

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

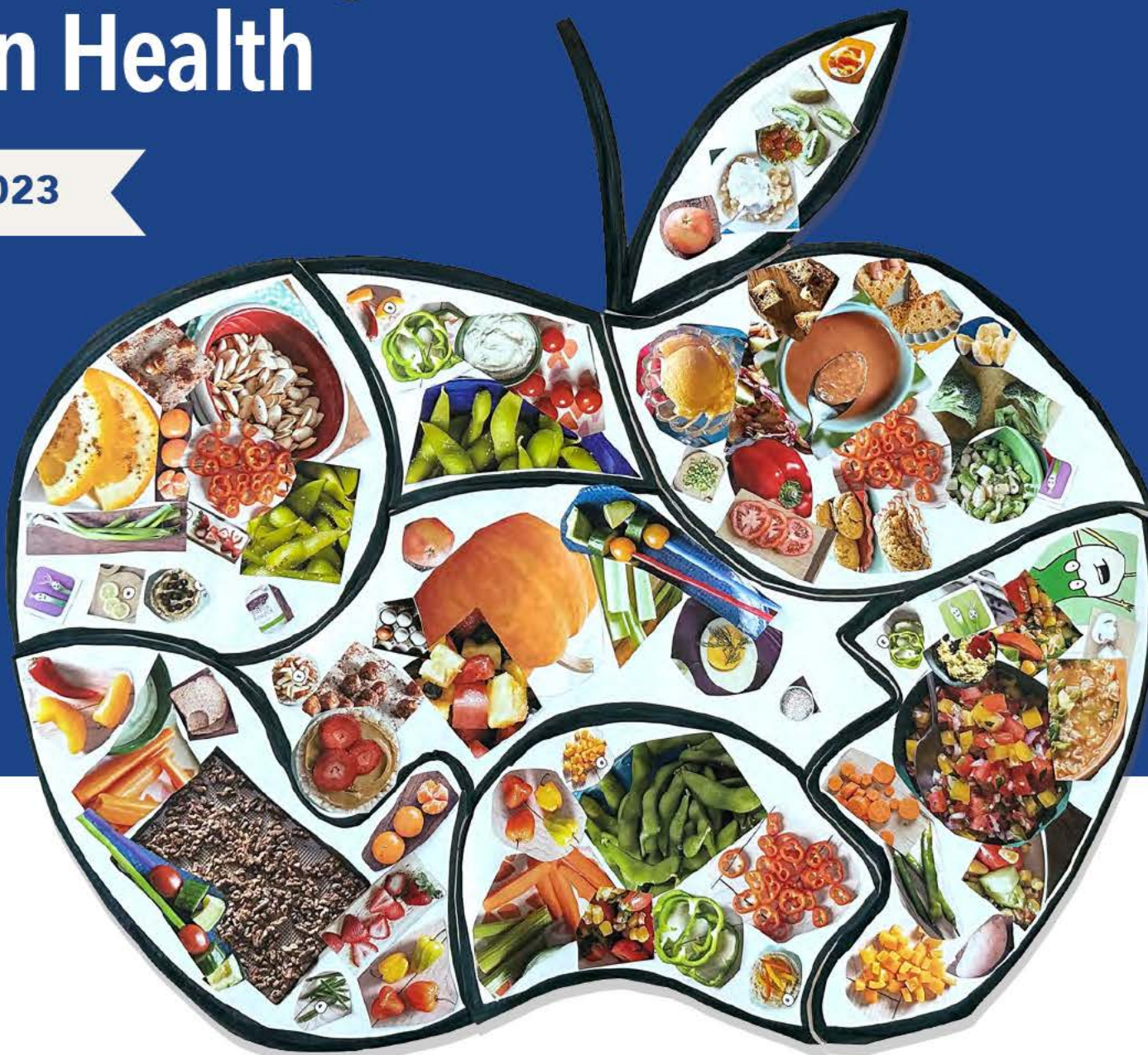
The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from electronic originals
(may include minor formatting differences from printed original)

Uniting to End Hunger and Sustain Health

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



Collaborating with Community, State, Tribal, and National Partners to Meet Hunger, Nutrition, and Health Goals

This annual report highlights Maine SNAP-Ed's successes in fiscal year 2023 that demonstrate the important role the program plays in achieving its own goals as well as advancing the goals of leading partners and funders at three major levels:

1. the White House National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health,
2. the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service's focus on elevating and promoting nutrition security, and
3. the State of Maine, including Maine's Roadmap to End Hunger by 2030.

