

BLUE ZONES

ORGANIZATION CHECKLIST

(Clubs, Civic Groups, Associations, and Societies)

The world we create for ourselves has an impact on our everyday lives, whether we're aware of it or not. Where we choose to live, work, play, and even the community of people with whom we spend our time, all influence the lifestyle choices we make.

What if you had the opportunity to help intentionally create a healthy city where the healthiest choices are also the easiest ones to make? **Imagine a place where it's easy to eat fresh produce from grocery stores and farmers markets, not only because they're more affordable, but also because they're more accessible than fast-food restaurants.**

Here it's easier to bike than drive, thanks to better bike lanes providing safe and direct access to work, shopping centers, and parks, all without the hassle of public parking. This community, designed for health and well-being, would also make it easier for our kids to play outside, with safe school playgrounds made available to the public during non-school hours.

This is a city built for active living. It's an environment where city governments can support the health and vitality of citizens by carrying out policies that provide people with healthy opportunities, giving them a supportive nudge toward eating better, moving more naturally, and becoming socially connected.

Can such a community exist? Yes, and your organization can be a vital contributor!

WHAT IS BLUE ZONES PROJECT?

Across the globe lie Blue Zones® areas, where people reach age one hundred at an astonishing rate. Citizens of places like Sardinia, Italy; Okinawa, Japan; and Loma Linda, California, have maintained their healthy lifestyles for generations.

Blue Zones Project® aims to adopt the lifestyle principles of these areas to transform American cities and towns into Blue Zones Communities®, where people can “live longer, better” lives.

Our town is trying to become a Blue Zones Community. Achieving that goal requires organizations within the community to pledge and then act on their specific responsibilities. If each sector does its part, then we will all share the benefits of living in a community where well-being is a way of life.



BLUE ZONES PROJECT

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION CHECKLIST

Picture the best version of yourself and your organization. Think about what you'd like to personally accomplish over the course of this Project, and then choose the checklist actions that best fit both your short- and long-term goals, personally and for your organization. Remember, these actions don't have to be completed all at once. The purpose of this checklist is to allow your organization to create goals that you can accomplish over time (individually and collectively).

This tool is designed for groups or organizations such as clubs, civic groups (i.e. Rotary), associations, and societies.

The Organization Checklist promotes evidence-based actions and lifestyle principles to create a healthier environment and community for citizens and organizations. The actions listed below are designed to create an atmosphere that inspires, encourages, and promotes well-being in the community in which you live, work, and play. Most of these actions have little to no cost beyond the initial time necessary to set them up. Choose the pledge actions that work best for your organization and get started!

BENEFITS

- Recognition for helping your community obtain Blue Zones Community certification
- Improved health and well-being of your members
- Recognition and promotion through Blue Zones Project media channels (if desired)
- Increased awareness about your group due to your organization's participation in Blue Zones Project (if desired)



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Identify your point person and make sure they are a trained Blue Zones Project Ambassador. This will equip them to get support and information to assist your organization.
2. Gather a small group of members to select the actions you are currently doing or want to do in the future. Then, obtain approvals as needed from the group as a whole.
3. Implement your selected action items from the assessment.
4. Celebrate your achievements!
5. By completing the assessment:
 - We agree to voluntarily comply with the pledge action items we've selected to implement.
 - We agree to display a banner or lawn sign stating our participation in Blue Zones Project (as appropriate).
 - We understand that no compensation will be provided to participate in or undertake any of the options listed above.
 - We allow/ do not allow (circle one) Healthways and Blue Zones to use the name of our company in their promotion of Blue Zones Project, and
 - We understand that our inclusion as a participating organization is entirely within the discretion of Healthways and Blue Zones, and that our designation as a participating organization may be terminated at any time and for any reason.
 - To the fullest extent permitted by law, we shall indemnify and hold harmless Healthways, Blue Zones, or partners and their officers, directors, agents, representatives, employees, and volunteers from and against all claims, damages, losses, and expenses including, but not limited to, attorney's fees, arising out of or resulting from requirements of this agreement, or the acts and omissions of our company, its employees, representatives, agents, patrons, and guests.

