Purpose of *CHANGE*

The purpose of the *CHANGE* tool is to enable local stakeholders and community team members to survey and identify community strengths and areas for improvement regarding current policy, systems, and environmental change strategies. The definitions of policy change, systems change, and environmental change are below. These terms and others used in the *CHANGE* tool itself are in the Glossary of Terms (Appendix A).

Policy change:

Laws, regulations, rules, protocols, and procedures, designed to guide or influence behavior. Policies can be either legislative or organizational in nature. Policies often mandate environmental changes and increase the likelihood that they will become institutionalized or sustainable. Examples of legislative policies include taxes on tobacco products, provision of county or city public land for green spaces or farmers' markets, regulations governing the National School Lunch Program, and clean indoor air laws. Examples of organizational policies include schools requiring healthy food options for all students, a district ban on the sale of less than healthy foods throughout the school day, menu labeling in restaurants, required quality assurance protocols or practices (e.g., clinical care processes), or a human resources policy that requires healthy foods to be served at meetings.

Systems change:

Change that impacts all elements, including social norms of an organization, institution, or system; may include a policy or environmental change strategy. Policies are often the driving force behind systems change. Examples are implementing the National School Lunch Program across the state school system or ensuring a hospital system goes tobacco free.

Environmental change (Environment):

Physical, social, or economic factors designed to influence people's practices and behaviors. Examples of alterations or changes to the environment include:

- *Physical*: Structural changes or the presence of programs or services, including the presence of healthy food choices in restaurants or cafeterias, improvements in the built environment to promote walking (e.g., walking paths), the availability of smoking cessation services to patients or workers, and the presence of comprehensive school health education curricula in schools.
- *Social*: A positive change in attitudes or behavior about policies that promote health or an increase in supportive attitudes regarding a health practice, including an increase in favorable attitudes of community decision makers about the importance of nonsmoking policies or an increase in nonacceptance of exposure to second-hand smoke from the general public.

- *Economic*: The presence of financial disincentives or incentives to encourage a desired behavior, including charging higher prices for tobacco products to decrease their use or the provision of nonsmoker health insurance discounts.

The *CHANGE* tool has four key objectives and three benefits.

Objectives:

- Identify community strengths and areas for improvement.
- Identify and understand the status of community health needs.
- Define improvement areas to guide the community toward implementing and sustaining policy, systems, and environmental changes around healthy living strategies (e.g., increased physical activity, improved nutrition, reduced tobacco use and exposure, and chronic disease management).
- Assist with prioritizing community needs and consider appropriate allocation of available resources.

Benefits:

- Allows local stakeholders to work together in a collaborative process to survey their community.
- Offers suggestions and examples of policy, systems, and environmental change strategies.
- Provides feedback to communities as they institute local-level change for healthy living.

In addition, *CHANGE* can assist you in proposing, developing, and justifying strategic areas for improvement within your Community Action Plan. *CHANGE* also serves as a vehicle for developing and operationalizing principles to guide your community team, such as decision-making and member participation. Tips for ensuring a strong team are discussed in Action Step 1.