

Growing Together:

Cultivating partnerships to improve access to affordable, nutritious and safe foods to individuals with low income

Live viewing and discussion: Monday, July 20, 2020, 12:40-2:00 pm (EST)
#SNEB2020: What Food Future?





Panelists

Trinity Allison
Blake Connolly
Christine Hradek
Sarah Rautio
Natalie Sehi

Learning Objectives

- **Learning Objective 1:** Describe how six Midwestern states are partnering to leverage resources for policy, systems, and environmental changes to promote healthy food access and availability for people with low income.
- **Learning Objective 2:** Identify common evaluation measures that are of value to cross-disciplinary programs and community organizations.
- **Learning Objective 3:** Utilize shared tools to adapt, implement and evaluate community donation garden projects to improve access to affordable, nutritious and safe foods.

Food Insecurity

The state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food through socially acceptable ways.

Food Insecurity by State

- Illinois 10% (pre-COVID)
- Indiana 12% (pre-COVID)
- Iowa 12% (pre-COVID)
- Michigan 14% (pre-COVID)
- Nebraska 12% (pre-COVID)



SNAP-Ed Funding

SNAP-Ed is a national program aimed at making healthy choices easier for Americans with low income.

Direct Education + Policy, System and Environmental Interventions= Sustained Change

Visit with state agencies and regional offices.

Socio-Ecological Model (SEM)



Master Gardeners

- Volunteers
- Significant training in horticulture practices
- Serve communities through beautification projects and education



Leap of Faith

Could two large programs with different administrative requirements, priorities, audiences and leadership jointly tackle the problem of food insecurity and healthy food access.



The answer is YES!

Together, we can make fresh fruits and vegetables more accessible for families experiencing poverty.

We can use the assets of SNAP-Ed and Master Gardeners to create a new initiative that makes a big difference in communities.

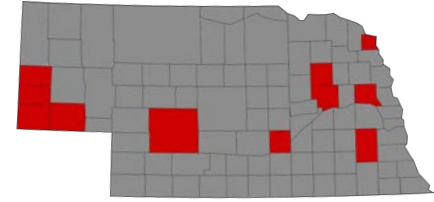


Asset-focused Approach

SNAP-Ed	Master Gardener
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding• Connections to food banks and pantries• Nutrition education and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers• Connections among growers• Gardening knowledge



Growing Together Nebraska: Community Donation Garden Project



Teamwork:

- Connecting local Extension staff, active Master Gardeners and local community organizations.

Purpose:

- Increasing food security and promoting healthy food access for those families and individuals who are food insecure (youth, adults, and older adults).
- Connect with partner organizations to increase Extension's reach to low-income Nebraskans.

