FOOD & NUTRITION POLICY DEVELOPMENT TOOLBOX

TOOLS FOR INDIVIDUALS WORKING TOWARDS

ADVANCING FOOD & NUTRITION POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this toolbox is to create one document which compiles hands-on policy development tools related to the area of food and nutrition. In particular, the focus is on tools that use food and nutrition policies as examples or case studies. Thus, the scan for policy development tools was defined to serve a particular purpose. Efforts were made to ensure that the tools were as hands-on as possible to provide the most utility for frontline professionals in Ontario. It is important to note that this was not meant to be an exhaustive search of all policy development resources but rather a selective gathering of tools that those working in the area of food and nutrition may find particularly helpful.

For each tool, you will find a summary sheet with a short description, its food and nutrition application, the website link to find the resource, and the website link to a summary document (if available). The tools are organized in the order that they may be used. However, it is possible to skip forward to the tool that best serves your particular needs as each tool can be used independently of each other. The country of origin and year is noted at the top beside the name of the tool. You will also notice that some tools provide links to additional tools that are not specific to food and nutrition but you may still find valuable. The idea behind creating a summary sheet for each tool is to allow the reader to easily discern whether a particular tool is most applicable to their situation by taking a look at the quick overviews provided in this document.

Also included are several documents on the successes and challenges of specific local level policies related to smoking (pg. 17). These were provided in lieu of a similar document for a food and nutrition local policy. Although there is a lack of food and nutrition focus in these examples, they provide insight on some of the issues that need to be addressed when developing local level policy. Finally, several policy scan documents are provided (pg. 19-21) as a source of information as well as inspiration.

METHODS

The search for resources was conducted by first visiting sites known to house policy development tools: The National Collaborating Centre for Healthy Public Policy and The Health Communication Unit. The resources available on these sites were combed through to identify the ones which employed a food and nutrition lens. The references for the resources found were reviewed for additional tools. In addition, a Google search was performed to using the words 'policy development' and 'food'/'nutrition'/'healthy eating'.

Tools selected for this compilation needed to meet several criteria. First, as mentioned above, there must be a food and nutrition lens. Second, resources were selected if they were applicable to local level policy development and can be used by anyone (rather than tools aimed at policy makers in government appointed positions). Finally, the tool had to be hands-on and directly related to the policy development process.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

DEVELOPING HEALTH PROMOTION POLICIES – THE HEALTH COMMUNICATION UNIT (CANADA, 2004)

Description

- This workbook was created to provide an outline of THCU's proposed policy development process. The workbook goes through the following 8 policy development steps while providing worksheets and examples to guide the process:
  - Step 1: Identify, Describe and Analyze the Problem
  - Step 2: Assess Community Support, Capacity and Readiness to Determine if Policy is an Appropriate Strategy
  - Step 3: Develop Goals, Objectives and Policy Options
  - Step 4: Identify Decision Makers and Influencers
  - Step 5: Build support for Policy Among Decision Makers
  - Step 6: Write and Revise the Policy
  - Step 7: Implement Policy
  - Step 8: Evaluate and Monitor Policy on an Ongoing Basis

Food and Nutrition Application

- References to policies related to food and nutrition are made throughout the document.

Link

- http://www.thcu.ca/resource_db/pubs/539372877.pdf

Summary Document

- http://www.thcu.ca/infoandresources/resource_display.cfm?resourceID=1014

TOOLKIT TO HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES – INFLUENCING HEALTHY PUBLIC POLICIES – ONTARIO CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION ALLIANCE (CANADA, 2011)

Description

- This toolkit is based on THCU's 8 step policy development process. It takes the reader through the steps and provides extra worksheets and tips to achieve each step as well as links to case studies. Checklists provided at the end of each step help the reader determine if they are ready to move on. Further links and resources are provided at the end of the toolkit along with a list of policy ideas for specific settings. The policy ideas pertain to: alcohol misuse, healthy eating, injury prevention, mental health, physical activity, sports and recreation, and tobacco use/exposure.

Food and Nutrition Application

- Evidence-based food and nutrition policy ideas are provided for the following settings: communities, schools, and workplaces. Nutrition examples are used to help with the completion of some worksheets.

Link

- http://www.ocdpa.on.ca/rpt_HCtoolkit.htm

Summary Document

- http://www.ocdpa.on.ca/rpt_HCtoolkit.htm

Description

- This briefing note illustrates how a logic model can be used as part of a knowledge synthesis or public policy analysis. In particular, the document reveals how to understand and display the intended effect of the proposed public policy. The following benefits of logic models are also discussed: defining the public policy being studies, assessing plausibility, guiding data collection and indicator selection, articulating causal links, communicating the logic of the intervention, and fostering collaboration.

Food and Nutrition Application

- The example logic model used in the briefing note uses the issue of nutrition labelling and its effect on the prevention of obesity.

Link

- http://www.ncchpp.ca/172/publications.ccnpps?id_article=898

Description

- This briefing note provides the basis for analyzing public policies through 6 elements:
  - effectiveness
  - unintended effects
  - equity
  - cost
  - feasibility
  - acceptability
- The tool can be used to analyze a policy prior to its implementation or to analyze a policy which is already in place. Potential data collection methods and the presentation of results are also discussed.

Food and Nutrition Application

- The document uses the example of nutrition labeling to illustrate how a potential policy can be analyzed.

