

**2024**

# **Actionable Approaches to using ASNNA Guiding Principles to Embed Equity in SNAP-Ed:** *Case Study Resource Guide*

Developed by:

**SNAP-Ed Advancing Equity Community of Practice – Administrators**



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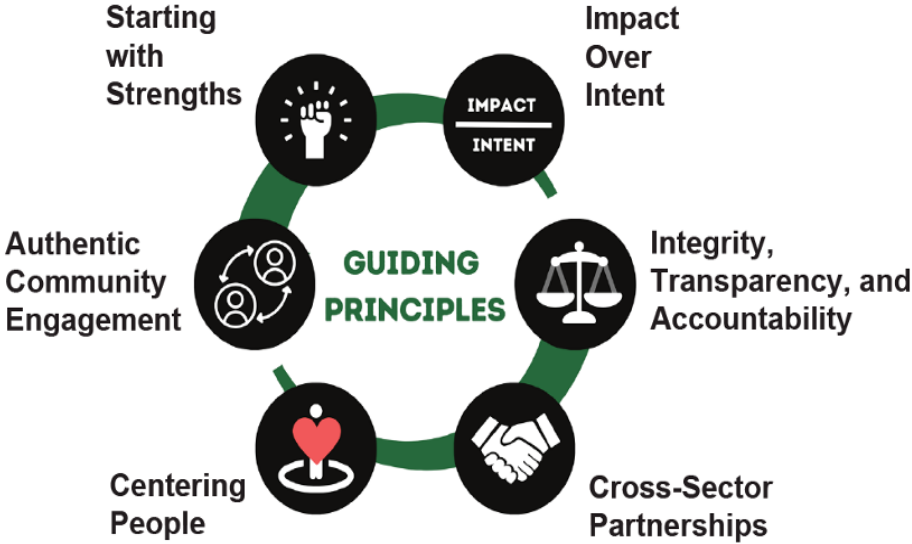
# BACKGROUND

As a part of the FFY2024 Southeast Region (SER) Health and Racial Equity Workforce Assessment Project, the Public Health Institute's Center for Wellness and Nutrition (PHI CWN) convened two Communities of Practice (CoP) in efforts to better gauge and support implementing agencies strengths and opportunities to center social justice and equity in SNAP-Ed. A CoP is an organized group of people with a common interest in a specific technical or business domain that often focuses on sharing best practices and creating new knowledge to advance a domain of professional practice.

This CoP gathered administrative leadership from SNAP-Ed implementing agencies across Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina to critically examine ways to advance equity in SNAP-Ed programming with a focus on sharing best practices and creating new knowledge to advance a domain of professional practice. Contributors reviewed and deliberated on the results of the [SER Health and Racial Equity Workforce Assessment Results](#) to determine what type of product they could develop that might be a supportive resource to peer implementers looking to strengthen SNAP-Ed programming. The CoP convened from May-September 2024 to develop this resource guide of promising practices in line with the [ASNNA Guiding Principles to Embed Equity into SNAP-Ed](#).

In 2023, ASNNA's Race, Health and Social Equity Committee developed and released Guiding Principles to Embed Equity into SNAP-Ed (Figure 1). In addition to this, a [Roadmap to Equity position paper](#) was developed to accompany the Guiding Principles.

**Figure 1. ASNNA Guiding Principles to Embed Equity in SNAP-Ed**

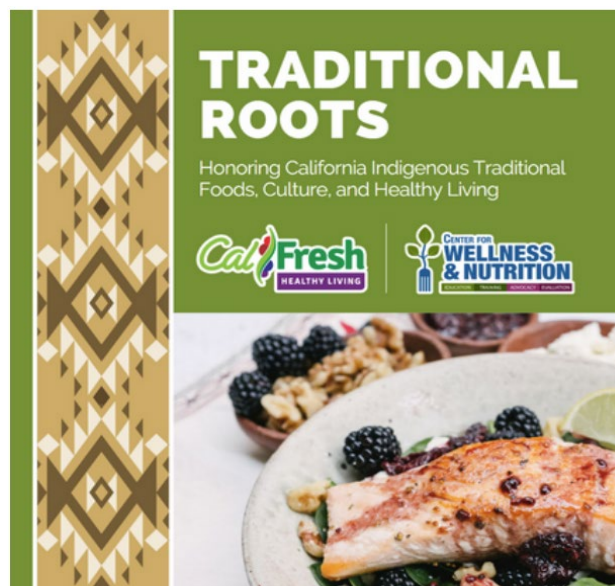


## CENTERING PEOPLE

*Centering people means recognizing the various identities of SNAP-Ed individuals, respecting, and valuing differences, and creating spaces of belonging, accessibility, and psychological safety.*