These goals are united by a shared vision: hunger-free communities where all people are able to access nutritious food, be physically active, and experience health equity.

Key to achieving this shared vision is Maine SNAP-Ed's work to promote the aspirations of Maine's Tribal and community partners. Throughout this report you will see compelling evidence of how Maine SNAP-Ed is collaborating with communities to further the federal and state goals to end hunger and improve health. On pages 14-15, Somerset Public Health's success story, Uniting for Community-Driven Solutions, exemplifies the crucial role communities play in uniting partners and resources to address nutrition security.

Maine SNAP-Ed's collective and sustained actions in support of each of the five pillars of the White House National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health are described on pages 18-19.

THE FIVE PILLARS ARE:



1. Improve food access and affordability



2. Integrate nutrition and health



3. Empower all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices



4. Support physical activity for all



5. Enhance nutrition and food security research

This report is an acknowledgment and thank you to the statewide team of Nutrition Educators, their community partners, and the participants of Maine SNAP-Ed whose contributions made the successes of fiscal year 2023 possible.

Results from this report are from data collected by the University of New England across all curricula and programs for Federal Fiscal Year 2023 unless otherwise noted.



Maine SNAP-Ed 2023:

Investing in Community Programming

Direct Education

Maine SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educators delivered **7,460 free classes from evidence-based, trauma-informed curricula** reaching a total of **19,814 youth and adult participants**. Many of those participants attended multiple classes in a series, resulting in more than **113,335 contacts**.

Curricula	Participants
Pick a better snack™	10,951
Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings	2,093
Food Smarts Kids	2,027
iGrow Readers	1,367
10 Tips for Teens	798
10 Tips for Adults	600
Cooking Matters at the Store	516
Cooking Matters for Kids	486
Cooking Matters for Adults	407
Cooking Matters for Teens	258
Around the Table (pilot)	128
Cooking Matters for Parents/Caregivers	85
Cooking Matters for Families	59
Cooking Matters for Child Care Professionals	22
Come Cook with Me/Kaaley Ila Kari	17

Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) Change Interventions

Nutrition Educators **joined community partners** in schools, clinics, libraries, and other community spaces to ensure all Mainers have **equitable access to nutritious food** and **welcoming spaces for physical activity**.

In 2023, there were **28 NEW PSE change interventions**, reaching over **9,000 Mainers** in **71 community sites**. When combined with **21 ongoing PSE strategies**, Maine SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educators reached close to **15,000 youth and adults**.

Social Marketing and Media

The Maine SNAP-Ed **SHOP, COOK, EAT** Healthy on a Budget social marketing campaign uses **multiple platforms** to drive community members to the Maine SNAP-Ed website to **find recipes, sign up for a class, and gain access to other local nutrition and physical activity resources**. In 2023, it resulted in:

2,452,391 impressions on the website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Google platforms, and an additional **1,168,557 impressions on television**.

220,000 complete video views on a new YouTube video, **Maine SNAP-Ed in Motion**. A **30-second version** aired on **television**.



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 Oxford Hills (Western Maine Health/MaineHealth)

MaineGeneral Medical Center

Mid Coast Hospital (MaineHealth)

Penobscot Bay Community Health Partnerships

Somerset Public Health (Redington-Fairview General Hospital)