Link

- http://www.ncchpp.ca/172/Publications.ccnpps

Description

- This document discusses a knowledge synthesis method which will result in a thorough compilation of data related to the policy's effectiveness and implementation issues. It begins by describing the elements of a public policy analysis and offers suggestions for data sources. The remainder of the document is committed to describing the four stages of knowledge synthesis:
  - Creating an inventory of policies and selecting the subject of the synthesis
  - Outlining the logic of the chosen intervention
  - Conducting a literature review
  - Contextualizing the data using a deliberative processes

Food and Nutrition Application

- Obesity and nutrition labelling is used as an example throughout the document.

Link

- http://www.ncchpp.ca/172/publications.ccnpps?id_article=536

Summary Document

- http://www.ncchpp.ca/172/publications.ccnpps?id_article=536

Description

- This document is an application of NCCHPP's Method for Synthesizing Knowledge about Public Policies to the issue of nutrition labelling. A review of the knowledge synthesis methods used is presented along with the results of the literature review and the deliberative processes on the effectiveness, unintended effects, equity, cost, feasibility, and acceptability of nutrition labelling. Key conclusions are given at the end.

Food and Nutrition Application

- The focus of this report is on the application of knowledge synthesis to the topic of nutrition labelling. The findings as a result of the knowledge sythesis process are presented.

Link

- http://www.ncchpp.ca/172/publications.ccnpps?id_article=562

Summary Document

- http://www.ncchpp.ca/172/publications.ccnpps?id_article=562

Action Strategies Toolkit: A Guide for Local and State Leaders Working to Create Healthy Communities and Prevent Childhood Obesity – Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (USA, 2011)

Description

- A US-based document which highlights evidence-based policy actions to promote healthy and active communities. Although the document is directed to policy 'leaders', the policy options provided are applicable to public health professionals as ideas for advocacy and policy development in local jurisdictions. The policy ideas presented relate to budgetary decisions, regulations, zoning, and many others.

Food and Nutrition Application

- This document has a focus on healthy eating strategies that can be implemented through policy change. Areas of policy change that are focused on include school nutrition, food vendors, local food, restaurants, and food and beverage marketing. Additional resources related to these topics are referenced at the end.

Link

- www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/actionstrategies

Description

- This briefing note succinctly covers the following four factors which can enable the successful development and implementation of sustainable policies:
  - Legal status and mandate of food policy
  - Staffing support and location of food policy within a local government bureaucracy
  - Integration of food policy into existing policies and regulations
  - Meaningful partnerships and citizen participation mechanism

Food and Nutrition Application

- Using the topic of food policy, real-life examples are provided for each of the above success factors.

Link

- http://www.ncchpp.ca/148/publications.ccnpps?id_article=820

Advocacy in Action: a toolkit for Public Health Professionals – Public Health Advocacy Institute of Western Australia (Australia, 2009)

Description

- An advocacy toolkit designed specifically for those who work in public health. Although the document orginates from Australia, many of the priniciples still apply to the Canadian setting. Tips for advocacy are provided (e.g. checking the facts and getting the timing right) and guidelines for writing media releases, letters to politicians, meeting with politicians, and letters to the editor are provided.

Food and Nutrition Application

- The document uses several food and nutrition examples (e.g. fast food advertising) to help illustrate some of the advocacy tips and tools that it provides.

Link

- http://www.phaiwa.org.au/publications-mainmenu-125/advocacy-toolkit-mainmenu-143

LOCAL LEVEL POLICY DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLES

Description

- Unfortunately, documents reviewing the process of implementing food or nutrition policy were not found. In lieu, the following reports can be used to learn about the challenges and keys to success for implementing local level policy.

Example Policies

- The Development and Promotion of Guelph Soccer's Tobacco-Free Policy: Success Factors & Lessons (2010)
- Ottawa's Smoke-free Bylaws Lessons Learned Toolkit (2002)
- The Development of a Smoke-Free Housing Policy in the Region of Waterloo (2010)

Links

- Guelph: https://www.ptcc-cfc.on.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=97833&pageId=104044
- Ottawa: https://www.ptcc-cfc.on.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=97833&pageId=104661
- Waterloo: https://www.ptcc-cfc.on.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=97833&pageId=104032

POLICY SCANS

FOOD AND NUTRITION POLICY DEVELOPMENT TOOLBOX

Description

- A policy scan of Canadian, US, and Australian policies aimed at improving healthy eating and active living. The common healthy eating policy themes identified by this scan are: community gardens, access to healthy foods, food advertising at schools, trans-fat ban, and regulation of foods sold at mental health facilities. A table at the end of the document provides a quick summary of each policy identified.

Food and Nutrition Application

- Policies in food and nutrition are a specific focus of this scan.

Link

- https://www.ptcc-cfc.on.ca/cms/one.aspx?pageId=103965

CANCER VIEW PREVENTION POLICIES DIRECTORY – THE CANADIAN PARTNERSHIP AGAINST CANCER (CANADA, 2012)

Description

- A searchable scan of Canadian policies aimed at cancer or chronic disease prevention. The database is updated regularly to reflect polices at the municipal, provincial/territorial, and national level. The risk factors addressed by the policy, jurisdiction, and policy venue are provided along with a direct link to the policy itself.

Food and Nutrition Application

- Policies in food and nutrition are included as part of this scan. Examples include community garden and nutrition in school policies.

Link

- http://www.cancerview.ca/preventionpolicies

Description

- These two documents are a scan of polices across Canada and internationally which define 'healthy' foods using nutrition criteria. The polices that were sampled are at the provincial and local level. Examples include school nutrition, labelling, and nutrition in recreational facilities. Stakeholders were consulted on the issues of defining 'healthy' foods and the lack of standardization was reported as a main concern.

Food and Nutrition Application

- The focus of this policy scan was to identify policies which use nutrition criteria to identify 'healthy' foods.

Link

- http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/pol/exsum-som-healthy-sains-environ-eng.php