### **Cultural Adaptations by American Indian and Alaskan Natives for American Indian and Alaskan Natives**

The CalFresh Healthy Living (CFHL) Tribal Expansion Project, established in 2021, is designed to expand collaborative nutrition education activities to reach California American Indian and Alaskan Native (AIAN) populations. The project is guided by a Tribal Ambassadors Committee (TAC) who act as a focus group and serve as reviewers, providing input on materials, healthy recipes, and ways to strengthen partnerships with California Tribal Organizations. One aim of this project is to increase the availability of culturally appropriate nutrition education materials. TAC has been instrumental in co-developing nutrition education resources that are culturally responsive to the needs of AIANs throughout California. Over time, the committee has developed many resources for SNAP-Ed nutrition education to benefit California Tribes where they live, work, and play. Recently, the TAC developed a cookbook that not only highlights healthy and culturally appropriate recipes, but also promotes traditional ingredients included in the recipes. The co-development of the cookbook with Ambassadors was a delicate process that involved personal calls, storytelling, and one-on-one collaboration beyond monthly committee meetings to ensure that the materials were developed with care, respect, and cultural sensitivity. In every step of the process, Ambassadors provided their feedback on the design, content, and presentation of this meaningful cookbook.



Adapted from: [https://mcusercontent.com/ed0cd170b7db38c91aed141c7/files/5d69b710-d22f-cfda-46ff-42ecbfa84a49/PHI\\_CWN\\_2023\\_Impact\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/ed0cd170b7db38c91aed141c7/files/5d69b710-d22f-cfda-46ff-42ecbfa84a49/PHI_CWN_2023_Impact_Report_Final.pdf)  
<https://calfresh.dss.ca.gov/healthyliving/partners>

## **Prioritizing Community Voices & Lived Experiences by Hiring Community Leaders**

Centering community voices can be achieved through authentic community engagement activities. However, hiring from within the community embeds community perspectives into programming and builds trust within the community. The University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill is one of nine SNAP-Ed implementing agencies in North Carolina. A local businessman and minister, [Rev. William Kearney](#) had been a community partner to UNC for more than ten years. In 2015, Rev. Kearney became a full-time UNC employee. He emphasized the importance of “consistent and persistent engagement with the community for the purpose of establishing a foundation of friendship, trust, and power building.” Rev. Kearney developed the Warren County Local Food Promotion Council. Similarly, [Judith Alvarado](#) started as a community garden manager for one of the gardens UNC supports. In 2017, Judith started as an outreach specialist, a full-time employee at UNC and in 2024 she became a project manager who facilitates the Communities on the Move, a community-led effort addressing barriers to active living by building residents' capacity to become leaders and change agents and creating opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. Today, both William and Judith are trusted members of the community working to support the connection between community and SNAP-Ed services.

Adapted from <https://hpdp.unc.edu/fforc/community-engagement-experience/>.

## **AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

***Authentic engagement is a consistent and persistent engagement with the community for the purpose of establishing a foundation of friendship, trust, and power building.***

## **Utilizing Design-Thinking to Engage Community in Planning & Adapting Programs**

Design-Thinking is a people-centered approach to understanding problems and developing solutions. In 2020, UNC Chapel Hill launched a Design-Thinking for SNAP-Ed project to help SNAP-Ed agencies and research groups incorporate design thinking into their planning and programming. This approach engages communities and builds trusting partnerships, allowing agencies to involve SNAP-eligible individuals in designing and adapting programs that address their needs and barriers. This results in more effective and desirable programs, easier recruitment, higher retention, and fewer implementation challenges, ultimately advancing equity in SNAP-Ed programs.

Recently, the UNC Chapel Hill Design-Thinking consultants completed a project focused on reducing household food waste. This involved hiring and compensating community members as consultants and subject matter experts and engaging them in a participatory process of brainstorming and solution co-creation. One community consultant expressed, “*I appreciated that I had a meaningful and impactful seat at the table.*”