NAME (GROUP LEADER IF APPROPRIATE) _____ DATE _____

ORGANIZATION _____

AMBASSADOR* NAME _____

PHONE _____ EMAIL _____

*Ambassadors are people who volunteer to be the liaison between an organization and Blue Zones Project. They receive special training on how to engage the organization in using this checklist.

CHECKLIST CRITERIA

Organizations that meet the following criteria will be recognized as a Blue Zones Project Participating Organization (if desired):

- Have at least 25 percent of your members complete a Blue Zones Personal Pledge and one action of their choice.**

What is it? The Personal Pledge is a list of small, easy steps individuals can take in their daily lives to provide lasting benefits for physical and emotional health, including losing weight, making new friends, and finding more meaning and purpose in life. Individuals select the changes they'd like to make from the list and commit to making those changes by signing the Pledge.

How to do it: Consider integrating promotion of the Personal Pledge with promotion of health and well-being initiatives that are already established at your organization.

- Select at least two Environmental Checklist items.** These ideas are designed to make changes that nudge members toward adopting easier, healthier choices.

- Select at least two Program Checklist items.** These ideas help individuals connect with other members and meet new friends in their community.

- Answer Communications Questions.** These ideas help promote Blue Zones Project to create a healthy community.

- Submit selections.** Have your Ambassador copy the pledge selections (pages 3–8 of this packet) and submit it to the Ambassador Coordinator (Engagement Lead).

BLUE ZONES PROJECT PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION CHECKLIST

Definitions:

Currently Doing: Our organization already practices this item and it is actively being observed by members.

Will Do: Our organization currently does not practice this item; however, by checking this box we are supporting the implementation of this item.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST ITEMS

(Choose a minimum of two items to implement)

		CURRENTLY DOING	WILL DO
1.	Create a tobacco-free environment and designate your organization as a "Tobacco-Free Zone."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Incorporate Blue Zones Project well-being material into regular communications.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Establish a health-and-wellness council that meets regularly at the organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Ensure bike racks are available to encourage alternative transportation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	Allow your facility to be used for Blue Zones Project meetings and/ or recreational activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Plant and maintain a community garden.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Ensure that at least 50 percent of the food and beverage options in vending machines meet Blue Zones Food Guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Offer healthy, nutritious food options at meetings, special events, and concessions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Don't use unhealthy foods for fundraisers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Discourage consumption of soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages, including those brought from home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Stock kitchen, cafeteria, or break room with ten-inch plates and tall, narrow glasses.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PROGRAM CHECKLIST

(Choose a minimum of two items to implement)

		CURRENTLY DOING	WILL DO
12.	Organize Moai® walking teams.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Sponsor trainings, such as Purpose Workshops, that support members connecting with their personal purpose.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Host well-being or educational events (health fairs, guest speakers, "Lunch and Learns").	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Promote volunteer opportunities within your organization and to assist the needs of your organization.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	Read the best sellers <i>The Blue Zones</i> and <i>The Blue Zones Solution</i> and organize book discussions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	Host plant-based cooking events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	Organize "Lunch with a Member" events to facilitate new relationships.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

COMMUNICATIONS SELECTIONS

1. We will host a Blue Zones Project presentation at our group's upcoming meeting.

No Yes Presentation date _____

2. What events do you host or sponsor and what ways could Blue Zones Project get involved?

Answer: _____

3. We will add a Blue Zones Project web banner or button to our website.

No Yes Contact _____

4. We will promote Blue Zones Project with a status update on our group's Facebook page and link it to bluezonesproject.com.

No Yes Contact _____

5. We will Tweet about Blue Zones Project and link it to bluezonesproject.com.

No Yes Contact _____

6. We will write a blog post explaining and promoting Blue Zones Project.

No Yes Contact _____

7. We will include information on Blue Zones Project in our next newsletter.

No Yes Contact _____

8. We will send an email about Blue Zones Project to our list.

No Yes Contact _____

9. Other ways we can help to promote Blue Zones Project include:

Yes Description: _____

10. Blue Zones Project would like to promote your group's new connection to the Blue Zones Project initiative through our communication channels. Would you be interested in any of the following?

1. A status update on the Blue Zones Project Facebook page promoting your group and announcing its support for Blue Zones Project.

