

SNAP-ED EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Practitioner Stories

As an accompaniment to the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework Interpretive Guide, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), in partnership with the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research and the Association of SNAP Nutrition Education Administrators, produced this collection of vignettes. The stories describe how SNAP-Ed agencies have used the evaluation framework, as told by practitioners themselves. Since there is no single way to apply the framework, it is important to make the framework meet your agency's needs. This document presents exemplars that are ordered strategically to illustrate comprehensive approaches through broad application of the framework followed by narratives that reference specific aspects or indicators. Overall, the vignettes focus on the creation of statewide evaluation and reporting systems, explain how the evaluation framework informed the development of state and local work plans, and highlight ways that the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework helps to communicate program evaluation results to stakeholders. |

FNS intends to grow this collection over time as more states incorporate the evaluation framework into their State SNAP-Ed Plans. For consideration, please share your brief vignettes (approximately 150 words) on how the evaluation framework has inspired your state or agency with your Regional SNAP-Ed Coordinator.

	AGENCY TYPE(S)				FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE REGION MID-ATLANTIC (MA), MIDWEST (MW), MOUNTAIN PLAINS (MP), WESTERN (W), NORTHEAST (NE), SOUTHEAST (SE), SOUTHWEST (SW)						
SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework Practitioner Story	SNAP Agency	University	Health Department	Non-Profit	MA	MW	MP	NE	SE	SW	W
<i>Kansas</i> – Producing PEARS, A Data Tracking System for the Mountain Plains Region		X					X				
<i>Arizona</i> – Using the Framework to Inform Arizona’s Statewide Evaluation Plan		x	x								x
<i>California</i> – The Potential for Shared Statewide Metrics	x	x	x	x							x
<i>Maine</i> – Creating a Standardized Program Evaluation System in Maine	x	x						x			
<i>Missouri</i> – Reinforcing Multi-Sector Partnerships Using the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework’s Indicators		x					x				
<i>Michigan</i> – PE-Nut™: A Whole-School Intervention for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity				x		x					
<i>Michigan</i> – Applying the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework to Michigan’s Statewide Social Marketing Campaign				x		x					
<i>Maryland</i> -- Employing Specific Indicators to Evaluate Maryland’s Text2BHealthy Program		x			x						
<i>Georgia</i> – Measuring Physical Fitness in Georgia’s Schools—An Illustration of the Impact of One Indicator in the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework	x	x	x	x					x		
<i>Tennessee</i> - Scoring Coalitions using the SNAP- Ed Evaluation Framework’s Multi-Sector Partnerships Indicator		x							x		
<i>Alaska</i> – Measuring food security in remote villages	x		x								x
<i>California</i> – SNAP-Ed Healthy Behavior Initiative Leads, Unexpectedly, to the Distinguished After School Health Recognition Program			x	x							x

PRODUCING PEARS, A DATA TRACKING SYSTEM FOR THE MOUNTAIN PLAINS REGION

Coordinated by Kansas State Research and Extension, Kansas SNAP-Ed’s nutrition education centers around the following four SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework indicators: MyPlate Behavioral Change (indicator MT1), Food Resource Management (indicator MT2), Physical Activity and Reduced Sedentary Behaviors (indicator MT3), and Food Safety (indicator MT4). The state uses the Program Evaluation and Reporting System (PEARS) to gather evaluation data. Using PEARS, Kansas SNAP-Ed professionals can select or build evaluation instruments specific to the needs of each program they deliver, enter program information and response data, and access various reporting features. Moving forward, the system will also track the assessment of policy, system, and environmental change (PSE) efforts. Details about PSE progress, implementation, and impact at both the individual and environmental levels are useful for reporting to internal and external stakeholders. Using PEARS has allowed Kansas to have consistent data tied to program objectives. As a result, Kansas is in a position to more effectively measure and report program impact and is now partnering with neighboring states to make PEARS available as a region-wide data tracking system for the Mountain Plains Region.

Screenshot of the PEARS Login Page

PEARS

WELCOME TO PEARS

As a regional SNAP-Ed reporting tool, PEARS greatly streamlines data collection, evaluation, and reporting of evidence-based nutrition education and obesity prevention interventions.

