

# City of Fresno Storefront Advertising Policy Promotes Health and Safety

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## Summary

Thanks to the collaboration of Fresno youth leaders and adult allies, the City of Fresno adopted a policy that restricts the location and type of storefront advertising allowed in the city. As a result of strong community engagement and city enforcement efforts, 37% of selected stores in Fresno reduced storefront advertising within the past year. This means 494,665 residents, including 83,501 children and teens in the City of Fresno are further protected from the promotional influences of tobacco, alcohol and sugary drinks.

## Challenge

Billions of advertising dollars are spent each year in the United States by the tobacco, alcohol and sugary drink industries. In 2016, the California Department of Public Health found that 67% of surveyed tobacco retail stores in Fresno County advertise tobacco, alcohol, and sugary drink products in store windows. Only 5% of Fresno County tobacco retailers displayed advertisements of healthy food and beverages, such as milk and produce. Marketing practices, even more than peer pressure, impact youth behavior. Lifestyle choices that are established in youth can lay a foundation for good health in the years to come or can lead to obesity, chronic illness and even death. In California's Central Valley, research indicates that store advertisements can increase the likelihood of pre-teen tobacco and alcohol use by 50%.

## Solution

Over a three-year period, youth leaders from four different high schools and adult allies from the City of Fresno actively educated city leaders, retailers, and community residents about the impact that unhealthy advertising has on youth, and the safety and aesthetics of the community. Youth leaders hosted a community forum that captured the attention of the media and city leaders. A local group of retailers partnered on the project and presented to city council their concerns about the negative impact unhealthy advertising has on the community. Survey data that documented the oversaturation of unhealthy advertising in the City of Fresno was a key factor in the success of the policy effort.



## Your Involvement Is Key

**You can help protect your children**

**from the dangers of daily unhealthy advertising. Follow these easy steps:**

**(1) Model healthy behaviors and show children how eating nutritious foods and exercising can be fun.**

**(2) Talk to your children about advertising. If a child asks for a product after seeing an ad, use it as an opportunity to teach the child what advertising is, what it means, and how it works.**

**(3) Advocate for healthy changes in your community.**

## Results

The initiative inspired the City of Fresno to adopt a policy in their citywide Development Code that restricts storefront advertising displays, outdoor advertising, and the proximity of outdoor advertising to youth sensitive areas such as nurseries, schools, parks, youth activity centers and daycares. This new policy reaches approximately 494,665 residents in the City of Fresno. That is enough people to fill Bulldog Stadium 12 times.

The Central Valley Health Policy Institute at California State University, Fresno, reports that since the passage of the policy, 37% of selected stores in Fresno reduced storefront advertising within the past year. Factors such as post-policy education to retailers and the city's code enforcement efforts contributed to this change.

### Contact

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*"Immense financial capital goes into advertising unhealthy products to our youth. We are not going to be a healthy community until healthful products are made affordable and accessible, and are marketed at least as well as unhealthy products."*

- Dr. Ken Bird, Fresno County Health Officer

## Sustaining Success

The Fresno County Department of Public Health developed a toolkit that outlines the key steps of planning and implementing an effective storefront advertising initiative. The toolkit includes supporting materials used in each step of the model and will help facilitate ongoing technical assistance to cities that are interested in adopting a storefront advertising point of sale communication policy. Toolkits will be sent to every city in the County and will be available for download at [www.fcdph.org](http://www.fcdph.org).



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