

# Georgia Health and Racial Equity Workforce Assessment

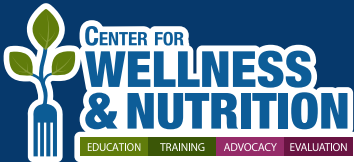
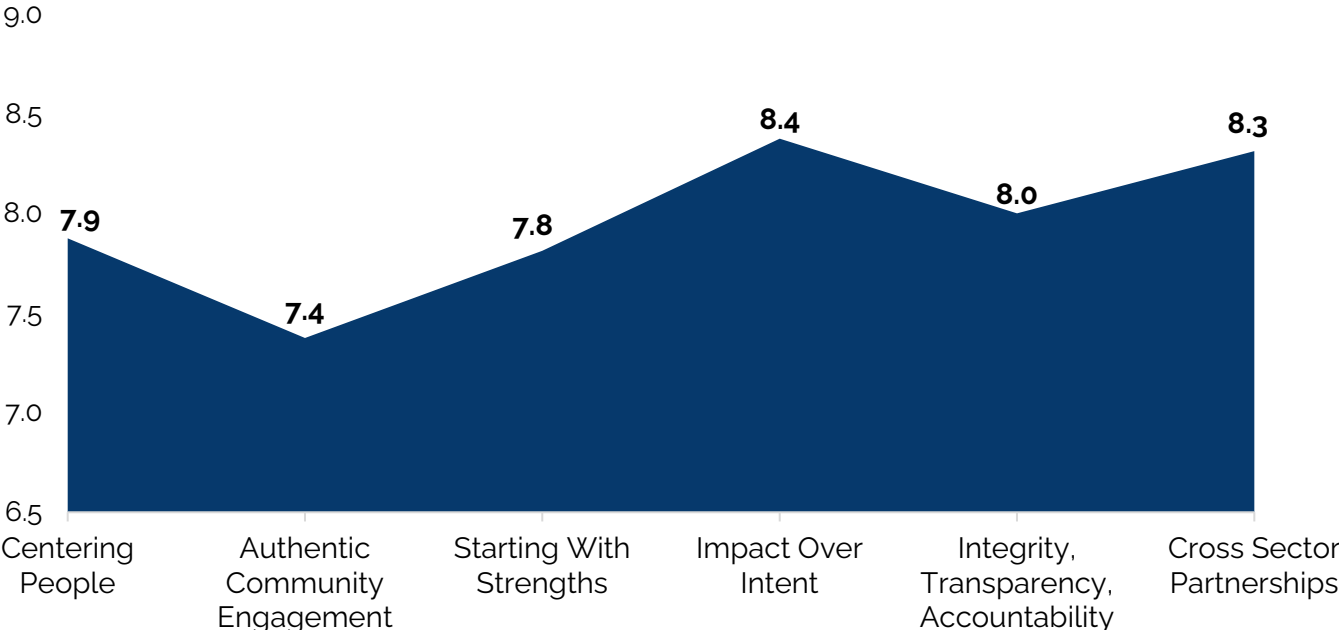
## Project Overview

In Federal Fiscal Year 2024 (FFY24) Public Health Institute's Center for Wellness and Nutrition (PHI CWN) in partnership with North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia conducted a workforce assessment of health and racial equity across implementing agencies (IAs). The purpose of the workforce assessment was to better understand strengths and opportunities for improvement to center social justice and equity in SNAP-Ed. Based on the [PRAXIS Standard of Equity](#) and [ASNNA's Guiding Principles to Embed Equity](#) in SNAP-Ed, IA staff participated in an electronic survey and key informant interviews. The results for Georgia SNAP-Ed, by each guiding principle, are presented below.