The Opportunity Alliance

Wabanaki Public Health and Wellness

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

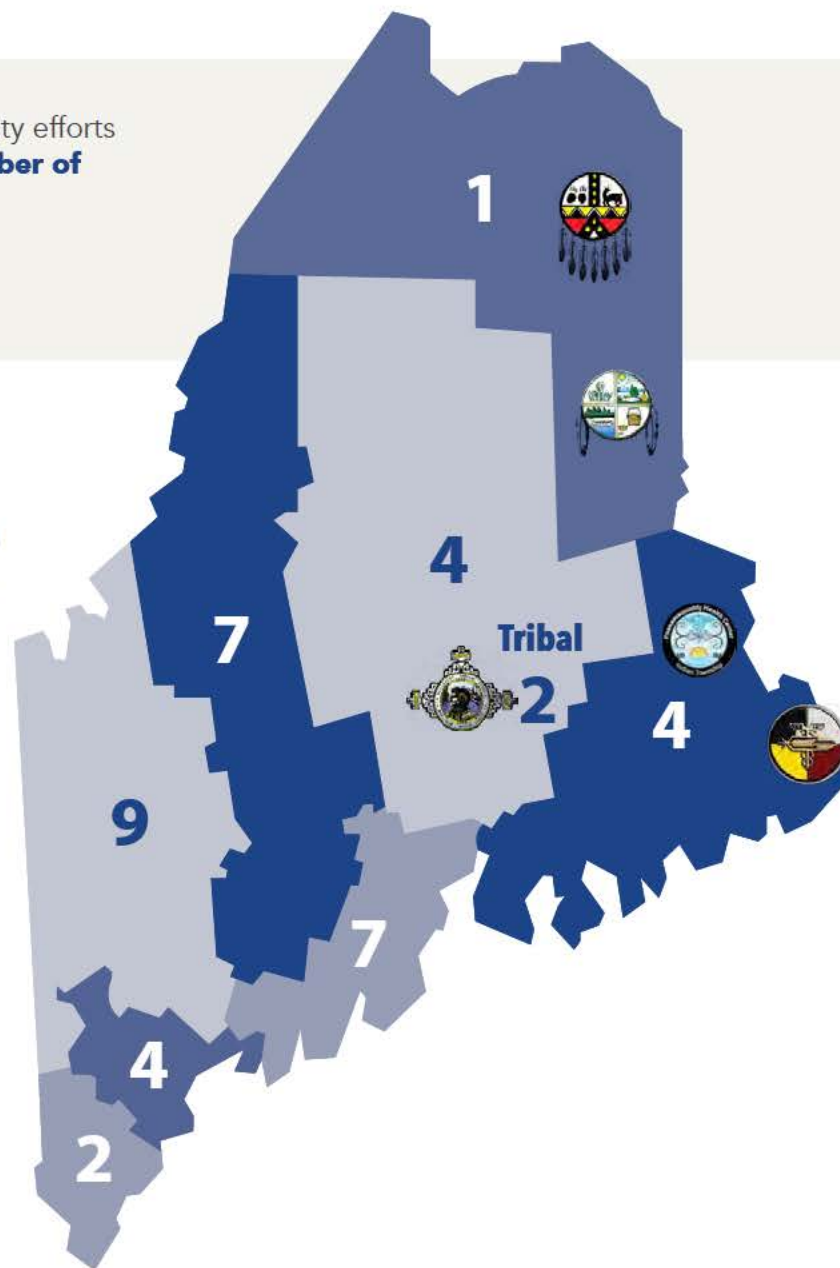
Statewide Collaborations

40 Nutrition Educators work across all **16 Maine counties**, building on community efforts to promote health and well-being. **The numbers on the map represent the number of Nutrition Educators in each of the 9 public health districts in 2023.**

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

Local Partners: Collaborating for Healthy Communities

97	Eligible Child Care and Head Start Programs	11	Adult Education, Job Training, TANF, and Veteran Services Sites	163	Eligible Schools and Youth Education Sites
49	Public Housing Sites	28	Health Care Clinics and Hospitals	22	Community or Recreation Centers
11	Libraries	40	Food Pantries, Food Banks, Congregate Meal Sites, and Soup Kitchens	10	Faith-Based Centers
7	Before-and-After-School Programs	8	Emergency Shelters and Temporary Housing Sites	15	Farmers Markets
9	Gardens	9	Residential Treatment Centers and Group Living Arrangements	8	Food Stores (Small and Large)



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 community 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.

“Through gleaning efforts in the Mid Coast area, the Merrymeeting Gleaners are able to provide TONS of fresh produce to SNAP partners. Through sharing tables, boxes of gleaned produce, and different events and SNAP-ED classes around town, we're able to see an increase in consumption of vegetables and fruit, especially for people who really could use it. I personally love the local sharing tables, everyone is welcome to grab something that appeals to them and they're set up in popular community settings like the lobby of our local library or the YMCA.”

— Ally Messier, Mid Coast Hospital Nutrition Educator



In 2023, Nutrition Educators reported close to

\$130K in leveraged resources *a 10% increase from 2022*

The **greatest total value** was **volunteer staffing** for SNAP-Ed activities at

\$63K,

followed by **gleaned produce** at

\$51K

Youth Education

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.

“This is a rewarding program for our rural school. Children have opportunities to try foods that might not be available otherwise and it has also encouraged them to try new foods at lunch. I hope we can continue with this program in the future.”

— PABS Classroom Teacher



In 2023, **PABS** reached

10,951 students

in eligible elementary schools where 50% or more students qualify for federally funded free or reduced-price meals.

