MAINE SNAP-Ed

Healthy Eating on a Budget

2022 Annual Report

Nutrition Security

Investing in Healthy Communities

Nutrition Security

The Evolution of Maine SNAP-Ed

In 2022, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced its commitment to nutrition security as a Federal priority, and the first White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health in over 50 years took place. These two momentous events elevated the importance of nutrition to the health and wellbeing of our nation's people, particularly among populations that are racial and ethnic minorities, experiencing lower incomes, and are rural and remote, including Tribal communities.

Nutrition security means having consistent and equitable access to safe, healthy, and affordable foods essential for optimal health and wellbeing. Food insecurity is a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life. Nutrition security builds on food security by emphasizing the coexistence of food insecurity and diet-related diseases and applies an equity lens to its approach.

Throughout this report you will see compelling evidence of how Maine SNAP-Ed advances nutrition security, from delivering evidence-based, trauma-informed curricula to implementing policy, systems, and environmental change initiatives that make healthy choices both accessible to and equitable for the diverse populations served, from youth in our schools to New Mainers in our communities. The Shop Cook Eat social marketing campaign reaches Mainers across the state with healthy eating and active living messages using a variety of media to ensure accessibility. Advancing nutrition security only happens in collaboration with state and local partners who share a commitment to end hunger and reduce diet-related diseases and disparities.

Maine SNAP-Ed nutrition education programming is an effective strategy for creating improvements to the food environment, addressing food and nutrition security, reducing chronic disease, and promoting health equity for the people of Maine.

Results from this report are from data collected by the University of New England across all curricula and programs for Federal Fiscal Year 2022 unless otherwise noted.

Collaborative Action: *Maine SNAP-Ed 2022 Community Reach*

Direct Education

Maine SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educators delivered **6,181 free classes from evidence-based, trauma-informed curricula** reaching a total of **15,345 youth and adult participants**. Many of those participants attended multiple classes in a series, resulting in more than **88,000 contacts**.

Curricula	Participants
Pick a better snack™	8,198
Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings	1,884
Food Smarts Kids	1,196
10 Tips for Teens	915
Cooking Matters for Kids	385
10 Tips for Adults	622
iGrow Readers	549
Cooking Matters at the Store	529
Cooking Matters for Teens	499
Cooking Matters for Parents/Caregivers	235
Cooking Matters for Adults	219
Cooking Matters for Families	114

Social Marketing

The **SHOP COOK EAT** campaign reached **about 10,000 Mainers** with consistent healthy eating prompts and calls-to-action: **"sign up for a class," "shop with a grocery list," "make a recipe."**

Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) Change Interventions

Building on community assets in schools, clinics, libraries, and other community spaces to ensure all Mainers have equitable access to healthy choices.

38 NEW PSE change interventions, reaching over **9,500 Mainers** in **59 community sites**. When combined with ongoing PSE strategies, SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educators reached close to **19,000 youth and adults**.

Maine SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educators are based in the following community organizations:

Aroostook County Action Program

City of Bangor

City of Portland, Public Health Division

Coastal Healthcare Alliance (MaineHealth)

Coastal Healthy Communities Coalition (University of New England)

Healthy Acadia

Healthy Androscoggin (Central Maine Community Health)

Healthy Communities of the Capital Area

Healthy Community Coalition of Greater Franklin County (MaineHealth)

Healthy Lincoln County (MCD Public Health)

Healthy Northern Kennebec (MaineGeneral Medical Center)

Healthy Oxford Hills (Western Maine Health/MaineHealth)

Knox County Community Health Coalition (Penobscot Bay YMCA)

Mid Coast Hospital (MaineHealth)

Somerset Public Health (Redington-Fairview General Hospital)

The Opportunity Alliance

Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness

- Mi'kmaq Nation
- Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians Health Department
- Penobscot Nation Health Department
- Passamaquoddy Health Center – Indian Township
- Pleasant Point Health Center

Collaborative Action: *Direct Education with Community Partners*

89	Eligible Child Care and Head Start Programs
123	Eligible Schools and Youth Education Sites
8	Adult Education, Job Training, TANF, and Veteran Services Sites
23	Public Housing Sites
14	Health Care Clinics and Hospitals
16	Community Organizations and Recreation Centers
9	Libraries
8	Food Pantries and Food Banks
4	Faith-based Centers
4	Before- and After-School Programs
8	Emergency Shelters and Temporary Housing Sites
5	Residential Treatment Centers and Group Living Arrangements
10	Food Stores (small and large)

