

Healthy Works: Paths to Healthy Living

What is Healthy Works?

Where we live matters to our health. But not every neighborhood enjoys the advantages of healthy choices, such as access to fresh, locally grown food, safe physical activity options, or smoke-free environments.

Since 2010, Healthy Works has pursued policy, systems, and environmental improvements in the places where San Diegans live, work, play, and go to school, helping to create healthy places and make the healthy choice the easy choice. Healthy Works is an ongoing series of projects implemented by the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency, under its *Live Well San Diego* initiative, a strategic vision for healthy, safe, and thriving communities.



What is 3-4-50?

Through Healthy Works, the County of San Diego combats tobacco use, poor nutrition and physical inactivity, the **three risk factors** that contribute to the **four major chronic diseases** that lead to more than **50 percent of deaths** in the region. These conditions include cancer, heart disease and stroke, diabetes, and lung diseases such as asthma.



What Are Policy, Systems and Environmental Improvements?

For many years, public health programs focused on changing individual behavior, assuming that if you teach people what will make them healthy, they will find a way to do it. Today, we're realizing that it's not enough to know how to be healthy – people need practical, readily available healthy options around them. That's where policy, systems, and environmental improvements come in. These efforts improve laws and systems, and change physical environments to make healthy choices practical and available to all community members.

For more information about how Healthy Works is building a healthy San Diego County, turn over the page to review key accomplishments.

For more information on Healthy Works, please visit HealthyWorks.org.

WHO IS MAKING THESE IMPROVEMENTS?

Improving health through policy, systems, and environmental changes cannot be done by one entity alone, and calls for meaningful engagement of communities. Healthy Works partners with many individuals and sectors:

- Residents
- Schools
- Farmers
- City and regional planning agencies
- Faith leaders
- Employers and businesses
- Apartment owners
- Urban planners & traffic engineers
- Health care providers
- Community-based organizations

What Are Some Areas of Key Accomplishments?

Smoke-Free Environments

Healthy Works increased the number of smoke-free housing environments by working with apartment complex owners throughout the county to implement policies that eliminate unwanted exposure to secondhand smoke in their complexes.

Healthy Works projects such as *Live Well @ Work* also create smoke-free work environments, and overall healthier worksites for thousands of employees. *Live Well @ Work* supports large employers in developing and implementing worksite policies and practices that give employees access to smoke-free environments, healthy eating, and active living opportunities throughout the day.

Healthy Eating

Healthy Works projects are helping to make locally grown foods more readily accessible and affordable in the community. This includes working with store owners to showcase and sell healthier food -- a win for store owners and consumers. Meanwhile, with support from Healthy Works, the San Diego City Council passed the first urban agriculture policy in the county, making it easier to start community gardens and urban farms in neighborhoods. Healthy Works has also strengthened the relationship between schools and the more than 6,000 farms in San Diego County so that kids have greater access to healthy, locally grown food. For example, under Healthy Works, San Diego Unified School District changed how it obtains its food by allowing locally grown produce to be purchased and served in school meals. This district also significantly reduced unhealthy ingredients such as excessive sodium in students' meals.

Active Living

With help from Healthy Works, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) included health as part of the vision, goals, and performance measures of the region's most significant transportation plan. This was a first-ever change that ensures health will be considered in regional transportation decisions, eventually leading to more active transportation options for San Diego's residents.

Increasing active transportation also involves collecting strong data to support the community's desire for safe places to walk, bicycle and use transit. Healthy Works funding helped create the largest regional bicycle counter network in the nation to better inform decisions on bicycle facilities as San Diego becomes increasingly bike-friendly.

Healthy Works also partnered with schools to enhance wellness policies and make it possible for students to get the physical activity they need to be healthy and prime them for learning. For example, Healthy Works worked with teachers and principals within Chula Vista Elementary School District to establish systems that build physical activity into classroom time and recess.

The changes implemented through Healthy Works have been many and widespread, and the work must continue. Be a part of supporting healthy, safe and thriving communities in San Diego County. Find out more about what you can do by visiting healthyworks.org for more information.



Photo Credit: SANDAG