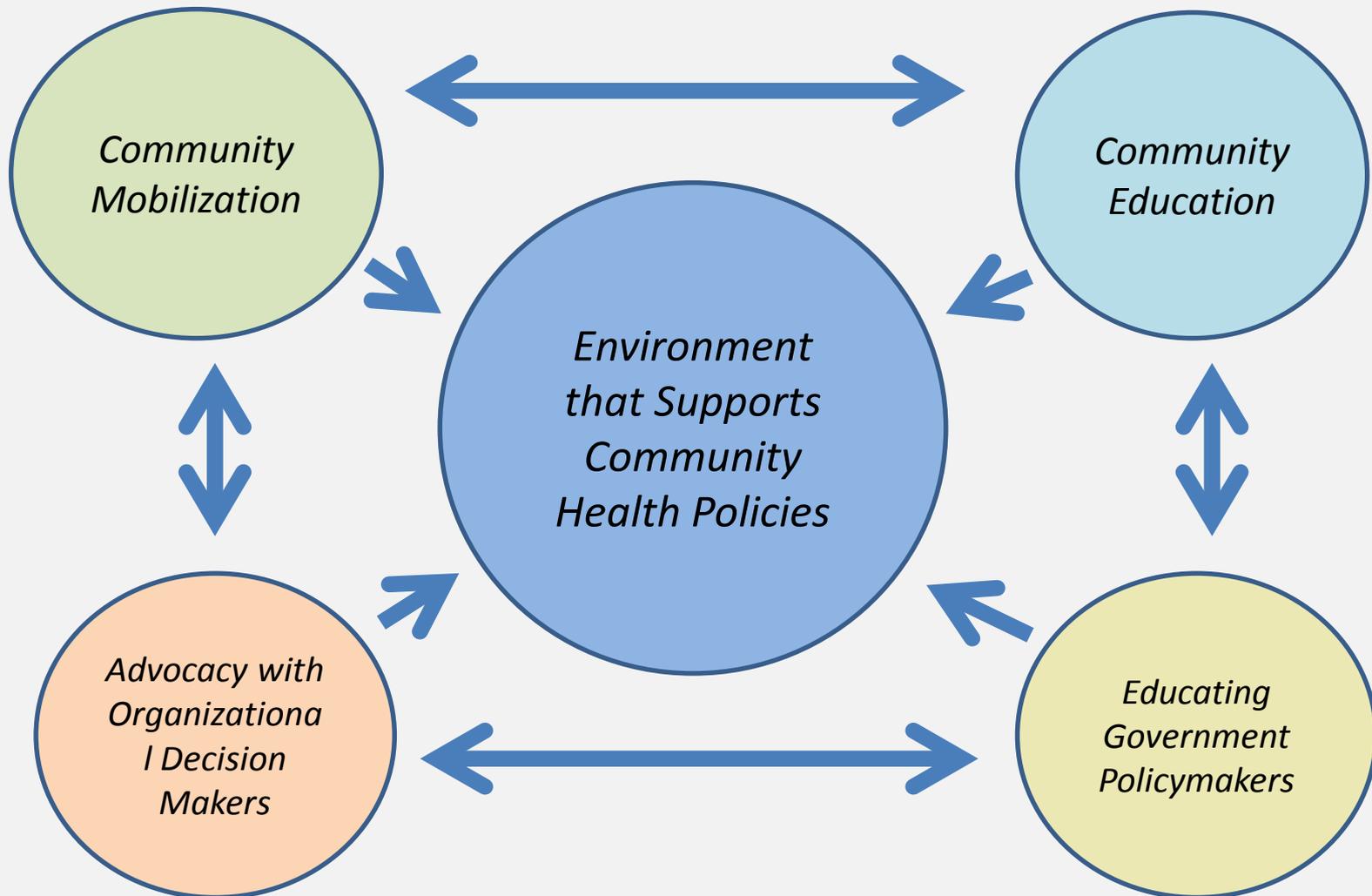
## “COALITION” Theory of Change



## “GRASSROOTS” Theory of Change



# Integrated Approach: Community Engagement