Request A Demo

Please sign in

Email Address

Password

Sign in

[Forgot password?](#)

Guided Evaluation

- Library of survey instruments
- Program activity details and survey response data
- Success stories
- Policy, systems and environmental (PSE) change efforts
- Indirect activities

Automated Reports

- Generate annual PEARS data with just a few clicks
- Dashboard with a birds-eye view of project impact
- Statistical analysis via automated Excel exports
- Charts, maps, data imports, and more

Added Benefits

- Standardized system for reporting and tracking
- Built and maintained at a professional evaluation office
- Data collection tools aligned with the evaluation framework
- New features & updates released regularly
- Additional tools available to support state-wide extension efforts

Support

- Friendly team of system experts available by phone and email
- Online and onsite training available
- Searchable knowledgebase of FAQs and instructions
- Dedicated development and technical support teams who work closely with the SNAP-Ed coordinators

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USING THE FRAMEWORK TO INFORM ARIZONA’S STATEWIDE EVALUATION PLAN

In 2015, in preparation for a new grant cycle, the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) sought a comprehensive, statewide evaluation plan that incorporated *both* direct education and policy, systems, and environmental change (PSE) approaches.

The external evaluator for Arizona’s SNAP-Ed program, the University of Arizona Evaluation Team, turned to the Western Region Office (WRO) SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework (now the national SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework) as a guide. Because the Social-Ecological Model was foundational to Arizona’s SNAP-Ed program delivery model—and therefore the evaluation of that programming—the framework provided an ideal scaffold for a state-level one.

What has emerged as the Arizona SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework combines Arizona’s 16-strategy programming with the national SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework. Individual-level indicators from the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework assess the state’s direct education strategy; environmental settings indicators measure PSE work that is site-based or with single partners; and sectors of influence indicators evaluate multi-sector partnerships and coalitions.

Arizona SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework - Excerpt of a Food Systems Strategy

Description of Strategy	INTENDED REACH	PROCESS INDICATOR	SHORT TERM OUTCOME INDICATORS
Start and expand Farm to School, Farm to Child Care, Farm to Worksite programs.	Number of sites that will be reached	Percent of sites reached	ST5/ST8 Qualitative data related to identification of partner opportunities
		If working with single partners/sites: Number of meetings/trainings with site leaders	Single partners/sites track: ST7 % of sites reached that have an action plan, Year 2
		If working with multi-sector partnerships/coalitions: Number of meetings with multi-sector partnerships/coalitions	Multi-sector partnerships/coalitions track: ST8 Baseline scores for active partnerships, Year 1

Organizational Level

Sectors of Influence Level

THE POTENTIAL FOR SHARED STATEWIDE METRICS

California has five SNAP-Ed State Implementing Agencies (SIAs), each of which has its own Local Implementing Agencies (LIAs) for reaching the SNAP-Ed population with education and obesity prevention interventions. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) serves an oversight function and funds 6 county welfare departments. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) funds 59 local health departments. The California Department of Aging has 19 area agencies on aging. UC CalFresh administers SNAP-Ed through UC Cooperative Extension in 31 counties. Catholic Charities of California has 11 local agencies across 24 counties. At the county-level, the LIAs jointly develop a single SNAP-Ed integrated work plan. Four of the SIAs use the same Food Behavior Checklist to evaluate behavior change among SNAP-Ed adult participants in series classes. In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2015, these four SIAs found statistically significant improvement in healthy eating behaviors in indicator MT1c (Ate more than one kind of fruit) and MT1d (Ate more than one kind of vegetable) across more than 3,000 matched participant surveys. The five SIAs have developed common SNAP-Ed goals and objectives for FFY 2017–2019 and are currently working on a joint evaluation plan. The SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework will be useful for identifying shared metrics that can tell a more unified story across the California SNAP-Ed SIAs.



Map of California's 58 Counties

CREATING A STANDARDIZED PROGRAM EVALUATION SYSTEM IN MAINE

The Maine Department of Health and Human Services contracts with the University of New England to deliver SNAP-Ed through 23 community-based coalitions. Maine's nutrition educators enhance direct education with obesity prevention policy, systems, and environmental change (PSE) strategies.

Maine developed a tracking tool that facilitates planning and collects data on short- and medium-term indicators. Specifically, the tool captures activities that directly relate to elements in the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework, namely readiness, champions, partnerships, and nutrition supports adopted. The extent to which PSE efforts reach the SNAP-Ed eligible population can be analyzed by setting and geography.

In 2015, 40 nutrition educators implemented strategies across Maine to achieve the following: implement 14 community and 6 school gardens; increase access to federal food programs for youth in 20 sites; and improve wellness policies in 13 schools and 8 child care centers. In total, 62 schools, 6 afterschool programs, 12 child care centers, and 46 community organizations (e.g., public housing and food pantries) were targeted.

