

# Study Assesses Policies for State-Level Food Service Guidelines

## What was the study?

In a 2016 study, CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, the American Heart Association, and the Public Health Law Center conducted the first systematic assessment of state governments' policies for food service guidelines (FSG) proposed and adopted by December 31, 2014.

The study aimed to:

- Identify state-level FSG policies,
- Provide a classification tool to assess FSG policies, and
- Describe key attributes of FSG policies.

FSG outline food and nutrition standards for food and beverages available in places such as worksites, health care facilities, and parks. Such guidelines aim to create a food environment where healthier food options are readily available and promoted by strategies such as competitive pricing, nutrition labeling, and use of symbols to easily identify healthier or less healthful options. FSG may also include practices that protect humans and the environment, are humane to animals, and treat workers fairly.

## How was the study done?

The authors searched commercial legal research databases and a CDC policy tracking system to identify FSG policies. The study identified bills, statutes, regulations, and executive orders concerning nutritional guidelines for foods and beverages served and/or sold to adults in government-controlled facilities, as well as committees formed to develop FSG. Once all relevant FSG policies were identified, authors analyzed each to assess its content for three key FSG policy attributes:

- Nutrition standards—specific nutrients or food groups for which standards are specified,
- Behavioral support—strategies that encourage healthy eating, such as pricing, placement, or promotion of healthy foods, and
- Implementation guidance—components that help improve policy effectiveness, such as assigning responsibility for policy implementation and for addressing policy compliance issues.

## What did the study find?

The analysis found few state policies establishing FSG. In addition, most policies did not align with key FSG attributes. Health departments and other stakeholders can use the baseline data offered in this study for future FSG policy assessments.

## Policies by the Numbers

31 proposed or adopted policies were identified

- 15 policies adopted among 10 states (CA, DC, MA, MN, MS, OH, OK, TN, WA, VT)
- 16 policies had been proposed but not adopted by states at the time of writing

## Proposed/Adopted Policies: How They Measure Up Overall

- Overall policy alignment to key attributes ranged from 0% to 86%
- 10 of the 31 policies met a majority (51% or greater) of key attributes
- 2 of the 15 adopted policies met a majority of key attributes

## Policy Alignment to Key Attributes

Key attributes related to: Nutrition, Behavioral Support, Implementation

- 12 of 31 policies met a majority of nutrition attributes
- 2 of 31 policies met a majority of behavioral support attributes
- 8 of 31 policies met a majority of implementation attributes

## What can health departments and other stakeholders do?

To improve FSG implementation and adoption, health departments and other stakeholders can use this study along with the classification tool developed by the study to assess their own FSG efforts, identify attributes to address, and monitor progress. This tool can be found as an appendix within the article referenced below.

States can find relevant FSG resources on CDC's [Healthy Food Service Guidelines webpage](#). They can also access the latest [Prevention Status Report](#) related to FSG policies to determine how their state compares to other states.

## Where can I find more information about the study?

The published study, "Food Service Guideline Policies on State Government Controlled Properties," can be found online in the *American Journal of Health Promotion*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Zaganjor, H., Bishop Kendrick, K., Lowry Warnock, A., Onufrak, S., Whistel, L.P., Ralston-Aoki, J., Kimmons, J. Food Service Guideline Policies on State Government Controlled Properties. *American Journal of Health Promotion*. 2016. DOI: 10.1177/0890117116667117