After completing PABS:

- 97% of teachers reported that more students now can identify healthy food choices
- 95% of teachers reported that more students are now willing to try new foods offered at school
- 70% 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:

- Encourage the students to be physically active (92%)
- Offer healthy food choices to students at parties or as snacks or rewards (84%)
- Remind families to bring healthy snacks for school parties (80%)

Food Smarts Kids and 10 Tips for Teens

Self-reported data from **two additional youth curricula that reached over 1,500 students** demonstrated that

55% of youth participants improved at least one health behavior. The health behaviors measured were eating fruits and vegetables, drinking sugar-sweetened beverages, engaging in physical activity, and, for teens, reading nutrition labels.



10 Tips for Teens Participant Voice:

"What was the best or most useful part of the 10 Tips classes?"

“ Getting exercise because it is fun and also it is one of the best ways to be healthy. ”

“ The best part of the 10 TIPS classes is when we made the snacks at the end of the class because it shows me how to make a healthy snack and what I should consider making or eating. ”



Additionally, after participating in **Maine SNAP-Ed**, students **9 to 18 years old** reported:

a 9% increase

in the times per day **fruits** were consumed

a 10% increase

in the times per day **vegetables** were consumed

Adult Education

Cooking Matters®: Partnering with Good Shepherd Food Bank for Hands-on Cooking and Nutrition

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 **Cooking Matters® direct education series to parents, caregivers, and youth** ages 8 to 18.

In 2023, **Cooking Matters® programming** accounted for

64% of adults reached

Cooking Matters® Participant Voice: *"How has this course affected your life?"*

“ I really enjoyed listening to other people’s ways of cooking and what their easy to use staples are. The recipes are also very hearty and can be simplified so easy to make. ”

“ It has made me more confident in food prep and solidified my nutrition knowledge. ”



Participants in Cooking Matters for Adults receive a **\$10 gift card for groceries, with donations from Hannaford Supermarkets**. Cooking Matters at the Store is a guided grocery store tour providing easy ways to shop for healthy foods – the tours can be held at retail sites or as “pop-up” tours wherever adults are gathering at community sites.

Health care sites, public housing, and grocery stores were the **top three settings** for adult Cooking Matters® programming (225, 185, and 91 adults reached, respectively).

After completing the **Cooking Matters for Adults series**, there were **increases in respondents reporting that they:**

- use the **nutrition facts** on food labels
- can choose the **best-priced form of fruits and vegetables**
- are **eating more beans** rich in plant-based protein and fiber
- are confident they **can help their family eat more healthy**

10 Tips for Adults

In 2023, **10 Tips for Adults** accounted for

35% of adults reached



Health care sites, public housing, and community or recreation centers were the **top three settings** for 10 Tips for Adults programming (168, 113, and 91 adults reached, respectively).

10 Tips for Adults Participant Voice: *"How has this course affected your life?"*

“ This class is preparing me for the future on how to make meals or shop on a budget. Thank you for this experience. ”

“ The class has already altered my food purchasing habits. I reached for cottage cheese and sour cream at the dairy case, and for the first time went for the light instead of the whole milk. ”

Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) Change Interventions

Across the state, communities are engaged in innovative, successful public health 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 2023, Nutrition Educators worked on **71 PSE change interventions:**

Increase access to local fruits and vegetables	20
Community public health supports	10
Healthy retail	9
School and early child care gardens	9
School wellness	8
Community gardens	5
Healthcare clinical-community linkages	3
Community-based social marketing	4
Encourage youth participation in federal food programs	2
Worksite wellness	1



As a result, there were **49 nutrition and physical activity supports newly adopted or maintained in Maine communities:**

28
new or expanded
PSE supports in
71 sites

21
maintained
PSE supports
in **70 sites**

15K
Mainers
reached



Multi-Level Programming

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**.

Of the 49 strategies in which a new support was adopted or an ongoing support maintained in 2023, all but one, or **98%, included at least one of the four complementary components**. The breakdown of **multi-level programming to maximize and sustain** SNAP-Ed public health interventions in 2023 is as follows:

- Direct education **78%**
- Parent/community involvement **71%**
- Marketing **67%**
- Staff training **29%**

Sustained PSE Programming

Maine SNAP-Ed 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 and obtain support from community allies, as well as implement monitoring and reporting systems designed to inform the long-term quality and impact of programming.

Of the 49 total strategies with successful new, expanded, or maintained supports in 2023, Nutrition Educators reported that **82%, or 40 of the strategies, included sustainability efforts**. This is higher than the past two years (65% in 2022 and 77% in 2021).