## HUMAN-CENTERED DESIGN PROCESS

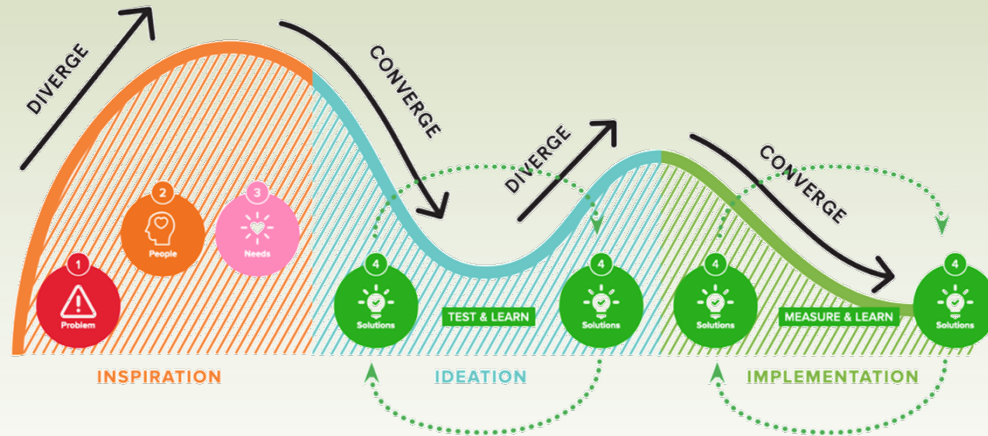


image from IDEO.org

Adapted from [UNC Chapel Hill, FFORC Design Thinking for SNAP-Ed page](#)

### Community Engagement as the Key to PSE Successes

A study conducted by Utah State University explored the use of community engagement (CE) as a strategy to address the common challenges experienced in implementing a multi-component community-based program. Semi-structured phone interviews were conducted with Utah SNAP-Ed educators (n = 7). - Four emergent themes were identified from the interviews: barriers to PSE progress, educator CE, the perceived value of using a CE approach to PSE work, and future support that could increase educators' ability to use CE when doing PSE work. While effective at eliciting long-term improvements among priority populations, there are several well-documented challenges associated with developing, implementing, and sustaining PSE projects. CE, defined as the process of involving members of a community in the planning, design, implementation, and improvement of a community-based initiative, may be an effective strategy to overcome many of these challenges and lead to long-term PSE changes and improved health outcomes.

*Citation: Meier, C., Coombs, C., Farnsworth, A., Jimenez, L., & LeBlanc, H. (2023). Barriers to Policy, Systems, and Environment Work: Using Community Engagement as a Tool in SNAP-Ed's Multi-Level Comprehensive Programming. Journal of Human Sciences and Extension, 11(3), 9.*  
<https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/jhse/vol11/iss3/9/>

### Peer Mentors Guide Program Improvements & Participant Recruitment Efforts

Open Hand Atlanta's (Open Hand) SNAP-Ed Produce Prescription Program (PRx) works throughout the state of Georgia to provide fresh produce and nutrition education to individuals who are living with or at-risk for chronic disease or food insecurity. Clinical partners and community organizations work together with Open Hand to refer participants to classes. In the last 10 years, Open Hand has had hundreds of program graduates from this program, many of whom are interested in

staying connected to the program and future participants. Past participants can provide valuable knowledge and feedback to the program design process that helps adapt programming to better meet the needs of those being engaged. For these reasons, Open Hand began taking past participants as peer mentors in the PRx program. As peer mentors, this provides the opportunity to engage in the program planning process and encourage future participants by allowing them to talk with someone who has been through the program and can speak to its strengths and the positive impact it had on their lives.

Participants are asked at the end of the 6-month program if they would be interested in serving as peer mentors to future cohorts in their area. Those who agree are invited to attend class recruitment events to provide testimonials about their experience and to aid instructors in making any necessary adjustments to class content to improve the program. The peer mentorship component of the PRx program is an important method of ensuring that community engagement is central to the program throughout its stages, as well as allowing past graduates to continue maintaining learned behavior changes long after their cohort has ended.

For more info contact Katie Leite, Open Hand SNAP-Ed Program Manager: [kleite@openhandatlanta.org](mailto:kleite@openhandatlanta.org)

## STARTING WITH STRENGTHS

***Starting with strengths means adopting a posture that assumes communities have inherent strengths, assets, and infrastructure to address their own needs.***

### Community-Led Asset Mapping

In North Carolina, North Carolina State University conducted asset-mapping workshops with students to identify the root causes of food insecurity among students. The goals of the workshops were to identify existing assets related to food and housing insecurity, identify structural factors shaping students' experiences with food and housing insecurity, articulate differences in perceived assets and needs, and determine priorities to address the needs of the students. Using the community based participatory research method of asset mapping centered on the voices and experiences of diverse populations to identify and address the systemic process that shaped students' experiences of food and housing insecurity.

