

**Policy, Systems and Environmental Change**  
**Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention Branch**  
**FFY 2014**

**Applying PSEs to SNAP-Ed and NEOP Statewide Objectives**

**DEFINITIONS**

**Policy:** A *written* statement of an organizational position, decision or course of action. Ideally policies describe the actions to take, resources that will be allocated, implementation, evaluation, and enforcement. Policies are made in the public, non-profit, philanthropic and business sectors. In the public sector, policies may be determined by the legislative, executive or judicial branches of government and may be units of a city, county, district or state. In other sectors, organizational policies may be established by boards of directors or executive officers. Policies are the most concrete type of change to characterize.

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

**Systems:** Systems changes are *unwritten, ongoing, often qualitative* organizational decisions/changes that result in new activities that reach large proportions of people the organization serves. They may involve a decision such as an organization adopting a new intervention, assigning people, reallocating resources, or in significant ways modifying the organization's direction to benefit low-income consumers qualifying sites and communities. Systems changes may occur in all four sectors. 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 or pricing shelf-talkers and offers free educational materials to encourage selection of preferred foods as per Half a Plate or the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA), OR the retailer elects to place EBT/CalFresh signs only with foods and beverages 'to increase' as per the DGA.*

## EVIDENCE-BASED EXAMPLES OF SNAP-Ed PSEs, WHAT STAKEHOLDERS CAN ADD

### Early Childhood

**P:** County First 5 Commission commits resources to assist SNAP-Ed qualified child care centers establish new policies for education or environmental change on healthy eating, beverages, physical activity or reduced screen time in accord with authoritative recommendations, such as the Institute of Medicine, *CHOICE* or *Head Start*. *Or*, centers enroll in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program to help offer nutritious snacks or meals.

**S:** SNAP-Ed qualifying child care centers conduct a self-assessment and join with others to advance practices recommended in the national *Let's Move! Child Care* initiative.

**E:** Qualifying centers engage parents or seniors in building edible gardens for the young children. *Or*, they create a physical and social environment that increases opportunities for safe physical activity for the children as recommended by authoritative sources.

**Added Value Partners May Bring:** 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. *Or*, a child care provider organization, or a county licensing agency, offers training or other assistance on healthy changes to all child care centers with which it works.

### School Wellness

**P:** SNAP-Ed qualifying schools and/or districts establish model wellness policies that exceed the USDA minimums, such as establishing rules for nutrition education, physical activity, or afterschool programs, without supplanting USDA requirements for its categorical programs.

**S:** **Qualifying schools** sign up for *Let's Move! Salad Bars to School* or USDA's *Healthier U.S. Schools Challenge*. *Or*, afterschool programs self-assess and institute best practices from *Changing Lives, Saving Lives*, the Healthy Behaviors Initiative.

**E:** Youth and their adult allies in low-resource schools secure resources to help implement state law by establishing enough hydration stations to offer all students fresh, cold and free water.

**Added Value:** Business, civic, service, or law enforcement groups help low-resource schools by providing fiscal or human support for evidence-based changes beyond those that SNAP-Ed may sponsor, such as requiring advertising on/near school property to be only for healthy foods and beverages, as per the *DGA*.

### Farm to Fork/Farm to School

**P:** A county agriculture commissioner establishes, funds and staffs a Farm to Fork office that fosters F2F/F2S activities, including nutrition education, farmer engagement, and tasting opportunities, in low-income communities or sites.

**S:** Qualifying schools and/or districts participate in Farm to School/Farm to Fork procurement systems with nutrition education and community links. *Or*, a system is established to link large numbers of restaurants and food stores in low-income communities or residents with a steady source of locally-grown, affordable fresh fruits and vegetables. *Or*, a group of organizations joins the National Farm to School Network.

**E:** A *food hub* is established to aggregate or 'fresh process' local produce for use by SNAP-Ed qualified commercial or retail vendors.

**Added Value:** Resources are found to support extension of F2F/F2S beyond SNAP-Ed qualifying settings.

## Joint Use Agreements

**P:** Low-resource schools/districts establish formal agreements for use of their recreational, sport, garden and/or cooking facilities by community residents 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.

**S:** A qualifying preschool, school or afterschool program arranges informally to use nearby land for sport, recreation, or gardening.

**E:** 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 by students.

**Added Value:** PSEs as above are extended beyond SNAP-Ed settings and audiences.

## Healthy Corner Stores

**P:** In qualifying neighborhoods, retailers sign partnership agreements to join the *Network's Retail Program* which includes education, marketing, public relations, and community service. *Or*, the transportation department alters its bus service to increase access to healthy stores for families and seniors.

**S:** A Champion Grocer or grocers' association achieves widespread participation by other retailers in Farm to Fork sourcing systems or the promotion of *Harvest of the Month* specials.

**E:** In qualifying CX<sup>3</sup> census tracts, food stores upgrade interior and exterior conditions to reach the 70-point minimum needed to qualify as a healthy retailer. *Or*, in food deserts alternative vendors such as farmers' markets, Community-Supported Agriculture or green carts grow a profitable customer base, in part by becoming USDA-certified as SNAP/CalFresh retailers.

**Added Value:** Qualifying supermarkets (>\$50,000 CalFresh receipts/month) sign partnership agreements with the *Retail Program* to exceed minimums by sponsoring more frequent or intense interventions that those SNAP-Ed can support. *Or*, assessment by the Healthy Food Retail Initiative (led by California Tobacco Control Program) or CX<sup>3</sup> are used to extend retail improvements to other geographic areas or to the entire jurisdiction.