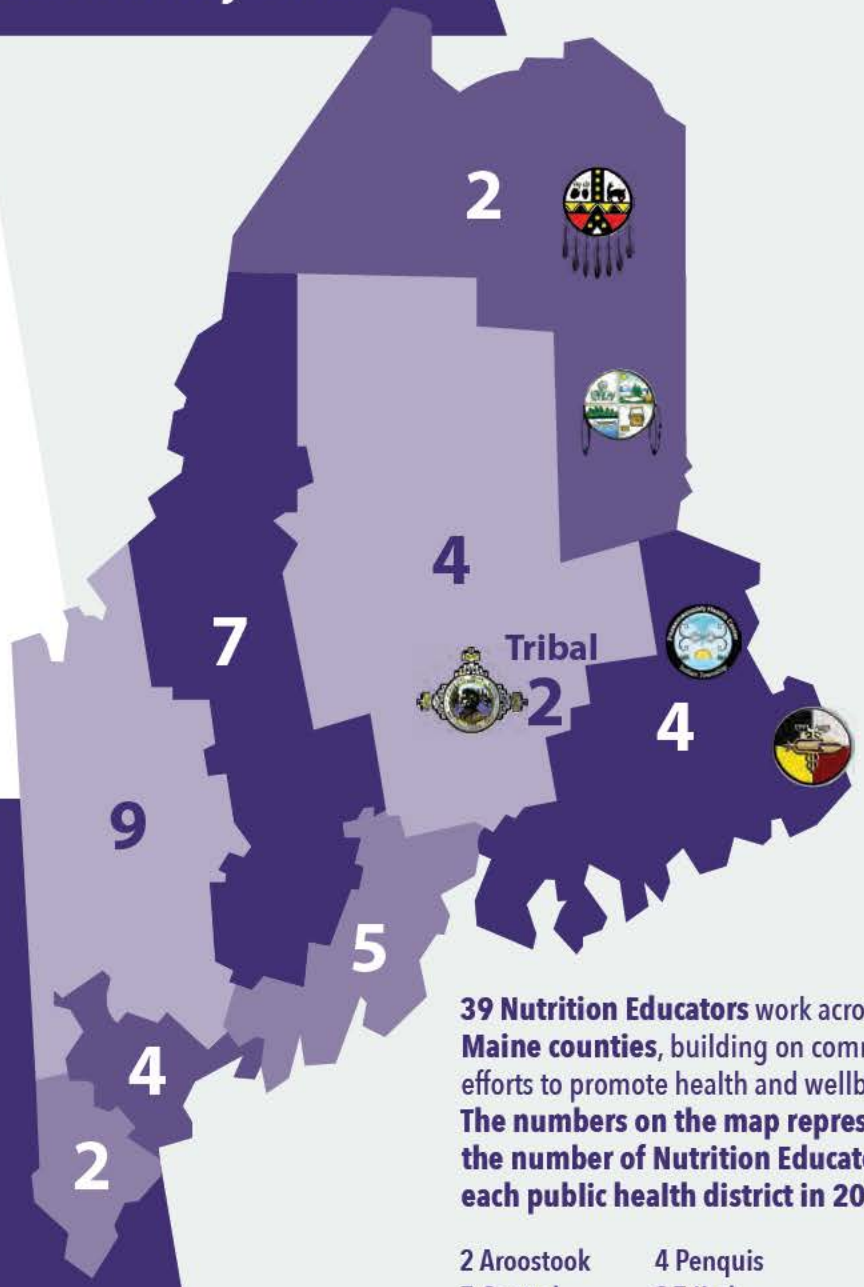
Health in Recovery

4 Nutrition Educators worked in the following residential treatment centers and group or assisted living organizations dedicated to helping adults recover from substance use disorder:

- El Rancho De La Vida, Hinckley
- McAuley Residence, Portland
- Recovery Connections of Maine, Lewiston

7 nutrition education series were conducted, reaching 39 adults

All participants who completed a post-series survey said the Nutrition Educators "made me feel included in the class."