*Citation: Shisler, R., Cordero Ocegueda, E., Hardison-Moody, A., & Bowen, S.(2023).Addressing and preventing food and housing insecurity among college students: An asset-based approach. Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 12(2), 135-153. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2023.122.022>*



### Tools to Center Ethical Asset-based Storytelling as a Trauma Informed Practice

Ethical asset-based storytelling is a powerful tool for SNAP-Ed programs to promote equity and respect by collecting and sharing community-based stories that highlight program successes and address the needs of SNAP-eligible communities.

Although Ethical Storytelling and Asset-Framing are distinct practices, they work well together. Ethical Storytelling emphasizes the respectful, trauma-informed, and empowering process of capturing and sharing stories, while Asset-Framing focuses on using intentional language to shift narratives from challenges to highlighting assets and achievements, enhancing audience connection and perception.

An example of Ethical Storytelling involves updating an organization's media release process and forms. Consent is more than a signed form—it is an ongoing informed process, centers participant choice, and uses plain language. Meaning is conveyed through words, language, and imagery. Shifting from a deficit to an asset frame takes intention and practice. It is critical that SNAP-Ed implementers model the behavior first in the language that is used by leading with uplifting and dignified depictions of individuals within the context of their strengths and aspirations.

Refer to [\*Ethical Storytelling & Asset-Framing: A Toolkit for Centering Equity when Communicating Programmatic Success\*](#)

## IMPACT OVER INTENT

***Intent is what we think or feel, what we are hoping to achieve through some action. Impact refers to the results of your words or actions and how those are experienced, felt, perceived, or understood by another person.***

### **Ripple Effect Mapping to Assess Unintended Outcomes**

Actively exploring unintended adverse and positive impacts that could result from a policy, system, or environmental change is one step in embedding equity in SNAP-Ed programs. Ripple Effect Mapping (REM) is a participatory data collection method designed to capture the impact of programs and collaborative processes. It is cited in the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework to measure LT11: Unexpected Benefits.

By using REM, North Carolina, SNAP-Ed implementers set out to better understand unintended benefits from their community gardening initiative. During the REM process, participants developed a map of benefits, at the individual, interpersonal and community levels, using evaluation and consensus-building methods, like appreciative inquiry and mind mapping. After the REM process, the North Carolina team analyzed the data and aligned the results with the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework. They were able to find that the community gardens generated capital in rural communities. In addition, “the research team found REM to be an effective community-engaged method for understanding a complex intervention’s benefits while centering participant community voices and transferring ownership of the data to community partners, a key principle in equitable evaluation.”

Citation: [\*Sadeghzadeh C, Sheppard B, de Groot J, De Marco M. Evaluating the Benefits of a SNAP-Ed-Funded Community Garden Intervention Using Ripple Effect Mapping. Health Education & Behavior. 2022;49\(1\):141-149. doi:10.1177/10901981211058075\*](#)

## **Building a Strong Foundation for Health Equity**

A recurring challenge for some SNAP-Ed Implementers is "embedding" equity, when equity should be foundational. This work begins with a foundation of equity being built into the organization's mission, goals, and culture. SNAP-Ed Implementers are exploring strategies for establishing a strong foundation for health equity within their programming and learning from other partners who have centered racial justice in their public health approaches. Prevention Institute's actions and commitments provide a pathway to a strong public health ecosystem rooted in racial justice and health equity, and centers community priorities, assets, and leadership.

Adapted from [https://www.preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/uploads/BCHC-PI\\_SkollReport\\_2022\\_FINAL%5B28%5D.pdf](https://www.preventioninstitute.org/sites/default/files/uploads/BCHC-PI_SkollReport_2022_FINAL%5B28%5D.pdf)

## **INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY**

***Integrity is when words, behaviors and actions are aligned with a set of moral and ethical standards of excellence. Accountability involves holding individuals and organizations responsible for executing their power ethically and appropriately. Transparency involves promoting information disclosure and shared, yet confidential, access to information in ways that empower all stakeholders to be informed and involved. All these elements are essential for building and maintaining a foundation of trust with individuals and communities.***

## **A Tool for Auditing Educational Support Materials for a Health Equity Lens**

A recent SNAP-Ed project designed an audit tool to systematically review a cookbook that was created to support healthy eating for families and individuals participating in a SNAP-Ed intervention in Maine. The purpose of the audit tool was to revise the content of a cookbook to ensure a weight-neutral, empowering approach to supporting the community's nutritional needs. During the audit process, content edits were made to the cookbook to reduce stigmatizing language and make the cookbook more inclusive. The instrument and methodology are conceptually replicable and adaptable.