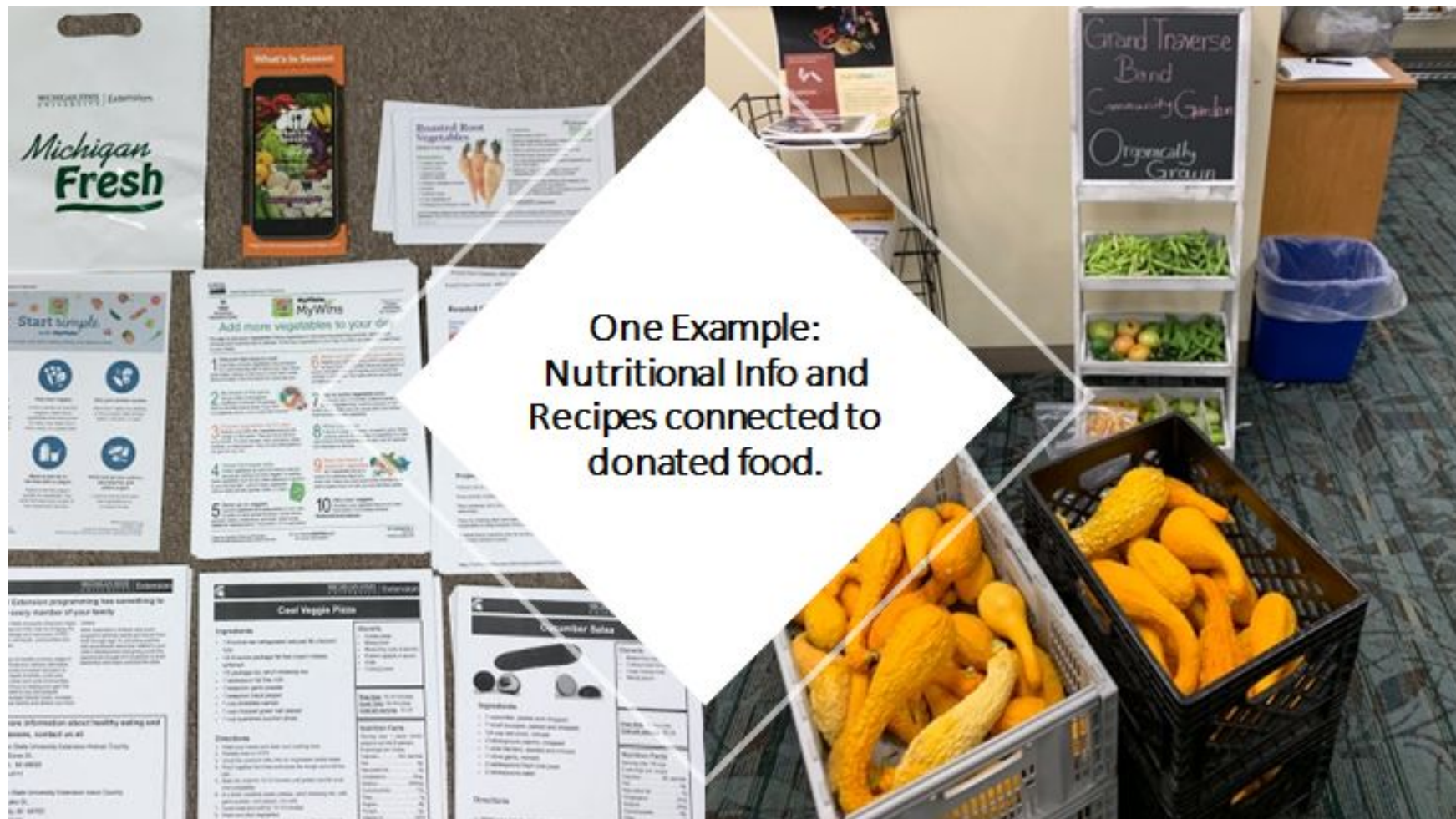
Goals:

- Assist in establishing successful gardens at program sites.
- Facilitate the integration of gardening and nutrition education curriculum.
- Support individuals and families in learning to utilize produce grown in the garden to make healthy meals.
- Connect professionals and families to research-based information and resources available through Nebraska Extension.
- Provide volunteer opportunities for Master Gardeners.



GROWING TOGETHER NEBRASKA

One Example:
Nutritional Info and
Recipes connected to
donated food.





BROCCOLI



NUTRITION BENEFITS

- Potassium: may help to maintain a healthy blood pressure
- Vitamin C: helps heal cuts and helps the immune system
- Folate: may lower your risk of heart disease



STORING

- Broccoli should be stored unwashed in loose unsealed bags in the refrigerator.
- Refrigerate broccoli and use within 3-5 days.



CLEANING

- Rinse broccoli under cool running water before eating.



PREPARING

- Cut the crowns away from the large stems of the broccoli. Break the crown up into bite-sized florets.
- Add broccoli to warm pasta dishes, pasta salads, and stir-fries for added crunch and color.
- Eat raw broccoli with a low-fat dressing or dip.
- Use a vegetable peeler and peel off the outer skin of the stem. Chop the stem up and add to soups and casseroles.

Steaming

Place 3/4 to 1 inch of water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Add the broccoli to the pan and cover; reduce heat to medium and let cook for 5-6 minutes. The broccoli is done when you can pierce the stem with a fork. Remove from heat and place in a serving dish.

Roasting

Preheat oven to 400°F. Mix broccoli florets with 1 tablespoon olive oil and your favorite seasonings. Spread broccoli into a single layer on a baking sheet. Roast in the oven, about 18 minutes, or until broccoli is tender and lightly browned.



SPEND SMART. EAT SMART.

spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/cook/produce-basics

The program is funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as Food Assistance, provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a healthier diet. To find out more and learn how to apply, visit www.fns.gov.

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“There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure.” -Colin Powell



Planning is Key!

1

Identify a Need

Work closely within your community to discuss and assess community issues, wants, needs, etc.

2

Plan/Coordinate

Is there a community garden already established? Will you be starting from scratch? What resources are available and/or desired?

3

Where to Donate?