39 Nutrition Educators work across **all Maine counties**, building on community efforts to promote health and wellbeing. **The numbers on the map represent the number of Nutrition Educators in each public health district in 2022:**

2 Aroostook	4 Penquis
7 Central	2 Tribal
4 Cumberland	9 Western
4 Downeast	2 York
5 Midcoast	

Leveraging Community Assets

The capacity to **leverage resources** is an important measure of Maine SNAP-Ed's generative impact on Maine communities. To better understand how **SNAP-Ed funding stimulates other local agencies and businesses** to co-fund beneficial interventions, the program tracks **leveraged resources** from implementing partners. A **cost value for contributions** such as dedicated space, gleaned produce, new equipment, materials and supplies, volunteer time, and communication activities that co-invest in new, ongoing, or sustained interventions is calculated annually.

In 2022...

The leveraged resource with the greatest total value was

gleaned produce

Followed by **$41K** **in volunteer staffing**

and $33K in materials and supplies

Personnel, communication, space, and transportation made up the remainder: **$32K**

Reported leveraged resources **increased from 2021 by over 300%**


KITS FOR ALL AGES!
There are NO MOOSE on this island
THIS BUILDING IS THE GIFT OF ANDREW CARNEGIE TO THE CITY OF WATERVILLE A.D. 1905
Library To G
is OPEN
Nutrition Facts
Calories
60
70
80
90
FREE!
CMG

Nutrition Security: *A Recipe for the Future*

Food Smarts Kids

Food Smarts Kids (FSK) is a **learner-centered nutrition education and cooking curriculum for fourth- through sixth-graders**. The direct education series was developed by Leah's Pantry, a California-based nonprofit organization committed to designing **trauma-informed nutrition security initiatives** that contribute to nourished communities. The primary focus of the FSK five- to six-week series is to **increase fruit and vegetable consumption** among children. A portion of every lesson emphasizes the **importance of active lifestyles**.

FSK covers **core nutrition principles** including: eating the rainbow, whole foods, water consumption, sleep, exercise, lean protein sources, and vegetables. **Home cooking** from whole, fresh ingredients is encouraged, using recipes from EatFresh.org, a website funded by the USDA.

In 2022, Nutrition Educators were in Maine classrooms conducting **84 multi-week FSK series,** reaching **1,196 youth.**

Student-Reported Health Behaviors After FSK:

62% of students completed a post-series survey, reporting statistically significant...

- increases in fruit, vegetable, and healthy snack consumption
- reductions in the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages
- increases in physical activity

Pick a better snack ™

Research suggests that **taste-testing fruits and vegetables as part of a multicomponent intervention increases fruit and vegetable consumption among children**, and it is a suggested strategy to improve nutrition.[1] The influence of teachers' personal health behaviors on classroom environments has also been documented as having a positive influence on children's health status and behaviors.[2]

Pick a better snack (PABS) promotes healthy eating and physical activity by introducing students to a variety of fruits and vegetables through monthly taste-testings and engaging students in fun movement activities. Materials such as family newsletters and Bingo cards are sent home to reinforce the PABS messaging.

In 2022, **PABS reached 8,198 students in eligible elementary schools** where 50% or more students participate in free or reduced price school meals.

After completing PABS:

- 98% of teachers reported that more students now can identify healthy food choices
- 92% of teachers reported that more students are now willing to try new foods offered at school
- 67% of teachers reported that more students were likely to choose fruits or vegetables in the cafeteria or during classroom parties

For their own behaviors, teachers reported that they now....

- offer healthy food choices to students at parties or as snacks or rewards (84%)
- remind families to bring healthy snacks for school parties (80%)

1. https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/strategies/fruit-vegetable-taste-testing. *Accessed April, 2023.*

2. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27169640]

"This was a beneficial program and the students enjoyed it. I see some of them making healthier choices and even had one student ask for fruit for his birthday party here at school."

- Elementary School Teacher

Cooking Matters®: *A Nutrition Partnership with Good Shepherd Food Bank*

Cooking Matters classes are designed to address nutrition security by inspiring families to make **healthy, affordable food choices**. Maine SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educators partner with community sites to bring **6 hands-on nutrition education series** to **parents, caregivers, and youth** ages 8 to 18.

In 2022...