## Results

There were 88 SNAP-Ed staff who responded to the assessment across three states, with 16 respondents (18%) from Georgia. Four Georgia SNAP-Ed staff participated in key informant interviews to gain insight into workplace equity. On a scale of 1-10, SNAP-Ed staff rated Impact Over Intent the highest among the guiding principles (average of 8.4 out of 10), which includes regularly engaging in dialogue to explore impact; and Authentic Community Engagement the lowest (average of 7.4 out of 10), which includes power sharing with community residents to design, implement and evaluate programs (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. Georgia SNAP-Ed Organizational Rating for Guiding Principles (n=16)**



## Centering People

**Centering People means recognizing the various identities of SNAP-Ed individuals and prioritizing the value, knowledge, and expertise of SNAP-Ed eligible individuals in the community.**

Survey respondents' most frequently reported activity related to Centering People was having a clear understanding of who they serve (94%). An opportunity for growth is providing more opportunities for the community to take part in culturally relevant activities (56%). Respondents mentioned using a human-centered design approach when conducting SNAP-Ed programs, and using a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) rubric to inform the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs.

**"[We] have identified gaps in the SNAP-Ed program that are specific to involving community members...To address this challenge, [we] are working on creating opportunities that will promote community member input (i.e. focus groups, surveys, etc.)...and is in collaboration with direct nutrition education sites to offer culturally sensitive recipe demonstrations." -Survey Respondent**

Transportation barriers, especially in rural areas, make it difficult for some community members to participate in SNAP-Ed activities. To address this challenge, one interviewee made their SNAP-Ed sites more accessible and provided transportation assistance.

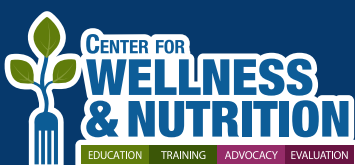
## Authentic Community Engagement

**Authentic Community Engagement is consistently and persistently engaging with the community to establish a foundation of friendship, trust, and power building.**

Most survey respondents (75%) reported having established accessible channels for feedback from community residents, whereas involving community members in the planning of programs was the least frequently reported activity within Authentic Community Engagement (38%).

**"Within budget and capacity constraints, we do the best we can to embed community engagement practices...More support/resources from SNAP-Ed would allow for us to more often compensate community members for their time/expertise and encourage us to more frequently involve them in each step of our projects." -Survey Respondent**

When describing community engagement efforts, SNAP-Ed implementers reported conducting surveys, sharing information at community events, and implementing a peer mentor program to share the benefits of SNAP-Ed with the community. Additional ideas to engage community members included e-learning modules, texting campaigns, and meeting people where it is accessible to reduce the transportation burden.



## Starting with Strengths

**Starting with Strengths means defining SNAP-Ed eligible communities by their strengths, assets and aspirations before their challenges and deficits.**

Prioritizing working with organizations that have a positive relationship with people eligible for SNAP-Ed was the most common activity (81%) while dedicating funding to asset-based programs was the least common activity (53%) within Starting with Strengths. Many respondents mentioned valuing and listening to community needs as an organizational priority, as a way to uplift strengths.

**"We listen to our community partners and value their opinions on what is needed in their community. We don't act as if we know what is best for them."**  
-Survey Respondent

SNAP-Ed implementers use needs assessments, focus groups, and community listening sessions to identify the community's strengths, in addition to working with peer educators. Interviewees also suggested that they would like a formal process for community partner onboarding and community strengths assessments.

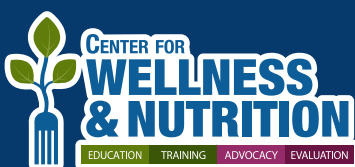
## Impact Over Intent

**Prioritizing Impact Over Intent means regularly engaging in exploratory dialogue to assess the impact, as well as unintended impacts, of nutrition education programs and PSE initiatives.**

All respondents (100%) believed their community programs prioritize Impact Over Intent by evaluating impact, not intentions. Interviewees discussed collecting feedback through pre-post surveys and informal discussions with partners and SNAP-Ed participants to assess program impact. Feedback gained from community members resulted in changes, including adapting recipes and curricula and making programs more accessible.

**"I think one of our biggest strengths as an organization...has been adapting programming to make sure that it fits community needs and wants by offering frequent opportunities for feedback. Most programs are not 'one size fits all'...So we want to make sure that community-centered design is present within all of our programs and that we are centering individuals within everything we are putting out."** -Survey Respondent

Areas for improvement within the Impact Over Intent category include: (1) exploring the unintended impacts of PSEs, (2) creating policies and programs in response to priorities set by the community, and (3) identifying the impact policies have on different communities and individuals (56%). Interviewees would like to see formalized qualitative feedback processes to assess unintended outcomes.