The following **sustainability strategies** are fully or partially in place to **ensure long-lasting PSE changes** in Maine communities:

- 90%** have support from community partners
- 75%** have an outside organization that has assumed responsibility
- 60%** have identified an outside funding source
- 55%** have a monitoring system
- 15%** report that a policy has been adopted that will require changes to be maintained

Community-Responsive Programming:

Engaging with Communities to Prioritize Person-Centered Approaches

Trauma-Informed Practices

Maine SNAP-Ed seeks to create positive healthy living experiences in a community setting with direct education programming and PSE change interventions. Positive experiences and supportive relationships build resilience and offer opportunities to buffer trauma. Approaching SNAP-Ed with a trauma-informed lens acknowledges the impacts of trauma on nutrition security and health and facilitates resilience building opportunities that promote healthy communities.

In efforts to promote a positive and healing relationship to nourishment in the communities Maine SNAP-Ed works in, Nutrition Educators are trained in the six principles of a trauma-informed approach and how to apply them in Maine SNAP-Ed programming. These six principles are as follows: safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment, voice and choice, and cultural, historical, and gender issues.³

Building on Strengths

2023 PABS and Eat Well Play Hard (EWPH) post-series **classroom teacher feedback** and **10 Tips for Adults** post-series surveys affirm that Maine SNAP-Ed programming promotes community trust.

Classroom Teacher Feedback:

% Strongly Agreed/Agreed

PABS EWPH

100%

80%

60%

40%

20%

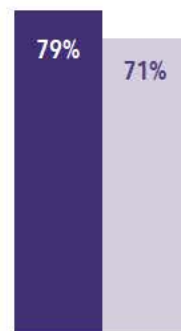
0%



Messages focused on positive reasons to eat healthy without overemphasizing "unhealthy" food choices.



The Nutrition Educator invited "voice and choice" (e.g., participants could opt in or out of discussions or activities and were invited to share their thoughts.)



The Nutrition Educator honored different personal and cultural connections to food.

10 Tips for Adults Participants Say:

% Selected Item



The lessons offered useful examples.



The lessons talked about familiar foods.



The lessons reflected my experiences.

When participants were asked if the Nutrition Educator "asked for my input in ways that made me feel included in the class."

99%

of 10 Tips for Adults and

88%

of 10 Tips for Teens participants said

YES

In 2023, Nutrition Educators considered **trauma-informed principles and centered equity** in their PSE interventions. Together with community partners:

- educators established **ADA-compliant garden beds and accessible StoryWalk installations**;
- students were invited to contribute **“voice and choice”** in decisions regarding youth-centered nutrition and physical activity supports;
- **rural and Indigenous cultures** were integrated into gardening and recipe creation and featured in StoryWalk books; and
- **American Sign Language and visual aids** were used to conduct a farmers market tour.

“ I appreciate moving away from calling food “junk food” or “unhealthy” and now calling it “sometimes food,” and trying a more neutral approach to food because realistically many of our students come to school with convenient, packaged food and I don’t want to contribute to any stigma around that because it is the food that is easily available to families. ”

— PABS Classroom Teacher



“ [The Nutrition Educator] is a very good teacher. He is patient and treat our clients with intellectual disabilities as just regular people. He doesn’t talk down to them or treat them differently. ”

— 10 Tips for Adults Participant

Spotlight

In Cumberland County, a Nutrition Educator has been collaborating with the **Portland Farmers’ Market** and other organizations such as **Good Shepherd Food Bank** and the **Maine Federation of Farmers’ Markets** to increase SNAP shoppers’ confidence using market produce. This PSE strategy to increase access to fruits and vegetables from farms and farmers markets resulted in the sustained maintenance of a system promoting use of fresh or local produce. In 2023, the Nutrition Educator **reached 150 people**. Taste tests and **inclusive direct education**, such as using **American Sign Language** to provide tours, improved access to healthy food for participants, including **18 adults with disabilities and their caregivers**.

Somerset Public Health:

Uniting for Community-Driven Successes

Summary

Funding through the **Good Shepherd Food Bank** and support provided by **Somerset Public Health's SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator** through facilitation of the **Somerset Food Security Group** enabled the implementation of a **new mobile food pantry**, operated by the **Winslow Community Cupboard**. These **collaborative efforts** work towards achieving community-wide nutrition security and help **end the meal gap** in Somerset County.

Between January and September, 2023, over **94** households — **approximately 787 individuals** – in Somerset County were able to **access food at 7 distribution sites** through the **Winslow Community Cupboard's mobile food pantry**.

Social and Community Context

Whether people are healthy or not is complex and is affected by their circumstances and environment. **Somerset County has the highest rate of food insecurity in Maine**, with 17% (8,600 people) experiencing food insecurity.⁵ This is 56% higher than the national average.