Tracking progress using nationally established performance measures allows Maine to monitor program effectiveness in a clear, consistent manner. The data inform quality improvement efforts and ensure local-level success and national relevance.



Edible Main Street in Norway, Maine



School Gardens in Lewiston, Maine

REINFORCING MULTI-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS USING THE SNAP-ED EVALUATION FRAMEWORK'S INDICATORS

The Missouri Council for Activity and Nutrition (MOCAN) is an example of a multi-sector partnership consisting of representatives from more than 50 statewide and local agencies, institutions, organizations, other coalitions, and individuals. Together, MOCAN partners engage in coordinated activities to advance the goals and objectives of the statewide SNAP-Ed Plan, *Preventing Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases: Missouri's Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan*. Many of the partners focus on specific audiences, such as SNAP-Ed eligible audiences, but the breadth of MOCAN's partnering agencies allows consistent messaging and coordinated delivery strategies to occur across agency boundaries. MOCAN is exploring how the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework can be used to communicate the collective impact across its work groups by focusing on community issues such as food systems, which relates to the MT8 and LT12 indicators. Others issues addressed, with their respective indicators in parentheses, are built environments (MT5/LT5 and MT6/LT6), social marketing (MT12), health care (MT11), and government policy (MT7). The long-term goal of these efforts is to improve Missouri's status on the population results indicators (R1-R11).

More information on MOCAN can be found at
<http://extension.missouri.edu/mocan/>.

PE-NUT™: A WHOLE-SCHOOL INTERVENTION FOR HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Developed by the Michigan Fitness Foundation, PE-Nut™ is a multi-component, whole-school intervention that focuses on health behavior changes at both the classroom and school levels as well as in the home. In doing so, the program provides both teacher and student input on those changes. Each of the four program components was developed to teach children why and how to make healthy food choices, the importance of physical activity, and the skills necessary to be active for life. One of the components, *Healthy Classrooms, Healthy Schools*, focuses on transforming the classroom environment through healthy snack policies; healthy school meal and vending machine options; visual cues and messaging in the classroom and throughout the school; role modeling by teachers and students; classroom policies for not using food as rewards; and healthy classroom party policies. These serve as examples that collectively result in positive shifts in social norms that are prevalent in schools. Program outcome evaluations have built the evidence base with indicators that match those in the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework to establish the PE-Nut™ program as a best practice intervention for increasing student consumption of healthy foods and physical activity. The success of PE-Nut™ comes from its multi-level approach to interventions. More specifically, the activities not only teach nutrition concepts and promote physical activity, but they also offer opportunities for students to apply what they learn by trying healthy foods and by being physically active throughout the day. Sending the messages into the home helps to ensure a long-lasting impact.

“At first, when I asked for healthy food at our room holiday parties, it was met with resistance. As we went through the program, the last party had the healthiest food of all.”

(Words of a participating teacher)



PE-Nut™ Includes Multiple Components to Support Behavior Changes in Classrooms, Schools, and at Home

