

CREATING HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS FOR YOUTH

With incoming legalized commercial sales of cannabis and other concerns impacting the health and safety of our young people, towns may be wondering what they can do to create a healthy, welcoming environment for families and exercise some control over youth exposure to messaging and products intended for adults.

Review the checklist provided to see where your town currently stands with in-place youth protective factors. This document is intended to provide guidance should a town wish to implement any changes.

CHECKLIST:

DOES YOUR TOWN HAVE...

- Zoning
 - Buffer Zones (requiring a certain distance between businesses focused on age-restricted products and places like schools)

- Ordinances Creating Substance-free Events/Locations

	Alcohol	Tobacco	Cannabis
Public spaces	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public events	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Town-owned buildings and property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Sign Ordinance
 - Placement (appropriate placement in relation to buildings, sidewalks, streets)
 - Size (size limitations to keep signs from being too large)
 - Height (height maximum to keep signs from being too tall)
 - Number (limit so there is not an excessive number of signs)
 - Brightness/Flashing (limiting these so they are not distracting or too attention-drawing)
 - Temporary Signage (rules for signs for temporary events or spaces)
 - Advertisements in window spaces (how much window space of a business can be taken up)
 - Off-premise Advertisement (allowed or not)

- Health Chapter in Town Plan
 - Healthy Food Access
 - Healthy Homes
 - Environmental Quality
 - Substance Misuse Prevention
 - Active Living & Active Transportation
 - Age-Friendly Environment
 - Childcare
 - Social Inclusion & Sense of Community

- Town Health & Wellness Committee

Zoning can be a useful protective tool, as it allows a town to place a “**buffer zone**” of a certain distance between businesses focused on age-restricted products -- such as vape shops, cannabis dispensaries, and adult entertainment stores -- and child- and family-centered establishments such as schools, churches, libraries, and daycares. (Note that existing businesses may be grandfathered in.)

Substance Ordinances can be adopted to regulate the use and consumption of certain substances in public places in town and may include an **Alcohol Ordinance** and a **Smoking/Vaping Ordinance** for both tobacco and cannabis.

Sign ordinances can be adopted to help minimize the impact of messaging for age-restricted products by controlling aspects of types of signage allowed. The ordinance must be content-neutral, meaning the regulations cannot be based on the content of the sign, and the regulations will apply to all businesses. Minimized signage for age-restricted products is also a feature of recovery-friendly and sobriety-friendly communities.

Health Chapters in town plans allow the town to set forth its goals, policies, and recommended actions relating to public health in a document that is then adopted by the town.

Town Health and Wellness Committees of town citizens can be formed to advocate for healthy town policies and implement town-identified action items of the town plan’s health chapter.

This checklist was drafted by the Mt. Ascutney Prevention Partnership (MAPP) and the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission (TRORC). Sample language for checklist items can be found in the online Health Policy Clearinghouse, www.trorc.org/healthpolicyclearinghouse.

To receive assistance with a health policy change in your town, contact us using the information below.

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