Adults

Cooking Matters programming for adults accounted for **55% of all Maine SNAP-Ed adult reach.**

Participants in Cooking Matters for Adults receive a **$10 gift card for groceries, with donations from Hannaford Supermarkets.**

Cooking Matters for Adults reached **219 adults** in: 5 food pantries, 4 public housing sites, 2 Tribal communities, 2 libraries and other accessible community settings.

Cooking Matters at the Store is a guided **grocery store tour** providing easy ways to shop for healthy foods – the stores can be held at retail sites or as "pop-up" tours wherever adults are gathering at community sites.

Cooking Matters at the Store reached **529 adults** in: 9 grocery stores, 8 health care sites, 6 public housing sites, and several other shared community settings such as parks, farmers markets, and emergency shelters.

Partner Point of View

"In partnership with Maine SNAP-Ed, Good Shepherd Food Bank's Cooking Matters Maine has been able to reach 1,981 Mainers to help connect people with nutrition knowledge to empower them to make the best possible choices for their families at home," stated Courtney Kennedy, director of nutrition at Good Shepherd Food Bank. "Maine SNAP-Ed is imperative to the program's success in Maine and the partnership is invaluable to educating individuals, teens, and older Mainers about the value nutrition holds in their lives. This program not only provides education about healthy food choices, but also creates a strong community through cooking lessons, collaborating, and engaging with other participants."

Youth

Cooking Matters youth direct education was primarily conducted in **schools and community recreation centers** (481 and 257 youth reached, respectively).

Nuturiton Educators work with young Mainers providing series-based education to improve cooking and shopping skills.

Cooking Matters for Kids and **Cooking Matters for Teens**, combined, reached **884 youth in**:

- 17 k-12 schools
- 2 before- and after-school programs
- 6 community and recreation centers
- 2 USDA Summer Meals sites
- and other community sites where youth gather such as gardens, libraries, and faith-based centers.

Families

Programming to support families was offered in **emergency shelters, early child care education sites**, and at **community recreation centers** (226, 59, and 54 youth and adults reached, respectively).

Cooking Matters for Families and **Cooking Matters for Parents and Caregivers**, combined, reached **349 participants.**

Cooking Matters Participant Voice

"This course has taught me to broaden my food choices and add more balance choices to my meals."

"I learned how to tell if the bread I purchase is really whole grain and which words to look for to help me buy the healthiest grains. I learned how to compare foods to buy the products with the least sugar"

"It has provided a great opportunity to build upon a recipe handbook and provided time set aside to focus on my child doing a life skill that is enjoyable and rewarding"

Collaborative Action: *For the Wellbeing of New Mainers*

Summary

Community and government organizations in Cumberland County, Maine have been collaborating for years to address the circumstances and environment affecting New Mainers and individuals seeking asylum and to overcome barriers to nutrition security such as transportation, income, and inadequate kitchen facilities in temporary housing. The organizations undertaking this work include farms, food security organizations, nonprofit organizations focused on immigrant and refugee populations, and local community members.

In 2022, **Maine SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educators** collaborated with these entities to support New Mainer and asylum-seeking communities with the following nutrition security approaches:

- **Evidence-based nutrition education,** such as Cooking Matters at the Store and Cooking Matters for Parents and Caregivers, at local grocery stores and temporary housing sites, reached **305 individuals seeking asylum**
- **Fresh and culturally relevant food events,** made possible by the Growing to Give Farm and the Locker Project, reached **152 individuals**
- **Over 200 direct education participants** received **food safety materials in English, French, and Portuguese**

Social and Community Context

The cities of Portland and South Portland have received hundreds of individuals and families seeking asylum each year over the past few years. Whether people are healthy or not is complex and is affected by their circumstance and environment. Numerous community organizations, as well as the city governments, continually work to address the circumstances impacting this community.

People seeking asylum are eligible for SNAP, Medicare, General Assistance, and Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) benefits. Due to federal government policies, individuals seeking asylum are not allowed to legally work for six months. Relying on benefit programs can cause confusion and difficulties for individuals trying to navigate the varying restrictions for each benefit program.

Lack of transportation, as well as cultural and language barriers, also create difficulties for those seeking asylum around being able to purchase what they and their families need. Many New Mainers seeking asylum do not have permanent housing and have been temporarily housed in hotels. Most of the hotel rooms do not have kitchens or amenities needed to cook for themselves and their families. These barriers contribute to nutrition and food security issues, as well as isolation and a loss of stability.