APPLYING THE SNAP-ED EVALUATION FRAMEWORK TO MICHIGAN'S STATEWIDE SOCIAL MARKETING CAMPAIGN

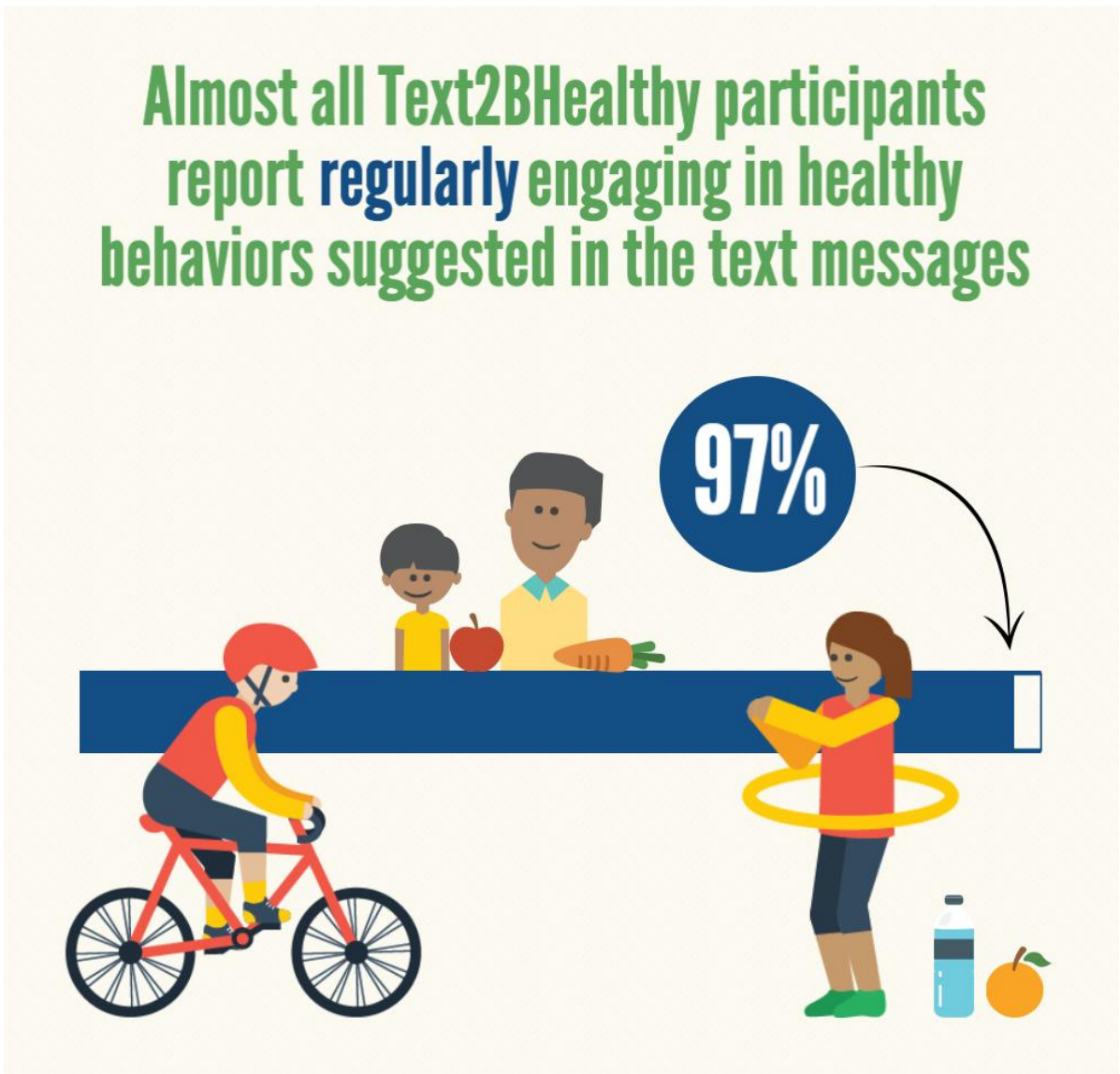


Two Campaign Billboards Featuring USDA's Core Messages

Developed by the Michigan Fitness Foundation (MFF), *They Learn From Watching You* (TLFWY) is Michigan's two-pronged, multi-level statewide social marketing campaign. It is based on the USDA's core messages to increase fruit and vegetable consumption (*Eat more fruits and veggies and they will too*) and physical activity (*Be active and your kids will too*) of children and their families. This practice-tested social marketing campaign uses multiple, overlapping channels that include social media/digital platforms, outdoor billboards, bus and truck wraps, print collateral, and public service announcements. On-the-ground components of TLFY include *Michigan Harvest of the Month* (MiHOTM), which is modeled after California's *Harvest of the Month* social marketing campaign. MiHOTM's ready-to-go supplemental nutrition education materials can be integrated into core curricula and are based on the current *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. All materials feature produce that is readily available and affordable in Michigan. As a result, MiHOTM has become widely popular in community, school, child care, worksite, retail, farmers market, health care, and emergency food settings. Via training on MiHOTM by MFF and its partners, teachers in the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program schools are implementing MiHOTM activities and using its resources throughout classrooms and cafeterias. This is part of an effort to coordinate the delivery of FFVP snacks with nutrition education to increase fruit and vegetable intake among children. Another example of partnerships and social marketing integration is Michigan's *Produce for Pantries*, a collaboration between MFF, MDE's Food Distribution Unit, local food producers, emergency food providers, and communities of faith. The pilot initiative promotes increased fruit and vegetable consumption among emergency food recipients through increased access to fresh produce (environmental change); onsite TLFY social marketing (environmental change/social marketing); and onsite MiHOTM nutrition education (systems change/direct and indirect nutrition education). Without a doubt, the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework's MT12 indicator will be a great resource for evaluating Michigan's campaign.