A household is **food secure** if all members, at all times, can access enough food for an active, healthy life.⁴ 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 well-being, prevent disease, and, if needed, treat disease.⁶

One of the Maine SNAP-Ed PSE strategies that works to address nutrition security, **Healthy Grocery Acquisition, is designed to create, enhance, and support interventions in retail or pantry settings** to increase healthy grocery acquisition through increased availability of healthy foods and beverages.

Community Assets

The **Somerset Public Health (SPH) coalition**, whose mission is "...to improve and protect the public health, well-being, and environment of people in Somerset County," working for years to achieve community-wide nutrition security

Good Shepherd Food Bank (GSFB), a statewide food bank, key hunger relief organization in Maine with hundreds of partners, and in 2018, GSFB launched the Community-Driven Strategies to End Hunger initiative (CDSI)

The **Winslow Community Cupboard**, a food bank in Winslow, operating the produce trailer (mobile food pantry)

The **Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets (MFFM)**, whose mission is to "cultivate a vibrant, sustainable farmers' market community as a vital part of Maine's local food network," helping to secure funding and leading programming to improve access to local farmers markets

The **Somerset Food Security Group (SFSG)**, a network of food pantries and other food assistance organizations that meet monthly to share grants and funding opportunities, support and expand existing relationships, and allow for membership-driven strategies

Collaborative Action

When CDSI funding was launched, regions were defined and prioritized for competitive funding to address food access through community-designed projects. The SPH Nutrition Educator had already established social capital in the community through years of SNAP-Education programming. To help end the meal gap in Somerset County, the coalition built on the educator's existing community relationships and **collaborated with local pantry directors** to establish the **Somerset Food Security Group (SFSG)**.

The Nutrition Educator participated in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis, led by GSFB, to identify priority projects for SFSG members. Using this community-based knowledge, the Nutrition Educator supported SFSG members in their efforts to apply for CDSI funding in 2022, resulting in **GSFB awarding Somerset and Kennebec Counties \$100,000 each in CDSI funding**. The majority of the Kennebec County funds supported the **Winslow Community Cupboard's two refrigerated produce trailers** (mobile food pantry serving the two counties). SFSG members coordinate deliveries by communicating what foods are needed in their communities through the mobile pantry's ordering system.

The mobile pantry strives to be barrier-free and is not limited by boundaries, service areas, or economic requirements. Distribution sites for the mobile pantry are selected based on their walking accessibility, if possible, in areas with low income. Rural areas are also prioritized.

CDSI funds also enables MFFM to mail postcards to households that receive SNAP/EBT to **promote incentive programming complemented by SNAP-Education nutrition education at local markets**, increasing both access and education.

“It has been my pleasure over the last six years collaborating with local agencies and Good Shepherd Food Bank. Many key players are working hard to address food insecurity throughout Somerset County. Thanks to funding from GSFB, the Solon Community Food Cupboard looks forward to their future site on Main Street. This new location has the potential for growth with the addition of a thrift store along with a large capacity for refrigerated storage, further benefiting our SNAP-Education community.”

– Cheryl Curtis, Somerset Public Health Nutrition Educator

Building on Strengths

Over **6,000 participants** have been tracked through various CDSI-funded programs since its inception. In 2023, the core reach of an estimated **1,300 individuals** expanded by **787 people** with the addition of a **mobile food pantry** funded by GSFB. The mobile pantry increased access to healthy foods by locating in walking-accessible, SNAP-Education eligible sites.

Evidence-based nutrition education, such as Cooking Matters at the Store virtual tours, Cooking Matters for Adults, and 10 Tips for Adults, reached approximately **82 community members**.



The number of distribution sites in 2024 has already increased to include a school and a town food pantry. The mobile food truck coordinates with these two new sites to be present during the weeks that the town and school pantries are not open to provide increased opportunities for community members to receive food.

Sustainability efforts are in place, with groups that are not dependent on SNAP-Education funding assuming long-term responsibility. **Future SFSG projects** through GSFB funding include **increased storage for a school food pantry** and **replacing the Winslow Community Cupboard's produce trailer and a forklift**, which were destroyed by a severe winter storm. GSFB recently awarded the Solon Community Food Cupboard with funds to purchase a local convenience store with refrigeration, extra cold storage, and room for their thrift store.

The SPH SNAP-Education team is successfully facilitating and expanding local efforts to improve nutrition security in Somerset County. Leveraged resources and integrated projects are improving healthy food access and affordability where families live and shop. The community is uniting to close the meal gap and improve the well-being of thousands of Mainers eligible for SNAP.