From the USDA: "A household is food secure if all members, at all times, can access enough food for an active, healthy life. At a minimum, food security includes:

- Readily available nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and
- The ability to acquire those foods in socially acceptable ways without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies

Nutrition security builds on food security, emphasizing the co-existence of food insecurity and diet-related diseases and disparities. Nutrition security, in turn, means consistent access, availability, and affordability of foods and beverages that promote wellbeing, prevent disease, and, if needed, treat disease....Nutrition security is an emerging concept that complements efforts to increase food security while also:

- Recognizing that Americans, in general, fall short of an active, healthy lifestyle, aligned with our Nation's dietary and physical activity guidelines, and
- Emphasizing that we apply an equity lens to ensure our efforts to promote access, availability, and affordability to foods and beverages serve all populations and address the connection between food insecurity and diet-related chronic diseases."[3]

Providing culturally relevant foods to populations is an aspect of food and nutrition security because familiar foods can promote wellbeing, allow people to feel more comfortable when asking for help, and reduce food waste that may occur from not knowing how to prepare unfamiliar foods.

Community Assets

Community and government organizations working to meet the needs of the asylum-seeking community made Maine SNAP-Ed interventions into collaborative action around nutrition security:

- The Locker Project, connecting food-insecure children in Maine with nourishing food to improve their learned capacity, health, and future
- Asylum-seeking community members and community-adjacent individuals such as Community Health Workers, providing feedback on cultural relevance of material
- Casco Bay Inn, Quality Inn, Best Western, and Howard Johnson, serving as temporary, emergency shelters and assisting in setup and promotion of SNAP-Ed events

- The Immigrant Welcome Center, serving as a hub of collaboration to strengthen the immigrant community
- Good Shepherd Food Bank, a key hunger relief organization [in Maine] with hundreds of partners. One staff member, who operates the mobile African Market, played a pivotal role in providing cooking appliances and culturally relevant supplies
- Catholic Charities, operating a resettlement program and providing translation and interpretation services for programming
- Portland Public Health's Resettlement Program, providing housing and General Assistance for New Mainers seeking asylum
- Maine Association for New Americans, providing free transportation between hotels and grocery stores for nutrition education
- WIC staff, attending store tours to answer questions about using WIC benefits
- Fedcap, specializing in vocational training and employment resources that provided an intern who supported the promotion, delivery, and adaptation of direct education programming

Collaborative Action

Maine SNAP-Ed programming and activities to reach and support the asylum-seeking community and supplement the work of the collaborative partner organizations included:

Direct Education

- Collaborating with partners to make direct education as culturally relevant, appropriate, and accessible as possible
- Creating a welcoming space, including playing music at the beginning and end of classes with song suggestions solicited from participants or playlists made by community-adjacent individuals
- Selecting culturally relevant recipes that could be prepared in hotel rooms with sparse or nonexistent kitchen amenities
- Working with community-adjacent individuals to review MyPlate and identify culturally-familiar foods
- Sharing how to access foods discussed in classes and identifying where culturally relevant foods are in American grocery stores through Cooking Matters at the Store, reaching 124 individuals, with transportation to grocery sites made possible by the Maine Association for New Americans
- Working with translators to develop new educational materials and conducting Cooking Matters for Parents and Caregivers, reaching 181 individuals, with French and Portuguese interpreters
- Identifying appetizing and user-friendly recipes for microwaves, the only amenity in temporary hotel room housing
- Identifying recipes for donated instant pots, purchased with funds from the City of Portland and Good Shepherd Food Bank
- Gathering culturally-relevant recipes from community members and participants

Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) Strategies

- Collaborating with community-adjacent film producers to develop food safety videos
- Creating food safety documents in English, French, and Portuguese, that were distributed to 238 direct education participants
- Working with Growing to Give Farm, which grew culturally relevant foods distributed to 77 individuals
- Collaborating with the Locker Project to distribute fresh produce, reaching 75 individuals

Sustaining Success

The future of this work for SNAP-Ed educators will focus on how to continue relationships with community members and not "lose people through the cracks" as they move from temporary housing to more permanent housing. The educators are working to find new ways to meet the community's needs as those needs evolve and community members establish themselves in Maine, obtain work permits, and begin generating their own income. Future educational topics include:

- Budgeting
- Increasing American culture and grocery store literacy and confidence
- Unit pricing, a concept that educators report having difficulties explaining to those unfamiliar with American culture

Other SNAP-Ed planned sustainability efforts include:

- Continuing to identify culturally relevant foods that make MyPlate more relevant to the asylum-seeking community
- Translating the food safety video into French and Portuguese
- Conducting more series of Cooking Matters curricula, with adaptations to demonstrate cooking in limited "kitchens"
- Continuing to adapt curricula to meet the community's needs
- Participating in a collaboration between Avesta Housing and the Immigrant Welcome Center to provide education to New Mainers at Avesta Housing sites
- Further prioritizing trauma-informed practices, such as holding space for participants to say what they need, share knowledge with each other, come together as a community to make familiar foods, and gain an element of accessibility to their cultural foods within their current means

3. United States Department of Agriculture. USDA Actions on Nutrition Security.

Collaborative Action: *Community Strategies for Healthy Living*

Public health approaches for healthy living

Across the state, communites are engaged in innovative policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change initiatives to create environments where all Mainers can thrive. SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educators connect with local organizations to initiate and promote **long-lasting, sustainable changes to make healthy choices accessible and equitable.**

In 2022, there were **37** new or expanded PSE supports in **59 sites**.
Estimated Mainers reached: 19,000

Nutrition Educators worked on 61 PSE change interventions:

Access to local fruits and vegetables	20
Community and home gardens	10
School and child care gardens	7
School wellness	7
Clinical-community linkages	6
Healthy retail environments	5
Community public health supports	3
Community-based social marketing	2
Connection to food assistance programs	1

Multi-level Community Health

PSE change efforts are primarily implemented in the same settings where Maine SNAP-Ed classes are conducted, ensuring that supportive environments are complemented by **evidence-based nutrition and physical activity lessons**. Nutrition Educators also promote environmental changes with **social marketing, staff training on continuous program and policy implementation**, and **parent/community involvement**. These four components of **multi-level programming help to maximize and sustain** the public health interventions.

Of the 37 strategies in which a new support was adopted or an ongoing support expanded, **100% included at least one complementary component**.

Direct education (78%) was the most likely component to be paired with a PSE support, followed by **marketing (70%),** and **parent/community Involvement (65%)**. Slightly less than one quarter of supports adopted or expanded included **staff training (19%)**.

Of the 59 sites with PSE supports in 2022:
- 3 sites had all 4 complementary activities
- 17 sites had 3 complementary activities
- 28 sites had 2 complementary activities

Sustained Programming

Nutrition Educators work on PSE sustainability so that Maine SNAP-Ed can invest in communities to co-create long-lasting changes that outlast SNAP-Ed involvement. Nutrition Educators work to identify ongoing funding and an organization that is not dependent on SNAP-Ed funding to assume responsibility for newly adopted PSE changes. They also work on policies or processes to maintain the change through support from community allies, as well as monitoring and reporting systems designed to inform the long-term quality and impact of programming.

Transforming the Lived Environment

- **Expanding Access:** Wheelchair accessible garden beds added to the Cherryfield Elementary School Garden
- **Valuing Community Assets:** Secondary funds secured to compensate community members for their time supporting the Androscoggin Gleaners network
- **Reducing Barriers and Stigma:** Central Maine Gleaners Group "Share Table" to promote healthy eating for everyone

Social Marketing

The **SHOP COOK EAT** social marketing campaign includes healthy messages on the Maine SNAP-Ed website, Facebook, Instagram, and Google.

In 2022, **147,549** people were reached

- **69,359 individuals** engaged with the **SHOP COOK EAT** social media ads and promoted posts on Facebook and Instagram
- **Google display ads** were **viewed more than 1.5 million times** and clicked through to **SNAP-Ed resources over 7,000 times**
- **Google search,** where ads are targeted to individuals who search for specific terms like "Budget Meals," yielded **9,655 impressions and 1,003 clicks for a click-through rate of 10%**

Maine SNAP-Ed Texting Campaign

- **297** subscribers received **52 weekly text messages** with a clickable link to **healthy living resources** and an average **click-through rate of 9%**
- **189 new subscribers were added in 2022**