Yes No

2. A Twitter tweet from Blue Zones Project promoting your group and announcing its support for Blue Zones Project.

Yes No

3. A post on the Blue Zones Project blog promoting your group and announcing its support for Blue Zones Project.

Yes No

4. A mention in an upcoming Blue Zones Project email newsletter.

Yes No

If we link to your website, what address should we use? _____

ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST ACTIONS

1. Create a tobacco-free environment and designate your organization as a “Tobacco-Free Zone.” Provide tobacco cessation information to your members.

How to do it: Inform your members and guests that you do not permit tobacco or smoking anywhere on your property. Remind your members that there is a free and confidential smoking cessation tool available as part of the Blue Zones Project initiative, QuitNet®.

Why do it: There is no safe level of tobacco use or secondhand smoke. It is a serious health risk in any amount. Keep tobacco out of your environment to protect people’s health and to promote anti-tobacco attitudes among children.

2. Incorporate Blue Zones Project well-being material into regular communications.

How to do it: Residents living in the original Blue Zones areas share common principles called Power 9®—these are healthy lifestyle habits that help them live longer, healthier, happier lives. Use the monthly Blue Zones Project themes to promote healthy principles and upcoming events as well as other Blue Zones Project communications.

Why do it: The more your organization knows about and understands the behaviors that improve well-being, the more likely people are to improve their own behaviors and live longer, better.

3. Establish a health and wellness council that meets regularly at the organization.

How to do it: Form a council of people who are knowledgeable and experienced in leading a healthy life, planning activities, and communicating information to members and other contacts with whom they work.

Why do it: The council ensures the visibility of the organization’s commitment to health and wellness. It also provides a support structure for members who are interested in changing their habits to promote a healthier life.

4. Ensure bike racks are available to encourage alternative transportation.

How to do it: Install safe, secure, and accessible bike racks on the property. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Make sure bicycle parking is easy to access and allows cyclists to safely join or exit from the local road network.
- Stands should be designed to allow both wheels and frames to be locked to something immovable, and they should be located in a highly visible area to deter theft.
- Ideally, bicycle parking should be covered and protected from the weather.
- If space is an issue, consider reallocating car parking, using storage spaces or two-tier stand systems, or contacting local authorities about using on-street parking.

Why do it: Bike racks give citizens and members who commute via bicycle the feeling of security that their bike will be protected. Lack of secure parking is one of the top three things that prevents people from biking to their destination. Bike racks send the message that cycling is welcomed by the organization. It is a great way to incorporate natural movement into our daily lives.

5. Allow your facility to be used for Blue Zones Project meetings and/or recreational activities.

How to do it: Allow individuals or groups open access or the ability to reserve your facility for hosting seminars or local workshops, such as scrapbooking, knitting, painting, photography, or sports-related activities.

Why do it: By letting your venue be used to host specific events, you are opening up a gathering place for people to meet and socialize about common interests, becoming a venue for the creation of new social networks.

6. Plant and maintain a community garden.

How to do it: Start by choosing some vegetables and herbs that you would like to grow. Map out growing space in a member's yard or rent or share a garden plot. Then, take a look through the "how-to projects" featured on the National Gardening Association website (www.garden.org) and choose a project that's right for you and your space. Start planting and enjoying your delicious produce!

Why do it: Gardening is common in all Blue Zones areas. This activity provides low-intensity range-of-motion exercise, stress reduction, and fresh, delicious vegetables. In fact, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention points out that you can burn 150 calories by gardening (standing) for approximately 30–45 minutes (<http://www.cdc.gov/family/gardening/>).

7. Ensure that at least 50 percent of food and beverage options in vending machines meet Blue Zones Food Guidelines.

How to do it: Work with your vendors to offer healthier items in your vending machines. Healthy items should meet Blue Zones Food Guidelines and be clearly labeled so that they are easy to identify. You can obtain these guidelines from your local Blue Zones Project team.

Why do it: Policies promoting access to healthy foods available on-site are important, basic steps to create a culture that supports well-being. Encouraging smart food choices for members creates a bias toward healthy eating and helps build barriers for unhealthy eating practices.

8. Offer healthy, nutritious food options at meetings, special events, and concessions.

How to do it: Offer meals and snacks that encourage members to eat foods in appropriate portion sizes and with healthy caloric and sodium levels. For additional information and resources, use the Blue Zones Project Catering Guidelines, which can be obtained from your local Blue Zones Project team.