Social Marketing

The **SHOP, COOK, EAT Healthy on a Budget** social marketing campaign promotes healthy living for Mainers.

- In FY 2023, it resulted in **2,452,391 impressions** on the Maine SNAP-Ed website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Google platforms, and an additional **1,168,557 impressions on television**.
- **203 posts** were shared on Facebook and Instagram, with an average **engagement rate of 6.19%**, which is high by industry standards. Engagement refers to the amount an audience interacts with the content they see (such as with likes or comments) and shows their level of interest.
- The most popular group among **Instagram followers** was **women ages 35-44**.
- Maine SNAP-Ed's **website had 4,980 (3.4%) more visitors** (152,529 total) compared to FY 2022 (147,549 total).
- The most popular ads were those showing healthy and delicious comfort food that led to the recipe section of the Maine SNAP-Ed website.
- NEW this year, the **Maine SNAP-Ed in Motion video** was successfully promoted via YouTube and received **over 220,000 complete video views**. A 30-second commercial of the video aired on **television**.

Maine SNAP-Ed Texting Campaign

- **299 subscribers** received **52 weekly text messages** with a link to **healthy living resources**, resulting in 833 clicks.



**SIMPLE, DELICIOUS
COMFORT FOOD**
Healthy on a budget.



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.

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

Spotlight

In 2023, postcards promoted 14 of the 44 farmers markets and 3 of the 18 farm stands participating in **Maine Harvest Bucks**, a nutrition incentive program – **\$1 bonus buck for every \$2 spent** – that increases the purchasing power of SNAP for nutritious foods.

- **1,816 postcards were redeemed** at 17 farmers' markets and farm stands.
- Maine SNAP-Ed **Nutrition Educators hosted family events** at 7 farmers markets.



Recognizing Our 2023 SNAC Members:

Fedcap, Families Forward

FoodCorps Maine

Full Plates Full Potential

Good Shepherd Food Bank

Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future

Hannaford Supermarkets

Let's Go!

Maine Dairy and Nutrition Council

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

Maine Department of Education – Child Nutrition

Maine Department of Health and Human Services – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program | Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention | Office of Aging and Disability Services | Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program
Maine Farm to Institution

Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets

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 Northern New England

The White House National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health: Five Pillars to Unite the Nation

SNAP-Ed is an important component of the Nation's strategy to end hunger and reduce diet-related diseases. The national actions, defined within five pillars, align with SNAP-Ed's programmatic and collaboration goals and build on community and state efforts. **The five pillars are defined here, highlighting Maine SNAP-Ed 2023 achievements within the vision area of each pillar.**

“...ending hunger and increasing healthy eating and physical activity by 2030 so fewer Americans experience diet-related diseases—while reducing related health disparities.”

For more information on the Nation's “Call to Action” around nutrition security and how all of us can achieve the 2030 goal, see the [Biden-Harris Administration National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health](#), Sept. 2022.



PILLAR #1

Improve Food Access and Affordability:

End hunger by making it easier for everyone—including individuals in urban, suburban, rural, and Tribal communities, and territories—to access and afford food.

Maine SNAP-Ed is working with sector-level and Tribal partners through the statewide SNAC to help more individuals experiencing food insecurity benefit from federal assistance programs. In 2023, the **SNAC's Federal Food Programs Subcommittee** successfully promoted the:

- **Hot Lunch Summer Campaign**, directing Maine youth to their local meal sites through magnets, posters, and social media; and the
- **211 Campaign**, connecting Mainers to food assistance and meal program resources through infographics and social media.



PILLAR #2

Integrate Nutrition and Health: Prioritize the role of nutrition and food security in overall health—including disease prevention and management—and ensure that our health care system addresses the nutrition needs of all people.

Maine SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educators work on the **Healthcare Clinical-Community Linkages** PSE strategy to connect patients who are food insecure with community food and nutrition resources such as direct education programming and food pantries. In 2023, through their PSE efforts, educators partnered with **six clinical sites** to:

- **increase the number of food insecurity screenings and food security program referrals**, such as direct education referrals or referrals to food assistance sites, in **four clinical settings**; and
- offer direct education and **implement MyPlate marketing at two clinical sites' Help Yourself Shelf food pantries.**





PILLAR #3

Empower All Consumers to Make and Have Access to Healthy Choices:

Foster environments that enable all people to easily make informed, healthy choices, increase access to healthy food, encourage healthy workplace and school policies, and invest in public education campaigns that are culturally appropriate and resonate with specific communities.