Generate a list of potential options. Develop partnerships. Discuss logistics.

4

What to Grow?

What are the needs of the community? Can your garden fill a gap/need? What resources are needed?

Great Resource: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/ffed/community-donation-gardening-toolkit/>



Nebraska's 2020 GTN Timeline

December 2019
Request for
Application released

January/February 2020
Informational GTN
webinars

Extension Professionals
& Master Gardeners
reach out to potential
partners

Meet with partners and
draft application

February 14, 2020
Applications are due

March 2, 2020
Notification of award

Spring/Summer 2020
Watch training
webinars, purchase
budget items, plant,
grow, and harvest

September/October
2020
Evaluation and end of
season reports

GTN funds must be spent by September 30th, 2020.

Logistics

- Early and clear communication is important.
- Applications submitted electronically.
- Providing an example of a completed proposal is helpful.
- Determine limitations.
 - Maximum grant amount
 - Allowable expenses
 - # of applications per county
 - Team requirements (who is involved, etc)
 - Eligibility from year to year
- End goal is sustainability.



Grow Strategy



Connect Strategy



Grow-A-Row Antelope County



June 3 at 1:42 PM · 🌐

Interested in donating produce to the Antelope County Food Pantry? During the month of June, please call the Antelope County Extension Office at (402) 887-5414 or e... See More

*GROW-A-ROW
UPDATE*



Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants must include at least one of each of the following:

- Nebraska Extension county office staff
- Active Master Gardener volunteer(s)
- At least one representative from a recipient agency (for example, staff representing local food bank, food pantry, or free meal service)



Critical Questions

- What is easy to grow in your state?
- How do you engage volunteers?
- What can last on a food pantry shelf?
- What equipment/resources does the pantry have?
- How often does the pantry distribute food?
- What do pantry clients want to see?
- What is culturally appropriate for clients?
- What can pantry clients use?
- What do pantry clients know how to use?





Implementing Growing Together

Community Partnerships
Nutrition Education
PSE Interventions

Community Partnerships

Public Housing
Community Centers
Grocery Stores
Community Colleges
Parks & Rec

Pantries
Churches
Schools
Health Clinics
Private Sector







PSE Change Strategies





"I love the change, this is a blessing. I am crying". - Guest

"I really like the change and I like to select the foods I want for my family, this is a great thing".- Guest

"I'm thankful for the opportunity to give back, you are doing something amazing, love being a part of it" . - Manager at Sherwin Williams

"This is the best thing we did! I absolutely LOVE the change!!!"- Director of Community Care Center



Reporting & Evaluation

METRICS

TOOLS

NATIONAL FRAMEWORK

IMPACT REPORTING

Reporting & Evaluation

Increasing Food Access

Pounds of produce donated*

Types of produce donated

Number of locations receiving produce*

Number of participants receiving produce*

Increasing Food Utilization

Pantry environment changes

Produce uptake and waste

Nutrition education contacts

Participant success stories

Increasing Community Capacity

Number of volunteers and contributed hours*

Community partners*

Dollars leveraged*

Master Garden education contacts

Community partnership & capacity questionnaire

Community food insecurity awareness

* Denotes shared multi-state metric





NEFPAT

Nutrition Environment Food Pantry Assessment Tool

I ILLINOIS Extension

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER
& ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Reporting & Evaluation



Objective 1: Increase Client Choice for Nutritious Options Strategies:

- ☐ 1.1. Clients may choose which types of F2E they would like to take*
- ☐ 1.2. Pantry hosts a "shopping style" distribution (set up like a grocery store)
- ☐ 1.3. Clients are able to come to the pantry for food more than once per month*
- ☐ 1.4. Food pantry offers items from each of the five food groups (fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, dairy)
- ☐ 1.5. Encourages nutritious donations (e.g. by distributing a list of suggested items or asks donors not to provide certain foods)*
- ☐ 1.6. Food pantry is listed on AmpleHarvest.org website (if not, seeks donations from local gardeners/farmers or community gardens)*
- ☐ 1.7. Has established nutrition policy used for purchasing food for clients*
- ☐ 1.8. A policy is in place for proper food safety*
- ☐ **Write total number of boxes marked.**

Notes:



Objective 2: Market & "Nudge" Healthful Products Strategies:

- ☐ 2.1. Recipes featuring F2E are available to clients*
- ☐ 2.2. Offers food samples to clients*
- ☐ 2.3. MyPlate or other healthy eating materials that promote F2E are visible (e.g. posters, fliers, window stickers, etc.)
- ☐ 2.4. Displays/hangs supporting materials for F2E (e.g. shelf talkers/shelf tags, nutrition information, etc.)
- ☐ 2.5. Includes at least one F2E item in a bundle to display items together as a meal (e.g. beans and rice)
- ☐ 2.6. F2E are stocked to appear abundant
- ☐ 2.7. Majority of F2E are displayed/angled to be viewed easily from the eye-level of an average client
- ☐ 2.8. At least one F2E item is within eyesight upon entering the pantry during distribution
- ☐ **Write total number of boxes marked.**

Notes:



Objective 3: Provide Various Forms of Fruits and/or Vegetables Mark off each type as you see them, below:

- ☐ 3.1. Fresh
- ☐ 3.2. Canned (Any type, no rust and minimal dents)
- ☐ 3.3. Canned (Fruit in lite syrup or juice or ≤12 g Sugar, or Vegetables with ≤230 mg Sodium and ≤2 g Sat. fat)
- ☐ 3.4. Frozen (Any type, no frostbite)
- ☐ 3.5. Frozen (≤12 g Sugar, ≤230 mg Sodium, & ≤2 g Sat. fat)
- ☐ 3.6. Dried (any type, no mold and packaging intact)
- ☐ 3.7. Dried (≤12 g Sugar, ≤230 mg Sodium, & ≤2 g Sat. fat)
- ☐ 3.8. Juice (100% fruit or vegetable juice)
- ☐ **Write total number of boxes marked.**

Notes:



Objective 4: Provide Various Types of Fruits and/or Vegetables Mark off each color type as you see them, below:

- ☐ 4.1. Red
- ☐ ← Check if more than 2 types of Red
- ☐ 4.2. Yellow/Orange
- ☐ ← Check if more than 2 types of Yellow/Orange
- ☐ 4.3. White or Tan/Brown
- ☐ ← Check if more than 2 types of White or Tan/Brown
- ☐ 4.4. Green
- ☐ ← Check if more than 2 types of Green
- ☐ 4.5. Blue/Purple
- ☐ ← Check if more than 2 types of Blue/Purple
- ☐ **Write total number of boxes marked.**

Notes:

Data Collection

Monthly Surveys

End of Year Surveys

Pantry Assessment

Nutrition Environment Food Pantry Assessment Tool
(NEFPAT)

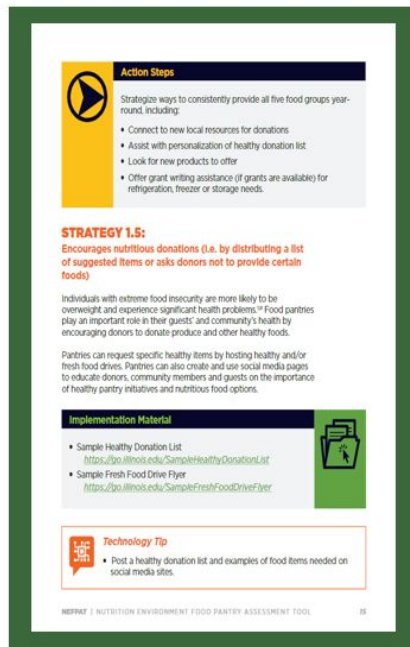
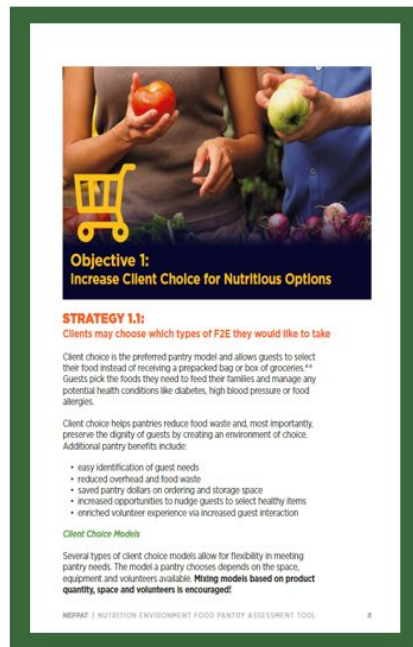
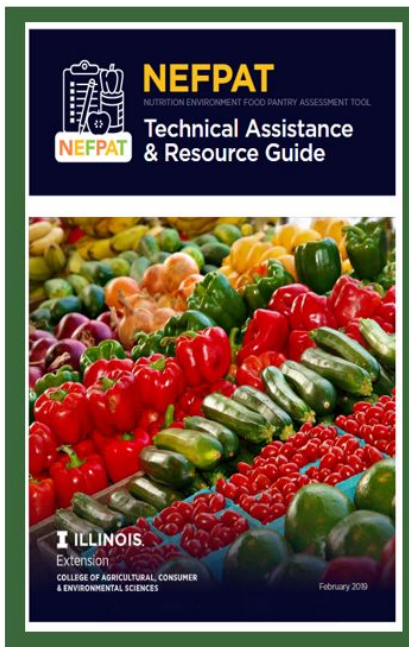
Reporting Systems

