



## Components of a Healthy Beverage Policy



One of the best ways to create a healthy beverage environment is by developing a written policy. A healthy beverage policy facilitates consistent communication of your organizational goals and priorities, and enables effective monitoring and evaluation. This document provides guidance on developing a policy and discusses its common components. **Note:** *Each policy will look different and vary in level of detail; as a result, all components described below are optional and not required to develop and implement a successful healthy beverage policy.*

### 1. Overall Policy Statement

An overall policy statement is a high-level summary of your policy. For this reason, it is easier to write the overall statement at the end, once you've drafted the entire policy.

**Example:** "(Insert organization name) is implementing a plan to reduce the provision of sugary drinks from our institution in an effort to create a healthy beverage environment for staff and visitors, and to serve as a model of health promotion in our community."

### 2. Purpose

A purpose statement(s) illustrates what your organization aims to accomplish through the written policy.

**Example** of a school's purpose statement:

- To provide specific guidance to staff, volunteers, etc. regarding the provision of beverages.
- To encourage consumption of healthy beverages.
- To increase availability of healthy beverages.
- To model healthy beverage choices and improve the overall health of students under our care.

### 3. Rationale

In a few sentences, this section states the overarching reasons why your organization is developing and implementing a healthy beverage policy.

**Example:** A school may draft a policy in response to increasing childhood obesity rates, increased sugary drink consumption in youth, the disproportional impact of sugary drink consumption in specific communities, and because they feel a responsibility to create a healthy environment for students, staff, and the communities they serve by providing food/beverages that support a healthy lifestyle.

### 4. Clear Definitions and Beverage Standards

A strong healthy beverage policy defines important terms including sugary drinks and includes beverage standards. Typically, beverage standards define which drinks qualify as healthy (e.g., by type of drink, serving size, other criteria) and specify the beverages your organization will carry and/or increase in availability, and those beverages that will be removed and/or reduced in availability.

**Example of Beverage Standards:** (Insert name of organization) includes the following guidelines for defining healthy beverages:

- Water (free, safe drinking water through fountains, hydration stations, and similar outlets; unsweetened, 100% fruit-infused, plain or naturally flavored sparkling water/seltzer).
- Tea/coffee (unsweetened with only naturally occurring caffeine)
- Milk (for children under the age of two, plain whole or reduced-fat [2%]; for children above the age of two and adults, plain low-fat [1%] or fat-free [skim], or other unsweetened non-dairy milk alternatives).
- 100% juice (no more than ½ cup or 4-8 ounces per serving).

## 5. Scope

Scope specifies who the policy applies to, and where and when only healthy beverages will be served and/or where and when sugary drinks are or are not allowed.

**Example:** “All beverage offerings, either served or sold, must comply with the organization’s Healthy Beverage Policy. (Insert name of organization) will promote access to free, safe drinking water at all times and provide only healthy beverages, as specified in the beverage standards, during all meetings (internal and external), events, and programming. The standards also apply to all beverages sold via vendors\*. Employees and visitors will continue to have personal choice of any beverage(s) they purchase outside of the organization and bring to work; however, because we serve children, we will encourage all staff to model healthy choices by choosing not to consume sugary drinks or conceal consumption around youth.”

\* Extending policy language into requests-for-bid and vendor contracts is considered a best practice. This allows for clear communication of your institutional priorities to outside vendors who have a presence onsite (e.g., vending machines) or utilize your space for events and/or programming. If your organization does not have a vending machine(s), the inclusion of language is highly encouraged so you are prepared to respond to potential vending machines in the future and ensure increased availability of healthy options.

## 6. Procedural Language

Procedural language provides a plan for implementation and enforcement including information about when and how staff and/or visitors will be educated about the new policy.

**Example** of a school’s procedural language: “Following approval by the school board, the school’s Wellness Committee will educate staff about the policy during its next all-staff meeting and regularly remind staff of the policy through other communication channels such as email and newsletters. The Wellness Committee will also provide staff with copies of the policy, tools such as classroom charts to monitor the beverage choices of students, and lists of healthier beverage options to be served in the classroom, and during before and afterschool events/programming. (Insert name of organization) recognizes that parents and guardians have a primary and fundamental role in promoting and protecting their children’s health and wellbeing. Because of this, the school will consistently communicate with families and provide information about the policy and ideas for promoting healthier beverage choices at home. Keeping in mind that we are striving to protect the health of our students, the Wellness Committee will monitor cooperation and compliance\*\* with the policy quarterly and make necessary adjustments, if needed.

\*\* It is optional to include language about the consequences of the policy being disregarded.