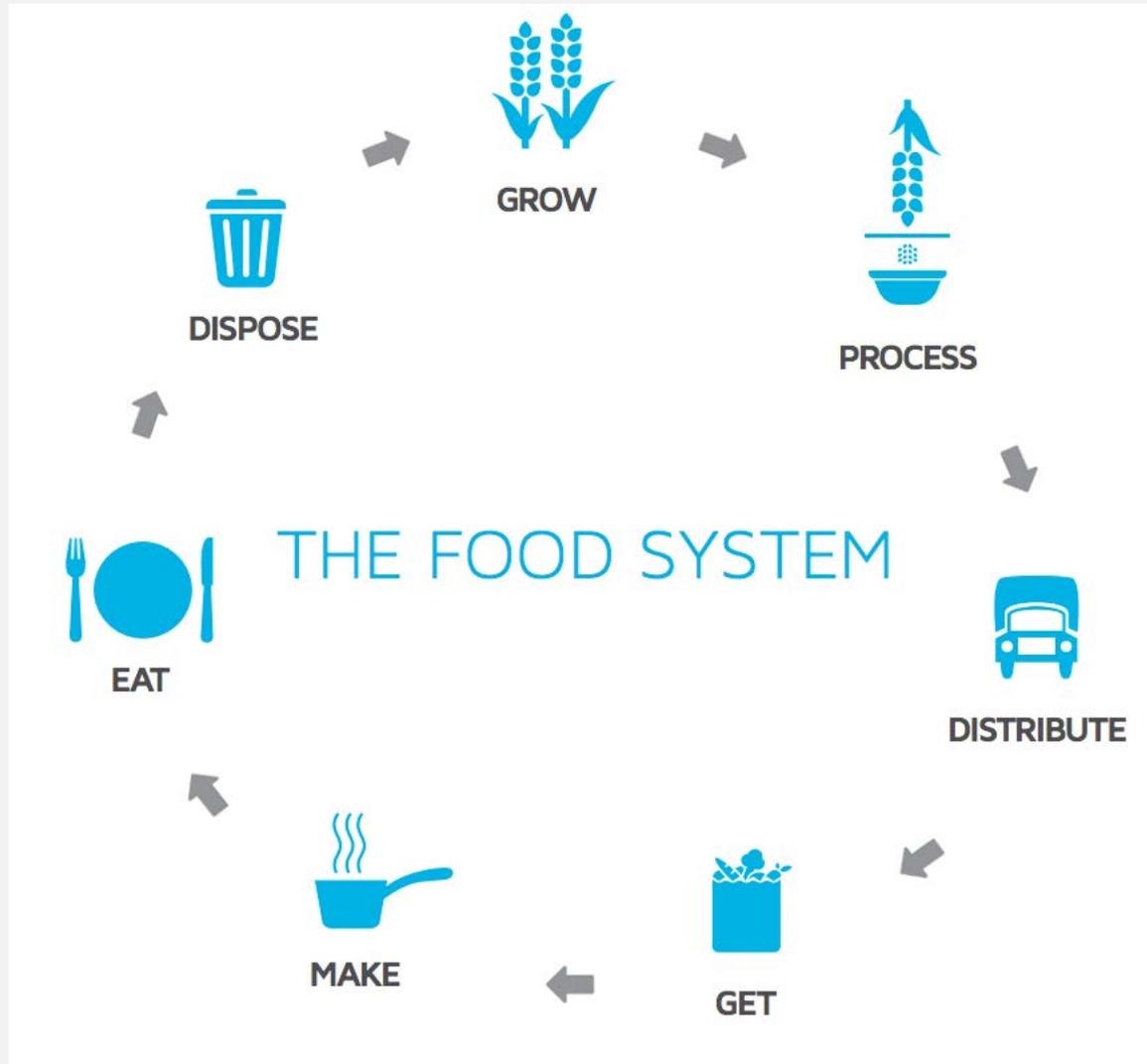
# Program or Policy?

Cooking classes

Ordinance allowing use of  
commercial kitchens for  
continuing education cooking  
classes.

