

## Applying PSEs to SNAP-Ed Strategies & Interventions: Definitions & Examples

While the concept of changing communities to promote access to healthy eating and physical activity is commonly understood, it can get confusing when trying to categorize that change as a policy change, a system change, or an environmental change. To help illustrate the differences, the definitions of each are listed below, as well as examples. In the pages that follow, examples of policy change, systems change and environmental change are provided for each of the most commonly selected topical areas for PSE work as well as examples of ways that partners can augment and enhance those efforts.

### **DEFINITIONS**

**Policy:** A *written* statement of an organizational position, decision or course of action. Ideally policies describe actions, resources, implementation, evaluation, and enforcement. Policies are made in the public, non-profit, and business sectors. In the public sector, policies may be determined by the legislative, executive or judicial branches of government at the city, county, district or state levels. In the non-profit and business sectors, organizational policies may be established by boards of directors, executive officers, managers or supervisors. Because they are written, policies are the easiest type of PSE change to characterize.

***Example:*** *A school district wellness policy requires nutrition education and physical activity interventions to be offered by SNAP-Ed qualified schools in accord once with its Common Core mandate.*

**Systems:** Systems changes are *unwritten, ongoing, often qualitative* organizational decisions/changes that result in new activities reaching large proportions of people the organization serves. An organization may adopt a new intervention, assign its people, reallocate other resources, or in significant ways modify its direction to benefit low-income consumers in qualifying sites and communities. Systems changes may occur in all three sectors (public, non-profit, and business). They may precede or follow a written policy.

***Example:*** *Organizations join efforts as a voluntary Food and Activity Policy Council to set up a farm-to-fork system that links farmers with new retail or wholesale customers in low-income settings. (A Council establishing itself as a non-profit or created by a body of government may be a policy change.)*

**Environmental:** Includes the *built or physical environments*, which are visual/observable, but may include *economic, social, normative or message environments*.

***Example:*** *A SNAP-Ed qualified retailer institutes cross-promotional signage and pricing shelf-talkers and offers free educational materials to encourage selection of preferred foods as per Half My Plate or the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DG); OR the retailer elects to place EBT/CalFresh signs only with foods and beverages 'to increase' as per the DGA.*

**Early Care and Education (ECE)**

<b>Strategy:</b>  <b>Increase access to healthy eating and physical activity.</b>	<b>Policy:</b> Childcare centers enrolled in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Programs are required to provide nutrition education, including an overview of regional food security resources to staff.
	<b>Systems:</b> Qualifying childcare centers offer food access, healthy eating and physical activity resources as a part of parent enrollment packets.
	<b>Environment:</b> Qualifying centers engage parents or services in building edible gardens for the young children.
<b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b>	<p>A for-profit child care company makes healthy changes in all its centers, not solely those where over half the children come from homes with incomes less than 185% FPL.</p> <p>A county welfare agency provides staff assistances at an orientation or parent night to help families complete CalFresh applications.</p>

**School Wellness**

<b>Strategy:</b>  <b>Establish model wellness policies that include after-school and meet or exceed the USDA minimums.</b>	<b>Policy:</b> SNAP-Ed qualifying schools and/or districts establish model wellness policies that exceed the USDA minimums, such as establishing rules for nutrition education, moderate to vigorous physical activity, or after-school programs, without supplanting USDA requirements for its categorical programs.
	<b>Systems:</b> Qualifying schools sign up for <i>Let's Move! Salad Bars to School</i> , <i>Let's Move! Active Schools</i> , or USDA's <i>Healthier U.S. Schools Challenge</i> . Or, after-school programs self-assess and institute best practices from <i>Changing Lives</i> , <i>Saving Lives</i> , the Healthy Behaviors Initiative.
	<b>Environment:</b> Youth and their adult allies in low-resource schools secure resources to help establish hydration stations to offer all students fresh, cold and free water.
<b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b>	<p>Districts, businesses or service organizations provide funds for infrastructure changes to improve water availability on school grounds, increase availability/quality of bike storage facilities (Safe Routes to School) or to fund expansion of physical activity equipment inventory.</p>