Why do it: Nutrition is a key factor in weight, cholesterol, and blood-pressure management, and in the prevention of some chronic conditions.

9. Don't use unhealthy foods for fundraisers.

How to do it: Eliminate unhealthy fundraisers like candy, cookie-dough, and soft-drink sales. Instead, use healthy food or non-food fundraisers. Alternatives include: fruit baskets, magazines, wrapping paper, and healthy foods cookbooks.

Why do it: When organizations participate in junk-food fundraisers, they contradict the messages the community learns about health.

For examples of healthy fundraising options, visit the following websites:

- Action for Healthy Kids: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources/files/vaafhk-healthy-fundraising.pdf>
- Ideas for Healthy Fundraising: California Project LEAN (Leaders Encouraging Activity and Nutrition). <http://californiaprojectlean.org/docuserfiles/Ideas%20for%20healthy%20fundraising%20fact%20sheet.pdf>

10. Discourage the consumption of soda and other sugar-sweetened beverages, including soda brought in from home.

How to do it: Inform members of the policy. Post signs around the building to promote healthy foods and beverages.

Why do it: Americans consume 13.8 billion gallons of soda each year. The average cola contains 136 calories and fruit punch contains 192 calories. By substituting other beverages for soda, you can reduce the number of empty calories consumed each day.

11. Stock the kitchen, cafeteria, or break room with ten-inch plates and tall, narrow glasses.

How to do it: Replace dishes in the cafeteria with ten-inch plates, small bowls, and tall, skinny glasses to reduce caloric intake and food waste.

Why do it: The Cornell University Food and Brand Lab found that people who eat off of typical twelve-inch plates regularly consume 27 percent more at meals than those who eat off of smaller ten-inch plates. The same decreases in consumption hold true for bowls and glasses.

12. Organize Moai walking teams (pronounced "Mo Eye").

How to do it: In Okinawa, a moai refers to a small social group that meets regularly. Organizing Walking Moais within your organization will create committed groups of friends who make health a priority. Contact your local Blue Zones Project team for information on Moais in your local community.

Why do it: This encourages people to meet new friends and to spend time with them. When folks surround themselves with health-conscious people, it creates a positive effect on their own behaviors. Studies show that if a person's three closest friends are overweight, she or he is twice as likely to be overweight as well.

PROGRAM CHECKLIST ACTIONS

- 13. Sponsor trainings, such as Purpose Workshops, that support members connecting with their personal purpose.**

How to do it: Conduct, co-host, or promote Purpose Workshops to help individuals identify their values, strengths, and gifts. You may use the Purpose Workshop materials or purpose-related materials from other organizations you trust. Promote your Purpose Workshops to the community through the Blue Zones Project website and emails which may introduce new people to your organization.

Why do it: Discovering a clear sense of one's own strengths and talents not only deepens one's sense of purpose, but encourages stronger contributions at work, in relationships, and in service to the community. People with a strong sense of purpose live seven years longer than people without. They have lower rates of heart disease, lower healthcare costs, and weigh less. They even report higher levels of happiness.

- 14. Host well-being or educational events (health fairs, guest speakers, "Lunch and Learns").**

How to do it: Organize events that promote a healthy lifestyle. Determine the level of interest for specific topics and host lunch and learns (e.g. include stress management, healthy eating, financial management, or a health fair). Invite other local organizations to participate in health fairs to spread the message. Find guest speakers who specialize in wellness, healthy eating, or physical activity, and ask them to speak at a meeting.

Why do it: Onsite events will encourage participation in well-being activities and help continually reinforce the well-being message.

- 15. Promote volunteer opportunities within your organization and to your organization.**

How to do it: Choose a charitable organization that suits your group's skills and interests. One place to start might be to contact your local United Way (<http://apps.liveunited.org/myuw>) to find organizations in your area that are in need of volunteers. You could also contact schools, churches, hospitals, assisted-living facilities, or other local service organizations you are passionate about. In the same way, provide information about your organization and the volunteer opportunities you have available for the community.

Why do it: People who volunteer have lower rates of cancer, heart disease, and depression, as well as lower healthcare costs. They also report being happier, perhaps because they focus their energy on helping others in need. According to the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index®, the happiest people socialize with friends and family about seven hours a day.