Growing Resilient Communities

Video Documentation of Local Collaborations

This year, SNAP-Ed worked with **Ethos Marketing** to create a video that shows how SNAP-Ed engages in communities across Maine. This was beautifully depicted by filming at the **Alan Day Community Garden in Norway**, Maine, which works to **improve community health** by providing opportunities to **"build relationships, learn, and grow food together."**[4]

The local Nutrition Educator contributes to this mission by holding nutrition education classes, supporting the community farmers market, leading a Power of Produce (POP) Club for children, and engaging youth in leadership programming – all in partnership with the garden site. Video documentation of the work was designed to capture multi-level programming by filming the garden activities and patrons. Families participating in SNAP-Ed programming were invited to share their experiences, which is described through partners and uplifted through community voice. The video is being shared locally and statewide through social media, paid ads, and television. The video, **Maine SNAP-Ed in Motion**, can be seen on YouTube.

4. Alan Day Community Garden Homepage. Accessed April, 2023.

State Nutrition Action Council

Members of Maine's **State Nutrition Action Council (SNAC)** are actively engaged in multi-sector, state-level initiatives to achieve food and nutrition security and healthy living access for all Mainers. The collective impact of the SNAC is only possible through the ongoing commitment and dedication of its members, who represent the following state-level organizations and their community-based affiliates.

Recognizing our 2022 SNAC Members

Lead – Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Family Independence, Maine SNAP-Ed State Agency

Co-Lead – University of New England, Center for Excellence in Public Health, Maine SNAP-Ed Implementing Agency

Fedcap, Families Forward

FoodCorps Maine

Full Plates Full Potential

Good Shepherd Food Bank

Hannaford Supermarkets

Let's Go!

Maine Association of Area Agencies on Aging

Maine Dairy and Nutrition Council

Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry – Maine Senior FarmShare Program

Maine Department of Education – Child Nutrition | Child and Adult Care Food Program | Health Education

Maine Department of Health and Human Services – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program | Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention | Office of Child and Family Services | Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program

Maine Farm to Institution

Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets

Maine Head Start

MaineHealth Center for Health Improvement

Maine Network of Healthy Communities

Maine SNAP-Ed Subrecipient Director and Nutrition Educator representatives

Representative from Maine's Immigrant and Refugee community

University of Maine Cooperative Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness

YMCA Alliance of Maine

In 2022, Maine became among the **first states in the nation** to pass a law that provides **free school lunches to all students regardless of income.** Parents and caregivers of students from public schools are still encouraged to complete the School Meal Benefit Form to help their school maximize federal and state funding. The Federal Food Programs (FFP) Subcommittee of the SNAC developed the School Meal Benefit Form Outreach Toolkit to spread awareness of these benefits and direct parents and caregivers to complete the online School Meal Benefit Form. The Toolkit was successfully promoted to 1,206 key stakeholders via email and downloaded 217 times. The Toolkit included 4 social media infographics that were shared by 5 SNAC members reaching **34,909 Mainers**, and is available in **11 languages** to ensure accessibility for parents and caregivers.

The Race, Health, and Social Equity Practice Group is a Nutrition Educator peer-led learning and support group who have met together online since 2020. Originally inspired by the 21-day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge hosted by Food Solutions New England, this group has developed its own identity by probing vital race, health, and social equity topics that relate to Maine SNAP-Ed communities and programming.

"This work is difficult, critical, and ever-evolving, and we commit to maintaining humility, identifying our blind spots, and moving forward with compassion."

- Maine SNAP-Ed Race, Health and Social Equity Practice Group

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights laws and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Programs that receive federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and programs HHS directly operates are also prohibited from discrimination under federal civil rights laws and HHS regulations.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

Civil Rights Complaints Involving USDA Programs

USDA provides federal financial assistance for many food security and hunger reduction programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) and others. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) (found online at: How to File a Complaint, and at any USDA office) or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. **mail:** Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
1320 Braddock Place, Room 334
Alexandria, VA 22314; or
2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **phone:** (833) 620-1071; or
4. **email:** FNSCIVILRIGHTSCOMPLAINTS@usda.gov

For any other information regarding SNAP issues, persons should either contact the USDA SNAP hotline number at (800) 221-5689, which is also in Spanish, or call the state information/hotline numbers (click the link for a listing of hotline numbers by state); found online at: SNAP hotline.

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