## Restaurants and Other Neighborhood Vendors

**P:** The environmental health and public health departments create a joint agreement to create and implement a comprehensive approach for introducing new federal regulations for nutrition labeling in restaurants, vending and other sites in low-income communities.

**S:** Organizations join efforts and mount a campaign to help restaurants make 'the healthy choice the easy choice' in eateries in low-income neighborhoods.

**E:** In qualifying CX<sup>3</sup> census tracts, restaurants, C-stores, and mobile vendors improve and market healthier menu and ready-to-eat items to reach or exceed the required minimum number of points needed to qualify as a healthy food establishment.

**Added Value:** A jurisdiction establishes policies that encourage marketing only healthy foods and drink to children and youth. *Or*, restaurants are assisted to join the American Restaurant Association's Healthy Dining initiative.

## Structured Physical Activity Programs

**P:** 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.

**S:** Local officials or the County Nutrition Action Partnership (CNAP) join the national *Let's Move! Cities, Towns and Counties* Initiative, engage residents of low-resource communities in an assessment, mobilize other entities, and establish a multi-component community campaign to promote and support daily moderate to vigorous physical activity.

**E:** Youth or adults in low-resource communities conduct a campaign to improve the facilities, safety and programs in schools or in neglected park and recreation sites; they may succeed in securing new funds for these purposes.

**Added Value:** District officials alter schools' daily schedules to offer recess before lunch, *Or* to help teachers incorporate moderate to vigorous PA through the school day. *Or*, officials set-aside funds for structured pedestrian, cycling, or sport programs with communities.

### **Community and School Gardens**

**P:** 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.

**S:** Gardening groups in SNAP-Ed-qualifying venues join with others through the California School Garden Network, *Let's Move! School Gardens*, or the urban garden network to support education, engagement, and maintenance of vibrant gardens.

**E:** Gardening groups link with other parts of the community, such as schools, retail, food banks, CalFresh offices, Community-Supported Agriculture, restaurants or Area Agencies on Aging in qualifying low-resource settings to use *Harvest of the Month* as a theme unifying education, marketing and promotional messaging.

**Added Value:** Businesses, service organizations or others donate equipment, supplies and capital to provide needed resources that SNAP-Ed may not provide. *Or*, land use policies are established by county, district, or city agencies to support school and community gardens.

### **Worksite Wellness**

**P:** Low-wage worksites sign an agreement to become a partner, conduct an assessment with workers, and institute evidence-based changes found in the *California Fit Business Kit*.

**S:** Qualifying worksites encourage vending machine and catering trucks to offer, promote and favorably price healthier options, then help drive patronage by providing education, marketing and promotional support with employees.

**E:** Low-wage worksites partner with nearby restaurants, grocery stores, farmers' markets, parks, fitness centers or transit authorities that offer healthy options to encourage participation by their employees.

**Added Value:** 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 or the new Supper Program.

## Safe Routes to School

**P:** Low-resource schools/districts become a Safe Routes to School (SR2S) partner, including by installing bike racks, supporting safety education workshops, reaching out to parents, and instituting on-site walking or biking programs for students. *Or*, county transportation agencies set-aside dedicated funds for 'quality' SR2S programs and capital improvements in under-served communities.

**S:** Youth or community residents complete a checklist with recommendations about conditions needed to increase walking, biking and disability access in low-resource neighborhoods, then 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 SR2S routes.

**E:** Best practices found in SR2S toolkits are used to improve the built environment, promote participation, attract volunteer support or help fund ongoing programs in low-resource settings.

**Added Value:** Quality SR2S programs are introduced to all schools in the district.

## Farmers' Markets

**P:** City or county policies are established that remove barriers, help expand California Certified Farmers' Markets to more low-income communities, or support best practices in or near food deserts and low-income communities based on authoritative community assessments.

**S:** A farmers' market organization works with its members and community groups to provide nutrition education, offer active entertainment, and otherwise help increase traffic at farmers' markets in low-resource settings.

**E:** Private-sector incentive programs for CalFresh/EBT purchasing, like the Fair Food Network's *Double-Up Food Bucks* or *Wholesome Wave*, are introduced and promoted to develop loyalty and help increase the ongoing purchase of fruits and vegetables by SNAP/CalFresh customers. *Or*, groups work together and extend the farmers' market customer base to include volume customers like retail food stores, restaurants, food trucks, worksites, and churches in SNAP-Ed qualifying locations.

**Added Value:** City policies are established that all farmers' markets must honor EBT/CalFresh.

## Healthy Food and Beverage Standards

**P:** 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. *Or*, community-based organizations and private sector entities in qualifying SNAP-Ed locations adopt policies with similar standards.

**S:** Residents or youth work assess marketing practices by companies in low-income neighborhoods or around schools, then encourage adherence to their public commitments to market only healthy foods and beverages to children.

**E:** Residents or youth work with vendors to identify healthy products and price points that will sell successfully to patrons in SNAP-Ed qualifying locations.

**Added Value:** Public entities use US DHHS procurement recommendations to establish healthy food and beverage procurement requirements for all public contracts that include food. *Or*, community groups work with mass media outlets to encourage voluntary adoption of standards for advertising of foods and beverages on programming for children.