EMPLOYING SPECIFIC INDICATORS TO EVALUATE MARYLAND’S TEXT2BHEALTHY PROGRAM

The University of Maryland SNAP-Ed program developed *Text2BHealthy*, a text message–based program for parents that reinforces nutrition information and behaviors their children are learning in school SNAP-Ed programs. On average, *Text2BHealthy* is implemented in 15 Maryland elementary schools and reaches over 2,000 parents annually. Parents who participate in *Text2BHealthy* are surveyed before and after the program about grocery shopping habits; familial eating and physical activity behaviors; and home nutrition environment characteristics. Real-time evaluation is also done through texted questions, which assess parents’ responses to previous educational messages. The data collection is used to provide information on program relevance and applicability as well as to explore whether text messaging, alone and in combination with in-school SNAP-Ed youth programming, is associated with improved health outcomes among participating families. The results have informed message content and delivery and have also encouraged program expansion and replication by other agencies. The evaluation of *Text2BHealthy* is part of a comprehensive parent-wide evaluation plan that capitalizes on indicators offered by the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework. Specifically, it assesses both individual behavior changes (indicators MT1 and MT3) and organizational adoption of healthy supports (indicators MT5 and MT6).



97% of Participants Reported Healthy Behaviors

MEASURING PHYSICAL FITNESS IN GEORGIA’S SCHOOLS—AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE IMPACT OF ONE INDICATOR IN THE SNAP-ED EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

In partnership with the Georgia Departments of Health, Education, and Human Services, HealthMPowers, Georgia State University, and other key stakeholders, Georgia has been collecting annual health-related fitness data on one million students in grades 4–12 since 2012. These data align with the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework’s physical activity and reduced sedentary behavior indicator, MT3. To initiate this work, training was provided to all K–12 schools by HealthMPowers to ensure consistency in fitness assessment administration, data collection, and messaging about fitness. Results have been used by a variety of sectors. Teachers have drawn on individual student data to set personal goals and create plans for improving health-related fitness levels. Schools and school districts have used the data to build on comprehensive school physical activity programming and policies. The results have also been used by nonprofits, community organizations, state departments, and universities to evaluate school-based interventions, create new programs and training, examine trends, and build data-driven computer models for projecting the childhood obesity rate that can inform legislators and community leaders on childhood obesity trends.

Percent of Students in the Healthy Fitness Zone Using Fitnessgram Assessment, 2012-2015

FITNESSGRAM TEST YEAR	STUDENTS TESTED	BMI: % IN HFZ, GRADES 1–12	AEROBIC CAPACITY: % IN HFZ, GRADES 4–12
2012	998,774 (67%)	Boys: 58.0% Girls: 58.5%	Boys: 58.0% Girls: 43.0%
2013	1,139,998 (76%)	Boys: 59.4% Girls: 59.7%	Boys: 58.5% Girls: 43.6%
2014	1,082,721 (71%)	Boys: 59.4% Girls: 59.7%	Boys: 58.8% Girls: 45.0%
2015	1,144,084 (74%)	Boys: 60.3% Girls: 60.3%	Boys: 59.0% Girls: 45.7%

SCORING COALITIONS USING THE SNAP-ED EVALUATION FRAMEWORK'S MULTI-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS INDICATOR