**Farm to School**

<p><b>Strategy:</b></p> <p><b>School districts participate in Farm to School procurement systems.</b></p>	<p><b>Policy:</b> A county agriculture commissioner establishes Farm to Fork as a policy initiative with funds and staff to foster Farm to School activities, including nutrition education, farmer engagement, and fruit and vegetable tasting opportunities, in low-income communities or sites.</p>
	<p><b>Systems:</b> Qualifying schools and/or districts participate in Farm to School procurement systems with nutrition education and community links by establishing a uniform invoicing and/or buying collaborative.</p>
	<p><b>Environment:</b> A <i>food hub</i> is established to aggregate or ‘fresh process’ local produce for use by SNAP-Ed-qualified commercial or retail vendors.</p>
<p><b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b></p>	<p>Partners provide resources to expand Farm to School systems beyond SNAP-Ed qualifying settings or funds to support technical assistance on procurement processes and tools, farmer training on certifications or school foodservice requirements for produce sourcing.</p>

**Joint Use Agreements**

<p><b>Strategy:</b></p> <p><b>Schools/districts have formal joint use agreements for recreational, garden and cooking facilities with surrounding communities, parks, and community centers.</b></p>	<p><b>Policy:</b> Low-resource schools/districts establish formal agreements for use of their recreational, sport, garden and/or cooking facilities by community residents and/or organizations outside of school hours. Or park and recreation districts, community centers, churches, or businesses establish written agreements to share their facilities or services with nearby low-resource schools.</p>
	<p><b>Systems:</b> A local health department creates an online form where organizations can apply to use space available for joint use.</p>
	<p><b>Environment:</b> A local health department advises school district officials on how to renovate on-site cooking facilities so that they are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which will facilitate joint use agreements with the community center</p>
<p><b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b></p>	<p>Partners help extend joint use beyond SNAP-Ed settings and audiences through establishment of jurisdiction-wide policies and initiatives. Donors help sponsor new costs such as nutrition or sports education, adult supervision, insurance costs, janitorial, equipment, or capital improvements needed to adapt the shared property for expanded use in a qualifying community or school.</p>

### Healthy Corner Stores

<b>Strategy:</b>  <b>Retailers agree to carry a minimum amount of healthy staple goods.</b>	<b>Policy:</b> A local small chain corner store revises their policy to ensure that each outlet carries a minimum of canned, frozen, and fresh fruits and vegetables.
	<b>Systems:</b> With consult from local health department staff, retailers revise their inventory tracking systems to include an increased number of fresh and canned fruits and vegetables for par inventory.
	<b>Environment:</b> In neighborhoods where the NEOPB Communities of Excellence program store assessment tool has been implemented, food stores increase the number of healthy products they stock and upgrade interior and exterior conditions needed to qualify as a healthy retailer.
<b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b>	Partners assist with corner store improvements that are not SNAP-Ed allowable such as shelving, refrigerators, facade improvements or small business loans.

### Restaurants and Neighborhood Vendors

<b>Strategy:</b>  <b>The overall CX<sup>3</sup> scores for the food environment are improved in low-income neighborhoods.</b>  <small>*CX<sup>3</sup> is a program of NEOPB that works to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables: <a href="https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/NEOPB/Pages/CX3_Main_Navigation.aspx">https://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/NEOPB/Pages/CX3_Main_Navigation.aspx</a></small>	<b>Policy:</b> A local, small chain restaurant revises their policy to serve only water, low-fat or non-fat milk or 100% juice on their children’s menu after consulting with local health department nutrition services staff.
	<b>Systems:</b> Neighborhood restaurants place the beverage dispensers behind the counters and discontinue free refills.
	<b>Environment:</b> In neighborhoods where the NEOPB Communities of Excellence program assessment tools have been implemented, restaurants, convenience stores, and mobile vendors improve and market healthier menu and ready-to-eat items to qualify as a healthy food establishment.
<b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b>	Partners work with jurisdictions to support policies that encourage marketing only healthy foods and drink to children and youth.

**Structured Physical Activity**

<p><b>Strategy:</b> Provide structured physical activity programs in low-income settings.</p>	<p><b>Policy:</b> Joint use agreements are established to provide high quality, supervised year-round sport and recreation programs for children, youth, adults or seniors in low-resource neighborhoods.</p>
	<p><b>Systems:</b> Local officials, or the County Nutrition Action Partnership (CNAP), join the national <i>Let's Move! Cities, Towns and Counties</i> Initiative, engage residents of low-resource communities, mobilize other entities, and establish a multi-component community campaign to promote and support daily moderate to vigorous physical activity.</p>
	<p><b>Environment:</b> Local health department staff work with community centers to provide low-cost resources that support physical activity along with nutrition education resources and signage throughout the building to encourage healthy eating and physical activity.</p>
<p><b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b></p>	<p>Health care providers develop physical activity programs for low-income patients to manage their weight or chronic conditions.</p>