## Integrity, Transparency, and Accountability

**Integrity is when words, behaviors, and actions are aligned with a set of moral and ethical standards of excellence. Transparency involves promoting information disclosure and shared, yet confidential, access to information in ways that empower all partners to be informed and involved. Accountability holds individuals and organizations responsible for executing their power properly.**

Ongoing and mandatory training in equity and social justice (94%) is a strength within Integrity, Transparency and Accountability. One interviewee mentioned that annual civil rights training is required for people working in SNAP-Ed. Whereas areas for growth are (1) prioritizing employee backgrounds with experience in health equity and social justice and (2) inviting current and former SNAP-Ed participants to share their perspectives based on their lived experience (63%). One respondent reported that their agency engages past program participants as peer mentors.

**“Something we are most proud of is the way that we have engaged past participants within ongoing programming as 'peer mentors/champions' in order to encourage sustained participation from community members who may be apprehensive about our organization.” -Survey Respondent**

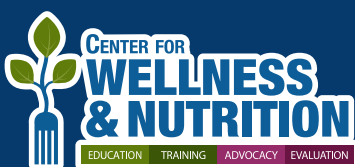
## Cross-Sector Partnerships

**Cross-Sector Partnerships are the coordination and collaboration with a variety of partners using their collective expertise and resources to enhance strengths and address barriers as identified and prioritized by the SNAP-Ed eligible community.**

Recognizing and respecting community partners' identities was the most frequently reported activity for the Cross-Sector Partnerships guiding principle (100%). Respondents mentioned the importance of establishing and maintaining partnerships in SNAP-Ed to be able to reach more people who need services.

**I think those partnerships are really great for us and have helped us to develop some of our strongest programs like our produce prescription programs, which we might have not had if not for those clinical partnerships.” -Interviewee**

Establishing channels for feedback from community partners was the least frequently reported activity (50%). Managing multiple cross-sector partnerships was a challenge reported by one survey respondent, as each partner communicates differently and has different expectations and needs for reporting.



## Conclusions

In Georgia, results of the FFY2024 health and racial equity workforce assessment show that SNAP-Ed implementers perceive their organizations to excel at prioritizing program impact and at building and maintaining trust with SNAP-Ed eligible individuals and communities. In addition, Georgia SNAP-Ed IAs are centering the needs of the community, taking time to build trust with community members and partners, and building a knowledgeable workforce around equitable practices and principles to better serve the SNAP-Ed community. More efforts should be made to engage the SNAP-Ed eligible community members in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs.

## Recommendations

To center equity throughout the stages of implementation, Georgia SNAP-Ed should consider the following recommendations:

- **Create opportunities for qualitative feedback from community members:** Georgia SNAP-Ed should consider hosting focus groups, interviews, and listening sessions before program planning to ensure they are centering the voices of the community in its programs and meeting the needs of the SNAP-Ed eligible population.
- **Meaningfully involve community members in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs:** In [FFY2025](#), SNAP-Ed introduced more flexibility in compensating community members for their time spent informing and improving SNAP-Ed effectiveness through focus groups, needs assessments, and/or advisory groups. Georgia SNAP-Ed should take advantage of this change and provide fair financial compensation to community members for their input into SNAP-Ed programming.
- **Develop a formal partnership onboarding and evaluation process:** While partnerships are a strength in SNAP-Ed implementation, Georgia SNAP-Ed should consider adopting a formal process for identifying, onboarding, and evaluating partnerships, including a process for systematizing feedback from partners, to ensure there is time to build trust and form sustainable relationships to better serve the SNAP-Ed eligible community.
- **Continue including past program participants in SNAP-Ed programming:** Engaging past program participants as peer mentors or community champions, as SNAP-Ed eligible community members may be more likely to engage with someone they can relate to and who has shared their same experiences. Including peer mentors can help sustain program activities and have a positive impact on healthy food behaviors.

