



## Eat Better - Use the Web

Find recipes and tips on healthy eating at:  
Para recetas de comidas saludables y más consejos en:  
[Tìm công thức nấu ăn và thêm lời khuyên về ăn uống lành mạnh ở:](#)



### MyPlate

Choose MyPlate  
Elige MiPlato  
Chọn Đĩa Của Tôi  
[www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov)



### Champions for Change

Champions for Change  
Campeones Del Cambio  
Nhà Vô Địch cho Thay Đổi  
[www.CaChampionsForChange.net](http://www.CaChampionsForChange.net)  
[www.CampeonesDelCambio.net](http://www.CampeonesDelCambio.net)

### Eat Fresh



eat Fresh  
coma fresco  
ăn đồ tươi  
[www.eatfresh.org](http://www.eatfresh.org)

For CalFresh information, call 1-877-547-3663. Funded by USDA SNAP-Ed, an equal opportunity provider and employer.



## Creating Policy, Systems, Environmental Change: Your Success Story and Lessons Learned

### Title

Eat Better – Use the Web. Helping SNAP-Ed Families Find Needed Resources

### Intervention Summary

*This PSE strategy was submitted in 4/13 and approved by the State. Activities were conducted in FFY13 and FFY14. New PSE change topics will begin in FFY15.*

Helpful nutrition and food security resources are available on the Internet but many SNAP-Ed individuals have trouble accessing them. Initial surveys showed that there is a wide variation in use. One pilot project conducted with SNAP-Ed eligible families in a library computer center showed that about half did not have library cards and the majority spoke Spanish, did not have an email address and had never used a search engine, such as Google. Families surveyed at a public housing site had some access to computers in a resource room but most did not regularly use them. Clients in the CalFresh waiting room were more likely to have some experience with the Internet and most Social Service Agency (SSA) offices had resource rooms for public use. NEOP LHD and its 7 subgrantees along with CNAP and community partners conducted a variety of activities to help increase access to and use of the Internet to help improve nutrition education and food security efforts. NEOP promoted CaChampionsForChange.net and ChooseMyPlate.gov and more recently started promoting EatFresh.org, the nutrition link on the State's CalFresh website. WIC began promoting its online nutrition education link and Orange County SSA-CalFresh continued to promote MyBenefitsCalWIN.

**Access to the Internet:** Computers are available at various sites, including libraries, schools, resource centers and Head Start sites, and free Wi-Fi is available at many fast food restaurants, coffee shops, etc. Partners investigated ways to help increase their use. Most sites were receptive to posting nutrition information and assisting families but barriers remain and more efforts are needed to make better use existing computer resources. Of the 9 SSA-CalFresh offices, 6 have resource rooms with computers available to public, primarily for job searches. Five rooms are operated by an outside contractor (ResCARE), but SSA owns the computers and determines the sites that can be accessed. One room is independently operated by SSA staff. All sites are

interested in allowing access to the NEOP proposed web links once approved by SSA administrators. To help defray costs for low-income families, one large Internet service provider offers a discounted rate to qualifying individuals in select parts of the county. Additionally, it was discovered that many low-income families prefer to access the Internet through smart phones and not computers. Efforts are underway to better understand how information from NEOP key websites is viewed and navigated on a small screen.

**Use of the Internet:** NEOP integrated key websites into several nutrition lessons and was effective in promoting Internet use. The three FFY14 IOE projects that targeted adults, teens and preteen youth all achieved statistically significant improvements in the use of the Champions and MyPlate websites. Champion Moms and parent leaders attended a workshop and learned how to use the Spanish-language resources on the Champions and school district's food service websites. Another lesson was conducted at a food pantry that had Internet access and a large screen. This format worked extremely well and participants could easily see how to navigate the sites. A half-page flyer listing the three NEOP priority sites was developed, approved by the State and used at events and library displays. The CalFresh-SSA staff found the flyer useful and is in the process of trying to have it mailed to all CalFresh recipients. NEOP is currently evaluating how visitors to the CalFresh offices would prefer to receive information about the websites. WIC partners continue to promote their online education but participation rates are at ~1%. The CalFresh online application process has been extremely well-received; the EatFresh web link is on the homepage, allowing for easy access. Local staff helped pilot test an app for locating Summer Meal sites. The local 2-1-1 referral partner recently posted a map showing the location of various food pantries. These resources may be added to future education efforts.

## **Description of Barriers Encountered and Identified or Proposed Solutions**

As discussed, not only is there a need for better access to computers but some computers are underutilized and others do not allow connections to NEOP key websites. Asking individuals to access websites as part of nutrition classes and homework has been an effective way to motivate them to use the Internet. Language was a barrier to some. Spanish-speaking participants were often pleased to find the information and recipes in their language but little is available in Vietnamese, a threshold language for Orange County. Obtaining approval to allow access to key nutrition websites in the SSA resource rooms is moving forward but staff has been extremely busy with Covered California and other competing activities.

Even when computers and web links are available, many low-income individuals, especially older adults, have little interest and limited computer skills. The County's Health Promotion division staff used the initial work done by NEOP as a basis for their work related to accessing health care resources on the web. They found they had to teach some very basic computer skills, such as how to use a mouse, a skill that does not need to be taught by a nutrition educator. It may be more cost effective to integrate the use of nutrition websites into computer classes and youth service projects.

Since the initial surveys were conducted, there has been an increase in the number of individuals of all incomes using smart phones to access the Internet. New barriers include the length of web address; most seem to prefer the short EatFresh name to the longer CACHampionsForChange name that takes longer to type. Once on a site, the page layout on some sites, such as MyPlate,

does not easily fit on a phone screen and navigation is difficult. It is also difficult to track the number of times local individuals visit state and nationally based sites. There may be a way to add a link on the County's new myHEALTHoc site to make it easier to direct visitors to key web links and track the number of hits.

## Future Directions/Sustainable Success

*Formal efforts on this PSE ended 9/30/14, with the start of the new FFY15 Work Plan; informal efforts will continue.*

### Short-term goals

- Continue to include Internet resources in NEOP lessons to help individuals access science-based, accurate nutrition information, recipes and food assistance resources, such as Summer Meals, food pantries, CalFresh and WIC
- Continue to work with SSA to allow access to key nutrition websites in CalFresh office resource rooms
- Increase the number of posters and prompts that encourage the use of key websites
- Add NEOP key web links to the County's new website to help track use and facilitate access

### Long-term goals include

- Share information with web designers on how to make the NEOP key websites more user-friendly on smart phone screens
- Investigate possible joint-use agreements related to shared use of computers at schools, worksites, faith-based sites, etc.

## Contact information about this Narrative

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