PEARS

Qualtrics

Google Sheets

NEFPAT



National Framework

- ST5: Need and Readiness
- ST6: Champions
- ST7: Organizational Partnerships
- MT5: Nutrition Supports
- LT5: Nutrition Supports Implementation
- LT9: Leveraged Resources
- LT12: Food Systems

SNAP-ED EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention Indicators



2019 SNAP-ED HIGHLIGHTS

Iowa State University
Michigan State University
Purdue University
University of Illinois
University of Nebraska
University of Wisconsin

456

Master Gardener
volunteers contributed time
to the project

1,048

community partners
and agencies cooperated
on the project

126,930

people with low income
were served
by the project

Growing Together

Projects Leveraged

\$84,634

in non-SNAP-Ed funds
to support their work



256

food pantries and
distribution sites
received produce as a
result of the project

169,427

pounds of fruits and
vegetables supplied
to food pantries
and distributions sites

Growing Together is a multi-state SNAP-Ed project to increase access to fruits and vegetables in food pantries. SNAP-Ed, the Master Gardener Program and food pantries are working together to build and maintain donation gardens in their communities.

This program is funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Shared Impact Reporting

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)

Growing Together in Michigan

2,503 pounds of fresh produce donated

17 food pantries & food sites served

15 Extension Master Gardeners volunteered 915 hours

11 Community Partners
105 Community Volunteers

\$7,465 additional dollars leveraged



THE ISSUE

A significant number of adults and children in Michigan suffer from food insecurity, often due to poor access to fresh vegetables and fruit. For many years, MSU Extension Master Gardeners (EMG) volunteers have had a passion for growing and donating fresh produce, but they have not always been well connected with donation sites and the multitude of MSU Extension (MSUE) programs that teach nutrition to food donation clients and service sites.

MSU EXTENSION ACTION

In order to reduce food insecurity as a team, MSU EMGs and SNAP-Ed Community Nutrition Instructors (CNIs) joined forces with Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Nebraska and Wisconsin to participate in a multi-state "Growing Together" program. In 2019, the program was piloted in Michigan using a one-time MSUE grant that funded garden supplies for food gardens in areas of Michigan with high food insecurity. Nine garden grants were awarded (seven redeemed) in Northeast Lower Michigan, Detroit, the Upper Peninsula, and at two Northwest Lower Michigan tribal gardens. MSU EMGs grew and donated food, developed relationships with donation sites, improved food safety, and connected with MSUE CNIs to deliver nutritional messages and cooking demonstrations. More intensive SNAP-Ed programs, such as nutrition education series and Policy, Systems and Environmental (PSE) change programs, are planned for 2020.

THE IMPACT

- Fifteen MSU EMGs and 10 SNAP-Ed staff, in cooperation with 11 community partners, 105 additional volunteers, and \$7,465 in leveraged funds, grew and donated 2,503 pounds of produce to 14 food donation sites.
- Three gardens were open 24/7 as "self-serve" donation sites.

 Nutrition and Physical Activity

State Impact Reporting

Growing Together Nebraska 2019 Impact Report

Increasing access of fruits and vegetables



EXTENSION



GARDEN COLLECTION PROJECT

Growing Together Nebraska (GTN) is a donation garden project that increases food security and promotes healthy food access for families and individuals who are food insecure. This team engages active Extension Master Gardeners (EMG), local community organizations and volunteers to build and manage donation gardens to improve access to affordable, nutritious and safe foods. Nebraska's efforts feed into a Growing Together multi-state (Iowa, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin) SNAP-Ed project.