Maine SNAP-Ed furthers national efforts to empower consumers through **series-based direct education, social marketing,** and support of **nutrition incentive programs.** Education is provided in food pantries, affordable and senior housing sites, Tribal, and other **community settings designed to reach Mainers eligible for SNAP.** Learning objectives align with the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans** and classes are tailored to local communities, **including translation of education resources into Arabic, French, and Portuguese,** and use of the **My Wabanaki Plate.**

Social marketing messages include **MyPlate tools, nutrition literacy,** and skills to build confidence around shopping – including **menu planning and use of food labels** to help consumers identify healthy foods when grocery shopping.



PILLAR #4

Support Physical Activity for All:

Make it easier for people to be more physically active—in part by ensuring that everyone has access to safe places to be active—**increase awareness of the benefits of physical activity,** and **conduct research on and measure physical activity.**

Maine SNAP-Ed is improving access to physical activity opportunities through the Community Public Health Supports PSE strategy, which includes StoryWalks®. **StoryWalks increase and promote community walkability, especially in rural states like Maine.**

In 2023, educators partnered with **six schools, two Head Starts, and one library** to implement StoryWalks, providing **physical activity opportunities for 1,700 youth and their families.**



PILLAR #5

Enhance Nutrition and Food Security Research:

Improve nutrition metrics, data collection, and research to inform nutrition and food security policy, particularly on issues of equity, access, and disparities.

The UNE Center for Excellence in Public Health, which holds the SNAP-Ed implementation grant, leads two nutrition and health research efforts.

Administration for Community Living (ACL)—US Department of Health and Human Services:

The nutrition of older Americans was disproportionately negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this inequity, UNE Centers for Excellence in 'Public Health' and 'Aging and Health,' in partnership with a low-income senior housing site, are testing a hybrid virtual approach to 10 Tips for Adults that is tailored to older adults.

Healthy Eating Research, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation & National Institute of Nursing Research:

Two studies will evaluate the effects of the COVID-19-era Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) allotments and their discontinuation on the healthfulness of participant food purchases.

“Maine SNAP-Ed is helping to advance nutrition science by serving as an important facilitator of SNAP-and nutrition-related research projects at UNE. 10 Tips for Adults underpins the nutrition education intervention implemented by the research team in the Administration for Community Living (ACL) study. SNAP-Ed leadership is collaborating with the NIH/RWJF research initiatives by advising the project and by supporting the studies' recruitment through statewide SNAP-Ed nutrition educators.”

— Michele Polacsek, PhD MHS, Director, UNE Center for Excellence in Public Health

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program–Education (SNAP-Ed) is a federally funded grant program that supports evidence-based nutrition education and obesity prevention interventions and projects for persons eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through complementary direct education, multi-level interventions, and community and public health approaches to improve nutrition.

Maine SNAP-Ed offers nutrition and cooking classes and supports projects that address food and physical activity needs in the community. Trained Nutrition Educators reach Mainers in all 16 counties. Nutrition Educators are integrated into the communities they serve and work where Mainers eat, live, learn, play, shop, and work.

CONTACT: Call (207) 221-4560 • Email mainesnap-ed@une.edu • Website www.mainesnap-ed.org

CONNECT: FB facebook.com/mainesnap-ed • IG instagram.com/snaprecipe



Icons: Noun Project Illustrations: Vecteezy.com

References/Footnotes:

1. *Fruit & vegetable taste testing | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps*. Retrieved Mar 29, 2024, from <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/take-action-to-improve-health/what-works-for-health/fruit-vegetable-taste-testing>
2. Esquivel, M. K., Nigg, C. R., Fialkowski, M. K., Braun, K. L., Li, F., & Novotny, R. (2016). Influence of Teachers' Personal Health Behaviors on Operationalizing Obesity Prevention Policy in Head Start Preschools: A Project of the Children's Healthy Living Program (CHL). *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 48(5), 318-325.e1. 10.1016/j.jneb.2016.02.007
3. California Department of Public Health and California Department of Social Services Essentials for Childhood Initiative. (June, 2020.) *Trauma Informed Nutrition: Recognizing the relationship between adversity, chronic disease and nutritional health*.
4. United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, Definitions of Food Security.
5. Overall (all ages) Hunger & Poverty in the United States | Map the Meal Gap (feedingamerica.org).
6. United States Department of Agriculture. USDA Actions on Nutrition Security.

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:** FNCSIVILRIGHTSCOMPLAINTS@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**.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



UNE UNIVERSITY OF
NEW ENGLAND
INNOVATION FOR A HEALTHIER PLANET