Promoting Health and Cost Control in States (PHACCS)

Trust for America's Health
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NORTH CAROLINA

The Promoting Health and Cost Control in States (PHACCS) initiative at Trust for America's Health (TFAH) highlights state legislative and administrative actions that support better health and an economic return on investment or state cost savings, while addressing community-level root causes of poor health.

PHACCS Policies Adopted in North Carolina

Universal Pre-Kindergarten Programs	NO
Universal School Breakfast	NO
Universal School Lunch	NO
Syringe Access Program	YES
Smoke-Free Laws	NO
Complete Streets	YES
Earned Income Tax Credit	NO
Paid Sick Leave	NO
Paid Family Leave	NO
Ban the Box	YES

Advancing PHACCS Policies in North Carolina

Spotlight: Earned Income Tax Credit

In 2014, North Carolina eliminated a refundable state EITC worth 5 percent of the federal credit. Since then, legislators have attempted to reinstate the policy that would increase the value of the credit to between 5 to 20 percent of the federal EITC. During the 2025 legislative session, legislators in the House introduced the Tax Relief for Working Families Act to attempt to reenact the Earned Income Tax Credit; however, the bill failed to make it out of committee.

Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center. "Prenatal-to-3 State Policy Roadmap 2025".https://pn3policy.org/pn-3-state-policy-roadmap-2025/us/state-eitc/. Accessed January 8,2026

https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2025/H181

State Cigarette Excise Tax Rates

TAX: **$0.45** TIER: **LOW**

State Excise Tax Rates for Beer and Distilled Spirits

Distilled Spirits

TAX: **$18.23** TIER: **HIGH**

Beer

TAX: **$0.62** TIER: **HIGH**

Tax rates are expressed by tier: high (top 25%), middle, and low (lowest 25%)

For more information, please contact TFAH at **info@tfah.org**

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Policy	Health Evidence	Economic Evidence
Goal 1: Support the Connections Between Health & Learning		
Universal Pre-Kindergarten Programs	Associated with lower rates of obesity, depression, alcohol use, and tobacco use. Support improved socioemotional outcomes and academic outcomes.	Universal pre-K has a positive return on investment and is also cost-effective to program participants, their parents, taxpayers, and society through reductions in healthcare and education spending, and increased earnings for program participants.
School Nutrition Programs	Decrease the risk for food insecurity and address child hunger, improve nutrition quality and reduce obesity rates. Supports academic outcomes, including improved school attendance, and improved cognitive and academic performance.	The school breakfast and lunch programs generate $40 billion in health and economic benefits, a higher value than their combined annual budget.
Goal 2: Employ Harm Reduction Strategies to Prevent Substance Misuse Deaths & Related Diseases		
Syringe Access Programs	Reduce the rate of infectious diseases among intravenous drug users. Influence other outcomes, such as greater promotion of naloxone, prevention overdose education, and connections to treatment.	Syringe access programs can yield cost savings within a year by preventing new cases of HIV and hepatitis and their associated costs for treatment.
Goal 3: Promote Healthy Behavior		
Smoke-Free Policies	Smoke-free policies decrease tobacco use, exposure to secondhand smoke, smoking-related illnesses and mortality.	Smoke-free policies can reduce secondhand smoke exposure and related medical expenditures.
Tobacco Pricing Strategies	Reduced smoking and rates of smokeless tobacco usage. Improved pre- and post-natal outcomes for pregnant women and babies.	Generate cost savings and avoid lost productivity due to poor tobacco-related health outcomes.
Alcohol Pricing Strategies	Increasing the price of alcohol leads to decreased alcohol consumption, less excessive drinking, decreased mortality from liver cirrhosis, and reduced alcohol-related violence.	Save billions of dollars in medical expenses and can also increase state revenue.
Goal 4: Promote Active Living & Connectedness		
Complete Streets	Attract active transportation for biking and walking by improving transportation connectivity. Can help mitigate the impacts of inactive lifestyles and improve health outcomes by promoting physical activity.	Have been associated with economic development, increased home values, and creating economic vitality.
Goal 5: Ensure Safe, Healthy, & Affordable Housing for All		
Housing Rehabilitation Loan & Grant Programs	Positive effects on overall physical and mental health by reducing hazards within a home. Reduce hospitalizations, mitigate heat-related illnesses and cold-related health problems. Can support older adults to age in place.	Improve home values, neighborhood quality and stability by promoting stable housing. Benefits low-income owners by reducing bill costs providing them with more income.
Rapid Re-Housing Programs/ Housing First	Rapid re-housing is linked to improved physical and mental health, greater self-sufficiency, reduced substance use and decreased rates of homelessness.	Improve financial stability and employment outcomes for participants. Supports efforts to maintain employment.
Goal 6: Economic Well-Being		
Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)	Associated with improved maternal and child health, increased food security and improved mental health outcomes.	Improved likelihood of completing higher education. Reduces likelihood of living in poverty, and criminal convictions.
Earned Sick Leave	Increases opportunities to access preventive healthcare. Reduces exposure to transmissible diseases in the workplace and occupational injury.	Increases labor productivity and profit for employers reduce employee turnover, saving employers the cost of hiring and training replacements.
Paid Family Leave	Improves maternal and child health by reducing the risk of birth-related health issues for mothers and their babies. Can support positive mental and physical health outcomes for parents.	Provides economic security to caregivers, increase employee retention, and saves employers the cost of training new hires.
Fair Hiring Protections (Ban-the-Box)	Increased employment for justice-involved individuals. Improves economic well-being from employment, which influences health outcomes.	Increased lifetime earnings for formerly justice-involved individuals.