**School and Community Gardens**

<p><b>Strategy:</b> Identify and provide opportunities to communities for land, water, and other support for community and school gardens.</p>	<p><b>Policy:</b> Park, school or city/county officials establish an Inter-Agency Agreement with the Extension's Master Gardener Program to provide technical support and education for gardens being established in low-resource communities or schools. <i>Or</i>, land use policies are established by county, district, or city agencies to support gardens at low-resource locations.</p>
	<p><b>Systems:</b> Gardening groups in qualifying venues join with others to support education, community engagement, and maintenance of vibrant gardens.</p>
	<p><b>Environment:</b> Local health department staff facilitate adding rain barrels to community garden sites.</p>
<p><b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b></p>	<p>Businesses, service organizations or others donate equipment, supplies and funding to provide what SNAP-Ed may not provide.</p>

**Worksite Wellness**

<p><b>Strategy:</b> Qualifying worksites self-assess and participate in the NEOPB worksite program.</p>	<p><b>Policy:</b> Low-wage worksites establish a policy to institute evidence-based changes found in the <i>California Fit Business Kit</i>, documented by the signed partnership agreement. Or, worksites institute mandatory stretching &amp; strengthening sessions before and after each shift.</p>
	<p><b>Systems:</b> Qualifying worksites encourage vending machines and catering trucks to offer, promote and favorably price healthier options, then help drive patronage by providing education, marketing and promotional support with employees.</p>
	<p><b>Environment:</b> Low-wage worksites offer free fruit, cold/hot drinking water, workout equipment, fitness classes, and locker rooms. Or, worksites promote stair usage and ensure stairwell is well-lit, comfortable, and safe.</p>
<p><b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b></p>	<p>Worksites institute company-wide changes for healthy eating and physical activity for all employees, not solely those in lower-wage categories or locations. Or, companies agree to liaise with county officials or non-profits to conduct outreach for under-used federal nutrition assistance programs like CalFresh.</p>

**Safe Routes to School**

<p><b>Strategy:</b> Promote active transport and work to improve access to safe streets or safe routes for all users.</p>	<p><b>Policy:</b> Low-resource schools/districts adopt Safe Routes to School policies that include plans for promotion, bike racks, safety education workshops, parent education, and on-site walking or biking programs for students.</p>
	<p><b>System:</b> Using an evidence-based checklist, youth or community residents identify needs in qualifying communities, make recommendations, gain support, and shape an ongoing campaign for active transport to and from school. The assessment may consider access to and promotion of healthy food and beverages on those routes.</p>
	<p><b>Environment:</b> A community invests infrastructure improvement funds to improve bike lane and crosswalk markings and signage.</p>
<p><b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b></p>	<p>Quality Safe Routes to School programs are introduced to all schools in the district. Or, county transportation agencies set-aside funds for capital improvements to support Safe Routes to School programs in low-income communities.</p>

**Farmers’ Markets**

<b>PSE Strategy:</b>  <b>Increase access to farmers’ markets through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Supplemental Nutrition Program coupon acceptance.</b>	<b>Policy:</b> City policies are established to require all farmers’ markets to honor CalFresh and EBT transactions.
	<b>Systems:</b> A farmers’ market organization works with its members and the local health department to provide ongoing nutrition education, offer active entertainment, and otherwise helps increase traffic at farmers’ markets in low-resource settings.
	<b>Environment:</b> Farmers’ market vendors adopt <i>Harvest of the Month</i> signage for all stalls to provide nutrition information, selection and storage tips for shoppers.
<b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b>	Private-sector incentive programs for CalFresh/EBT purchasing, like the Fair Food Network’s <i>Double-Up Food Bucks</i> or <i>Wholesome Wave</i> , are introduced and promoted to develop loyalty and help increase the ongoing purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP/CalFresh customers.

**Healthy Food and Beverage Standards**

<b>Strategy:</b>  <b>Promote healthy food and beverage standards.</b>	<b>Policy:</b> Public agencies adopt policies with standards that favor access, marketing and pricing of healthy food and beverages in low-resource settings, e.g., parks, housing, social service offices, and senior centers. <i>Or</i> , community-based organizations in qualifying SNAP-Ed locations adopt policies with similar standards.
	<b>Systems:</b> Following consult from local health department staff, the parks and recreations adopts nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold in vending as a requirement within the minimum standards of its procurement process.
	<b>Environment:</b> Residents or youth work with vendors to identify healthy products and price points that will sell successfully to patrons in SNAP-Ed qualifying locations.
<b>Added Value Partnership Example:</b>	Community groups work with mass media outlets to encourage voluntary adoption of standards for advertising of foods and beverages on programming for children.