FRESH PRODUCE

For the fourth consecutive year, Nebraska Extension's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) awarded funding to communities across the state through its Growing Together Nebraska program. Over \$27,000 was designated to 10 county sites across the state to provide fresh, locally grown produce to those in need in Nebraska during the 2019 growing season. Across 10 county sites, including 13 gardens, a total of 35,408 pounds of produce was donated to local partners, with an estimated value of \$50,688.45.

Statewide impact:
13 gardens across 11 counties



35,408 pounds = 106,225 servings of fruits & vegetables

35,408
pounds of fruits and vegetables supplied to food pantries and distribution sites

12,239
people with low income received fresh produce



241
volunteers, including 63 Extension Master Gardeners, contributed over 4,800 hours to the project, valued at \$116,000.

SNAP-Ed works: Transforming communities, making healthy choices easier for Illinois families



Access to healthier foods leads to healthier eating

When individuals have access to healthier foods, they have a **lower risk for obesity** and other chronic diseases. Healthier eating choices can lead to **better health, bringing improved job performance and lower absenteeism rates.**

Illinois SNAP-Ed partnered with 82 grocery stores or farmers' markets and 483 food pantries to help improve available choices and encourage families to choose the healthier options.

SNAP-Ed helped 122 food pantries make changes to layouts and operations to **make healthier choices more accessible for Illinois families.**

Partnership continues to provide education, fresh fruits and vegetables

SNAP-Ed and Illinois Extension Master Gardeners worked together to increase fresh fruits and vegetables at local food pantries through new or existing community gardens.

In 2019, the gardens produced 4,822 pounds of fresh produce that was donated to 14 pantries, reaching 21,341 individuals.

Partnership received information on preparing the produce from SNAP-Ed. SNAP-Ed worked with local pantries to improve pantry layout and use space to make sure families choose the fresh produce. Clients were excited to see new, fresh produce options to share with their families.



"I made the veggie pasta salad recipe at home from the vegetables at the (Park Avenue Food) pantry and loved it!"
—Client of the Park Avenue Food Pantry in Mt. Vernon, which receives donated produce from the Mt. Vernon Community Garden

Partners receive funding to better serve families

With the help of SNAP-Ed, Eastern Illinois Foodbank received \$37,500 to create and implement healthy food pantry operations and build a model for other pantries in their 13 county network.

SNAP-Ed helped Belleville Old Town Farmers Market accept SNAP benefits for the first time, which included obtaining grant funds to buy a card reader and a donation from IHHS St. Elizabeth Hospital to purchase 500 \$5 vouchers for families to use at the market.



Community donates over 25,000 pounds of produce

Buyers who purchase produce at the Arthur Proctor Auction to sell at stores and restaurants donated a portion of their purchases to the Partners in Produce program initiated by SNAP-Ed. The donated produce was distributed to families at 22 food pantries and one summer feeding program.

A total of 25,285 pounds of produce was donated and distributed in 2019.

Families at the pantries and summer feeding program also received nutrition education from SNAP-Ed to increase their knowledge of eating healthfully and shopping for food on a budget.

Providing education across the community where families EAT, LEARN, LIVE, and PLAY

364 afterschool and summer programs
666 early childhood sites and preschools
731 elementary and secondary schools

SNAP-Ed worked closely with community partners to make changes that promote and encourage healthier choices. Changes included lunchroom makers, farm-to-school initiatives, professional development trainings for staff and volunteers, healthy snack and vending machine policies, and community gardens.

SNAP-Ed assisted Beverly Miller Junior High in Washington to reduce lunchroom food waste with a new offer vs. serve model. As a result, the amount of food wasted at meals decreased from 187.7 to 53 pounds. This new policy helps the school district save money and better serve their students.

PlayIt in Champaign County was expanded in 2019 with help from SNAP-Ed. This referral program pulls together multiple agencies for nutrition education and physical activity programming for families, including SNAP-Ed. Previously, multiple groups provided duplicate programming. Agencies now work together to coordinate a variety of educational options to better meet the needs of area families.

Lessons Learned - Food Safety

- Food safety is critical and requires awareness-building as well as training.
- Focus on providing action-oriented guidance and provide recommendations for carrying out the guidance in a garden environment. Avoid examples that use farm imagery or language.
 - Example from Iowa:
<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/ffed/community-donation-gardening-toolkit/#:~:text=Community%20Donation%20Gardening%20Toolkit,insecurity%20in%20their%20local%20communities.>

Keep pets and wild animals away from plot.