16. Read *The Blue Zones* or *The Blue Zones Solution* and organize book discussions.

How to do it: Buy, borrow, or check out from the library *The Blue Zones* or *The Blue Zones Solution*. Form a book group and discuss lessons presented at the end of each chapter, including how you can incorporate them into your daily life.

- *The Blue Zones* book discussion guide is available at:
<http://www.bluezones.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/BlueZonesStudyGuide.pdf>

Why do it: People in the original Blue Zones live longer and have less chronic diseases and better well-being than people in the United States. By incorporating the lessons of the longest-lived people in the world into your life, you can improve your well-being and chances of living a long, healthy life.

17. Host plant-based cooking events.

How to do it: Calling all cooking pros! Organize a group of members who have experience cooking with those who would like to learn how. Hold cooking events that focus on preparing tasty plant-based recipes and educate your members on healthy eating practices.

Why do it: Once people learn how to make more plant-based recipes, they're more likely to prepare them. If people can make healthy eating a habit, they are less likely to develop chronic diseases like heart disease and cancer.

18. Organize "Lunch with a Member" events to facilitate new relationships.

How to do it: Designate a time and place where employees can meet every afternoon to go for a walk during their lunch break. Perhaps have volunteers or members of your wellness committee take turns leading walks each week. Remind employees of the scheduled walks through various media, including email, overhead announcements, or flyers.

Why do it: This program is designed to encourage members to have substantive one-to-one conversations, outside of meetings and work events, about topics of common interests, future studies, and general life experiences. This promotes the formation of strong, lasting friendships between members.

- ⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General—Executive Summary. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Coordinating Center for Health Promotion, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2006.
- ⁱⁱ Albers, Alison B., Lois Biener, Michael Siegel, Debbie M. Cheng, and Nancy Rigotti (2008), “Household Smoking Ban and Adolescent Antismoking Attitudes and Smoking Initiation: Finding From a Longitudinal Study of a Massachusetts Youth Cohort,” *American Journal of Public Health*, 98:10, 1886-1893.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Wansink, Brian. “From Mindless Eating to Mindlessly Eating Better.” *Physiology & Behavior*, 2010; 100: 454-463.
- ^{iv} “The Perils of Plate Size: Waist, Waste, and Wallet.” Brian Wansink and Koert van Ittersum, under review at *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 2011.
- ^v Wansink B, van Ittersum K, and J Painter. “Ice Cream Illusions: Bowls, Spoons, and Self-Served Portion Sizes.” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, 2006; 31(3):240-243.
- ^{vi} Fried, Linda P., Michelle C. Carlson, Marc Freedman, Kevin D. Frick, Thomas A. Glass, Joel Hill, Sylvia McGill, George W. Rebok, Teresa Seeman, James Tielsch, Barbara A. Wasik and Scott Zeger (2004), “A Social Model for Health Promotion for an Aging Population: Initial Evidence on the Experience Corps Model,” *Journal of Urban Health* (March), 81:1, 64-78.
- ^{vii} Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index®. Social Time Crucial to Daily Emotional Wellbeing in U.S., <http://www.gallup.com/poll/107692/Social-Time-Crucial-Daily-Emotional-WellBeing.aspx> (Accessed 8.22.11).
- ^{viii} Christakis, Nicholas A and James H. Fowler (2007), “The Spread of Obesity in a Large Social Network over 32 Years,” *The New England Journal of Medicine* (July 26), 357, 370-379.
- ^{ix} Olshansky, S. Jay, Douglas J Passaron, Ronald C Hershow, Jennifer Layden, Bruce A Carnes, Jacob Brody, Leonard Hayflick, Robert N Butler, David B Allison and David S. Ludwig (2005), “A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century.” *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 352:11, 1138-1145.
- ^x Andreyeva T, Chaloupka FJ, Brownell KD (2011). “Estimating the potential of taxes on sugar-sweetened beverage consumption and generate revenue.” *Prev Med*. 52(6): 413-416.
- ^{xi} U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000.
- ^{xii} Center for Disease Control. Gardening Health and Safety Tips. 2012. <http://www.cdc.gov/family/gardening/>.