Citation: Bruno, P., Fuller, C., Ruhl, H., Kaley, L., & Dushuttle, P. (2024). *Advancing Inclusive Communication: Implementing an Audit to Center Equity in SNAP-Ed Programming*. *Health promotion practice*, 15248399231221773. Advance online publication. <https://www.une.edu/news/2024/maine-snap-ed-team-publishes-article-inclusive-communication-audit-public-health>

Citation: Bruno, P., Fuller, C., Ruhl, H., Kaley, L., & Dushuttle, P. (2024). *Advancing Inclusive Communication: Implementing an Audit to Center Equity in SNAP-Ed Programming*. *Health promotion practice*, 15248399231221773. Advance online publication. <https://www.une.edu/news/2024/maine-snap-ed-team-publishes-article-inclusive-communication-audit-public-health>

## **Utilizing an Equity Rubric to Evaluate Nutrition Education**

The Poe Center for Health Education wanted a tangible way to assess their SNAP-Ed direct education with an equity lens. Most tools were not the right fit for SNAP-Ed until the Poe Center found and tested the Branch Alliance for Educator Diversity

(BranchED) Equity Rubric. BranchED prioritizes strengthening, growing, and amplifying the impact of educator preparation programs. This program focuses on diverse and inclusive instructional materials that resonate with educators and participants. The rubric is intended for educators to increase the number of high-quality, equity-oriented, and inclusive educational resources representing communities of color. Even though the rubric was not designed for SNAP-Ed programs explicitly, the Poe Center successfully piloted the rubric and expanded its use to review all education programs. While some of the measures do not match well with SNAP-Ed, the tool still assists in identifying areas that can be improved so that all programs are learner-centered and culturally sustaining.

Adapted from <https://oercommons.org/courseware/lesson/82102/overview>

Another rubric was developed by the University of Washington School of Public Health to assess SNAP-Ed curricula with a lens of equity, inclusion, and the facilitation of community building.

Refer to [Assessing SNAP-Ed Materials Through Equity and Empowerment Rubric](#)

## CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

***Addressing food security and overall community wellness is a complex endeavor. It will require the coordination and collaboration of a variety of stakeholders, including those with indirect ties to the food system. Using their collective expertise and resources, stakeholders can enhance community strengths and broaden opportunities to address the issues and barriers identified and prioritized by communities.***

### **Leveraging Partnerships to Strengthen Food Systems**

Growing Together Nebraska (GTN) is a community garden project that increases food security, promotes healthy food access, and provides nutrition education for families and individuals. Partnerships between master gardeners, local community organizations, and volunteers help to manage and provide affordable produce to those in need. The partnership between the Siouxland Community Health Center (SCHC) of Nebraska and the Voices for Food (VFF) Project established a "hub" location for a daily produce drop off to increase fresh produce access for low-income medical clients. Through this partnership, SCHC clients can pick up local produce and educational materials that help patients better adhere to the guidance they receive in the exam rooms. This collaborative effort coordinated by Nebraska Extension SNAP-Ed engages partners in the community to strengthen the food system.

Adapted from <https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/library/success-stories/nebraska-community-gardens-increase-nutrition-security-through-access-local>

## **A Participatory Regional Partnership Approach Strengthens Interventions**

In Missouri, a regional partnership was developed to leverage resources and enhance environmental and policy interventions to improve nutrition and physical activity. The Healthier Missouri Communities (Healthier MO) community-based research project engaged community partners in a participatory action planning process. This project's purpose was to implement and evaluate evidence-based interventions that promote nutrition and physical activity. Healthier MO partners participated in interviews to evaluate resource sharing and sustainability efforts of the regional partnership. Partners identified the benefits of resource sharing and concluded that new partnerships outweigh the challenges of travel in rural areas of Missouri. Healthier MO's success with the participatory partnership approach demonstrates one way to implement environmental and policy interventions to promote nutrition, and physical activity in rural areas. This approach allows partners to not only take ownership, but also identify what they value early in the partnership process.

*Citation: Barnidge EK, Baker EA, Estlund A, Motton F, Hipp PR, Brownson RC. A Participatory Regional Partnership Approach to Promote Nutrition and Physical Activity Through Environmental and Policy Change in Rural Missouri. Prev Chronic Dis. 2015 Jun 11;12:E92. doi: 10.5888/pcd12.140593. PMID: 26068413; PMCID: PMC4467256. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4467256/>*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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