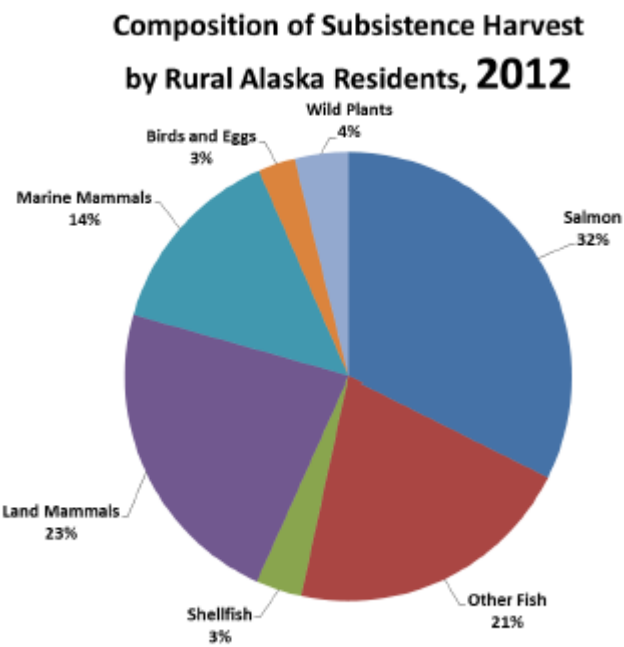
Partners that are engaged through active coalitions are vital to the success of SNAP-Ed in Tennessee. All 95 counties are required to have a SNAP-Ed coalition. These coalitions have members from diverse public and nonprofit agencies and organizations as well as SNAP and SNAP-Ed participants. Their common goal is improving nutrition and physical activity outcomes for low-income residents and communities. Each coalition is charged with identifying community needs, working together to implement interventions, and evaluating and reporting their collective efforts. To measure community-wide partnerships (indicator ST8 in the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework), focus groups and surveys were conducted. Based on results of both, coalition members identified the following three key components for success: 1) coalition work that contributes to activities and interventions with measurable results for people and communities; 2) regular productive communication between members; and 3) a respectful and inclusive leader chosen by the group. Using these elements, coalition strength is scored by combining information from meeting minutes and surveys. Coalitions are rated on their communication efforts, inclusion, leadership, and measurable community outcomes as well as member satisfaction with the coalition. The coalition's score is used to help local SNAP-Ed providers identify areas for improvement.

MEASURING FOOD SECURITY IN REMOTE VILLAGES

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game’s Division of Subsistence (DOS) conducts annual field research to measure changes in the amounts of subsistence foods used in rural Alaska. The Alaska Family Nutrition Program’s SNAP-Ed team is partnering with DOS and the Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR) to measure food security in rural Alaskan communities (indicator R6 in the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework). Communities in this area are often off the road system, thus capturing those households and communities missed during other food security statewide sampling efforts. The goal is to systematically analyze the impact of SNAP and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits on a household’s level of food security. In Alaska, especially in rural communities, the ability for a household to achieve food security, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, relies on both foods available through the market and those procured from the wild. The study includes interviews with individuals in the communities and participant observation. CANHR will develop, test, and analyze survey questions. Project results will be used to target nutrition and food security educational efforts more effectively to rural, predominantly Alaska Native communities. This work also measures changes in societal norms and values by specifically looking at the beliefs on using a mixed economy of subsistence and FNS supplemental foods that can support healthy eating, active living, and obesity prevention.



Photo: *Foods Stocked in Home Pantry,*



Graph: *Types of Foods Rural Alaska Residents Procure From the Wild*

SNAP-ED *HEALTHY BEHAVIOR INITIATIVE* LEADS, UNEXPECTEDLY, TO THE DISTINGUISHED AFTER SCHOOL HEALTH RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Editor’s Note: While this write-up does not directly demonstrate how the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework was applied, it is an example of how to describe the evaluation framework indicators that are referenced within the text in parenthesis.

California’s local and federal funding provides enrichment services in 4,500 SNAP-Ed eligible afterschool programs. To assess the potential of SNAP-Ed to introduce such efforts system-wide (ST5), the California Department of Public Health’s Network for a Healthy California worked with the Center for Collaborative Solutions (CCS), a nonprofit specializing in public education. CCS conducted formative research to produce *Changing Lives, Saving Lives—A Step-by-Step Guide*, which was published in 2010 and 2015. Co-funding from The California Endowment, Kaiser Permanente, and the Packard Foundation extended training to more sites (ST7, LT9), resulting in 32 CCS-certified Healthy Behaviors Initiative (HBI) learning centers affiliated with more than 800 schools. Evaluation found positive changes in health behaviors, organizational and community environments, and policies (LT5, LT6). HBI standards contributed to the National Standards for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity in Out-of-School Time Programs (LT7). Senator Jackson (ST6) sponsored Senate Bill 949, which established the Distinguished After School Health (DASH) Recognition Program within the California Department of Education and recognized HBI standards as criteria (LT11). A sustainability plan, with the goal of 70 percent of California’s afterschool sites being DASH-recognized in five years, is being implemented (LT10).

More than 500 children from the Sacramento START program, an HBI Learning Center, performed a hula hoop routine to music from the 1950s at Cesar Chavez Park on July 15, 2014. Sacramento START partnered with Kellee McQuinn, founder of KidTribe to create the choreography and training for the event. KidTribe is an acclaimed children’s fitness program that has also held events at the White House Easter Egg Roll and Nickelodeon Worldwide Day of Play.



Children from START performing at Cesar Chavez Park in Sacramento, California in 2014