



CAN-Act

The California Association of Nutrition and Activity Programs

Basic Facts About Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed)¹

What is SNAP-Ed?

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Nutrition Education, or **SNAP-Ed** (formerly called **SNED**), is an optional component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program administration, which, like other administrative activities, is reimbursed at 50% of costs. The primary purpose of nutrition education in SNAP is to increase the likelihood that participants and potential eligibles will adopt healthy eating habits and active lifestyles consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *MyPyramid*.

How many states participate?

SNAP-ED is operated in 49 states plus the District of Columbia.

Who is reached by SNAP-ED?

Nutrition education activities are largely directed at women and children. Providers estimate that about two thirds of nutrition education participants were school-age children and adult women. In 2004, nearly 60% of participants were white, 23% African American, 8% Native American, and 20% were identified as Latino or Hispanic, regardless of race.

About 75% of individuals reached through SNAP-Ed are either food stamp participants, applicants, or income eligible non-participants. The remainder are generally individuals eligible for other federal food assistance (such as WIC, school meals, TEFAP, etc.).

How much does SNAP-ED cost?

The federal outlays (or actual expenditures) for SNAP-Ed in 2004 were \$147 million. The median cost of SNAP-Ed per SNAP recipient in 2004 was \$11.21 (compared to WIC nutrition education, which is \$31.68 per recipient²). The average cost per low income person was \$3.62.

What types of activities does SNAP-ED help pay for?

Almost all SNAP-Ed programs offer direct education through multi-session group instruction. Many also offer indirect education through print materials and public events. About a third conduct social marketing campaigns delivered through radio, television, posters, billboards, etc. Approaches such as these that reach so many people with limited dollars are essential.

Does SNAP-ED work?

Outcome evaluation is not a required element of SNAP-Ed; nonetheless, many states offering SNAP-Ed do report that they conduct outcome evaluation. About half of the agencies interviewed for the *Systems Review* reported positive behavior changes among clients. In California, impact evaluation of the state's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program nutrition education activities showed increases in percentages of both adult and child SNAP-Ed participants who reported eating five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily and children engaging in physical activity compared to similar non-participants in slightly higher income groups.³ In short, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Nutrition Education is effective.

¹ *Food Stamp Nutrition Education Systems Review*, Office of Analysis, Nutrition, and Evaluation, USDA, 2006.

² [http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/NutritionEducation/Files/CongressNutEd\(2-2002\).pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/oane/MENU/Published/NutritionEducation/Files/CongressNutEd(2-2002).pdf)

³ <http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/cdic/cpns/downloads/JSC-11-3-05-BldgOnOurSuccess.pdf>



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