



Food and
Nutrition
Service

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DATE: June 4, 2020

SUBJECT: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Questions and
Answers on SNAP Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed) response to COVID-19

TO: All SNAP Regional Directors

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is issuing the attached set of questions and answers to address inquiries received about the implementation of SNAP-Ed in response to COVID-19.

FNS is grateful for your continued partnership in responding to the current public health emergency and ensuring SNAP households receive the nutrition assistance they need. The agency is ready to provide any additional technical assistance to State agencies as they seek to maintain operations and serve participants.

Sincerely,

Jessica Shahin
Associate Administrator
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Enclosure

Questions and Answers SNAP-Ed Program Implementation Response to COVID-19

1. What are FNS' expectations about SNAP-Ed outcomes or program progress due to COVID-19?

FNS recognizes that SNAP-Ed operations may be significantly impacted by the pandemic. Expectations of program performance such as participants reached, progress towards behavioral outcomes, and other metrics, will reflect this understanding. However, FNS expects States to explore alternative ways to deliver nutrition and obesity prevention interventions that comply with local COVID response guidelines. We are committed to working together to ensure we can collectively continue to achieve SNAP-Ed program outcomes. FNS Regional Offices are able to provide technical assistance.

2. How should States report nutrition education intervention reach through online platforms such as Facebook Live?

At this time, FNS cannot offer a methodology for measuring reach for all online education platforms that State and implementing agencies may use. FNS will continue to work with stakeholders to identify valid and practical recommendations for reporting online programming reach. For FY 2021 reporting for the Education and Administrative Reporting (EARS) form, States should use a methodology that best measures the number of unique viewers who had a meaningful engagement with the content provided and document this in EARS. For direct education reach through online nutrition education classes, the number of individuals reached should be reported in EARS Item 2, in the Estimated Count column. Please explain the estimation method used in the explanation of estimation method text box below Item 2.

3. What flexibilities are available for States that find they need to increase telecommunications capacity, for SNAP-Ed activities?

SNAP-Ed implementing agencies should work with their States to identify additional telecommunications material and funding needs. These may include purchasing additional Wi-Fi hotspots, cell phones, and partial reimbursement of staff home internet expenditures. Additional expenditures, or changes in planned expenditures must follow all applicable cost principles, including ensuring that costs are reasonable and that cost allocation procedures are used. States should confirm their rationale for changes in expenditures with their regional coordinator. Regional coordinators will also assist in determining if a plan amendment is needed.

4. Should FY 2021 SNAP-Ed State plans include flexibilities in case direct education or other in-person activities are restricted?

FNS anticipates future pandemic and other emergency response to be variable and localized. States may find it helpful to develop a contingency plan for SNAP-Ed program operation. FNS welcomes States to include the contingency plan as an appendix to their State SNAP-Ed plan, but this is not required as part of FY 2021 State SNAP-Ed plans.

5. Can SNAP-Ed programs donate food demonstration supplies (e.g. gloves, paper goods, disinfectant wipes, etc.) to local meal service and food distribution sites?

No. SNAP-Ed funding is limited to work that directly supports SNAP-Ed. If SNAP-Ed State or implementing agencies purchased supplies with SNAP-Ed funds, providing these supplies to activities outside of administering SNAP-Ed would be considered an unallowable use of SNAP-Ed funding. Food demonstration supplies purchased using SNAP-Ed funding may be re-purposed for SNAP-Ed activities in future fiscal years.

6. What are some examples of SNAP-Ed activities that have been adapted to respond to COVID-19?

- The University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service developed Grab and Go lessons that connect with their Healthy Choices for EveryBody, Cooking Challenge, and gardening curricula. Bags placed at the entrance of extension offices contain a lesson with reinforcement items, such as seed packets and evaluation materials. Participants share photos of what they practiced at home with program assistants.
- The University of South Carolina supports environmental changes made by library partners as they implement curbside produce pickup programs. They also developed comprehensive resource guides to provide to partners by phone, email, and other remote communications. This supports community-based policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes to promote healthy choices and obesity prevention as required by the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008.
- The University of South Carolina's PSE change activities within SNAP-Ed, also work remotely with Food Policy Councils to create a new State Food Policy Council website that includes resources related to food insecurity during COVID-19.
- The University of Wisconsin-Madison's Division of Extension's FoodWise program increased their social media presence on their program Facebook page by developing a weekly calendar for sharing content. Posts on their main Facebook page are then shared on county-level pages to reach additional participants. Examples of posts include the FoodWise Quick Tips videos (available in English, Spanish, and Hmong) and the Build a Better Snack tip sheet. FoodWise and the Department of Health Services and Extension worked together to develop evidence-based guidance for safe gardening practices and to share models for safe farmers markets that accept SNAP EBT.

- FoodRight Youth Chef Academy in Milwaukee adapted school-based programming for online delivery through platforms such as Facebook Live, IGTV, and YouTube. The organization distributed class materials, including recipe kits, to students for use at home.
- Cooking Matters Colorado has repurposed specific, relevant food skills education content from their course and tour curricula into simple and helpful shortened messages that can be delivered through social media, website posts, text message campaigns or other remote approaches. Cooking Matters Colorado and National offices post messages in English and Spanish that include tips, videos, and a toolkit of family resources. Participants access interactive Cooking Matters at the Store tours online via Zoom and can participate in conversations on Facebook Live.
- University of Colorado Denver delivers the Text2LiveHealthy program to connect participants to a variety of resources around how to access free meals and snacks, locations for food distributions, strategies to shop and prep food during the crisis, and creative ideas to stay active at home. Teachers send revised classroom-based lessons to parents with ideas and activities for healthy eating and physical activity, as well as connections to the resources to find healthy food. Adult class series continue via Zoom, and efforts are being devoted to creating additional online classes that will be offered as part of a series and as stand-alone learning opportunities.