# Community Visions





# Identify Strategic Opportunities





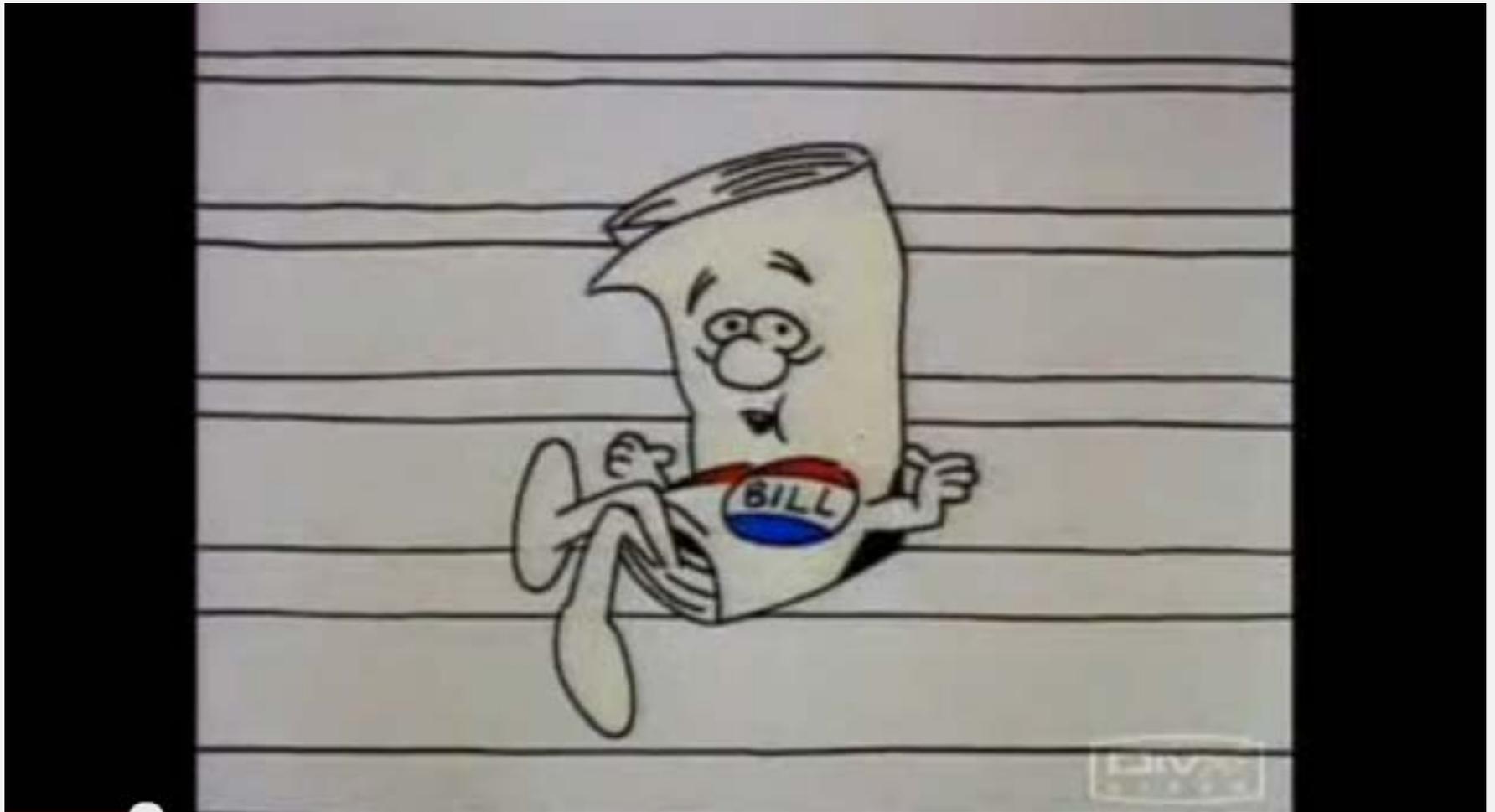
## Policies

- Ordinances
- Resolutions
- Nutrition standards
- Purchasing policies
- Economic development incentives/budget

## Program

- Farmers markets
- Food pantries
- Eat local dinners
- Brochures
- Booths at special events
- Cooking classes

# Know how policy change works



# Levels of Policy/Laws

**Federal**



**State**



**Local**



**Internal  
Policy/  
Rules**



# Creating Your Vision



# Program/Policy Discussion

- What programs are you working to implement through your project?
- Does your project have a policy component? If so, please write the policy elements below.
- Looking at your list of programs, how can some of those be formalized with policy? Write some suggestions below. What resources would you need? What steps would have you to take? What stakeholders should be engaged?



# Creating Your Action Plan

- What component of the food system can you **impact**?
- What exists in your community that could be **modified or strengthened**?
- What **policies/strategies** do you want to pursue?
- What are the possible **obstacles**?
- What are the **tools** available to help?
- What **barriers** currently keep your community members from having access to healthy food?

# Questions?



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# Contact Us

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