A tall deer fence at Onawa demonstration garden helps to prevent animals including deer from entering the garden.



A fence built with chicken wire is effective at preventing rabbits, cats, and other small animals from entering the garden and compromising the produce.

Compost or discard bruised or damaged produce.



Handwashing Station Photos



GROWING TOGETHER: FOOD SAFETY IN DONATION GARDENS



Keep pets and wild animals
away from plot.



Use municipal (drinking) water
to rinse and remove visible
dirt from produce.



Harvest produce into properly
cleaned and sanitized bins
using clean utensils.



Wash hands before and
after handling produce.



Discard or compost bruised or
dropped produce.



Transport produce to
food pantry in a clean,
covered vehicle.

PERSONAL

- Restrain hair
- No eating or smoking on
facility grounds
- Do not work while sick
(fever, diarrhea, etc.)
- No excessive jewelry
- Wear clean clothing



Developed by Shannon Coleman, assistant professor
and state human sciences specialist in food safety
with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
and Heather J. Pangborn, 2017 Department of Food
Science and Human Nutrition Cyclone Scholar
Summer Research Experience intern and student at
University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Lessons Learned - COVID Adaptations

- Focus on staff and volunteer safety, allow any administrative flexibility that is possible.
- Be aware that volunteer base may include people at high risk and provide guidance that assumes such.
- Talk with pantry partners about adjustments to their service, hours and relevant precautions.



Lessons Learned - Garden Safety Plans

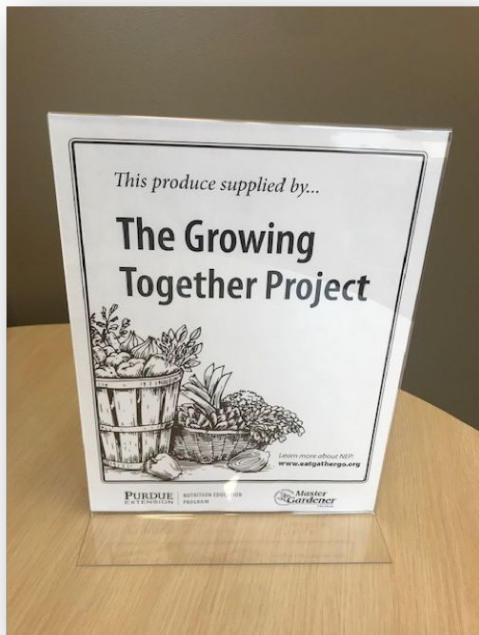
- Volunteering during this time is optional
- Communicate best practices to volunteers utilizing recommendations based on CDC guidelines - face coverings, handwashing
- Oversee the use of shared tools and disinfect them before and after use OR ask volunteers to bring their own tools and not to share
- Limit number of volunteers working at the garden simultaneously to maintain a minimum social distance of 6 feet
- Postpone events/tours
- Ask anyone showing signs of illness to leave



Signage



Welcome To Our Donation Garden!



This garden is cared for by Purdue Extension Master Gardeners and community volunteers. The produce is donated to food pantries in our area. Thank you to the gardeners who are making healthy foods easier to access for our food insecure neighbors.



Did you know?

1 in 8 Hoosiers struggle with food insecurity
- meaning they do not have access to
sufficient food to make a healthy diet.



Purdue University is an Equal Access/Equal Opportunity institution.
This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).



Keys to Successful Collaboration

Partners are flexible and creative



The right people are at the table throughout planning and implementation



Impact first, credit second



High level leadership values collaboration



Strong communication throughout

- Consistent communication through the application, planning, and implementation process with Master Gardeners, SNAP-Ed, agencies receiving donations and other volunteers
- Agree to a plan of action through a team consensus
- Encourage group attendance and engagement through consistent days/times for working sessions
- Use multiple channels of communication - email, phone calls, text groups, social media groups

Celebrate your successes!

- Bethany Community Gardens
- NUSA (Neighborhoods USA) 2020 National Neighborhood Association of the year, multi-neighborhood partnership Award Recipient
- Bethany Community Gardens was created in 2018 to Build Community through the Gardening Together mini-grant on the southside of Indianapolis. The Garden Council continues to engage neighbors and neighborhoods with gardening instruction, information sessions, community meals, friendship building and giving those in need quality, fresh produce.



Contact the presenters

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**Share your questions and feedback live on July
20th at 11:40 Central Time**

