



Healthy Eating and Active Living Sub-Committee

MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 27, 2022

Attendance: Tiffany Neal, Imge Uludogan, Denise Lanza, Payal Arora, Jen Hopkins, Amy Faus, Jen Salt, Lisa Pitz, Patience Sengbey, Tina Kim, Nyssa Entrekin

Special guests from stakeholder organizations:

- Jen Salt from Zufall/SNAP-Ed
- Patience Sengbey from NJDOH/SNAP-Ed
- Lisa Pitz from Hunger Free NJ
- Tina Kim from Community Food Bank of NJ
- Nyssa Entrekin from The Food Trust

Tiffany provided brief overview of HealthyNJ project and HEAL goal. Then we shared the draft strategies and asked for feedback: What is already working, what else needs to be done, what would be realistic, what are the smaller steps to make it happen?

Below are the draft strategies with notes from the discussion about each one.

Improve access to healthy foods for low-income residents

- Access to fresh produce, e.g. CityGreen Double Bucks at farmers markets and now grocery stores

Increase SNAP/WIC enrollment by simplifying process

- Good idea but a big lift
- Many improvements have already been made, including eWIC implemented statewide
- CFBNJ offers SNAP outreach but not all counties are covered. Food Bank of South Jersey covers some counties, and Y State Alliance is applying for other counties. Make sure there is SNAP outreach across the state.
- <https://hungerfreenj.org/njsnapreport2021/>: recommendations to improve SNAP access

Increase healthy foods at food banks/pantries

- This is a growing focus in the field
- Food banks try to follow Feeding America guidelines, but individual pantries may not
- Smaller pantries don't have refrigeration to store fresh produce

Client choice at food banks/pantries

- SNAP-Ed already working on this, as are food banks
- Gap: limited funding for shelving, etc. that SNAP-Ed can't cover

- CFBNJ grant for programs to apply for funding to convert to client choice model
- Challenges: physical space to “shop”, different model for volunteers (no pre-packaging bags). Need capacity building.

Increase the number of mobile food pantries offering healthy food options in rural and urban areas

- *No discussion about this strategy*

Promote healthy food donations to food banks/pantries (liability-free)

- Getting the message out to restaurants etc. about the Good Samaritan law
- Pantries can buy more with money donation than they get with food donation (Hunterdon Partnership for Health did campaign about this)
- Food bank nutrition policies can shape the donations that they seek, need to have a strong policy and strong communication about it. Policies are less common among smaller pantries. Lunch Break (Monmouth County) has a great nutrition policy that could be used as a template: <https://lunchbreak.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Final-LunchBreak-Nutrition-Initiative-Branded.pdf>

Transportation to grocery stores/food pantries/food distribution centers

- NJIT looking at transportation to grocery stores etc.
- Upcoming NJEDA grants for food deserts in designated municipalities
- The Food Trust partnered with RWJF on a report: http://thefoodtrust.org/uploads/media_items/report_community-development-and-healthy-food-access-in-new-jersey.original.pdf

Increase child participation in free meals (school breakfast, school lunch, summer meals)

- Hunger Free NJ “Food for Thought” campaign to improve Breakfast after the Bell, summer meals, after-school meals
- Upcoming legislation Working Families Anti-Hunger Act (increases income eligibility to cover ~25,000 extra kids)
- SNAP Gap grants to school districts, get kids eligible for free lunches to also get SNAP (pilot program that could be expanded)

Improve school meal quality

- Big lift
- How to define?

Limit unhealthy food marketing in schools

- *No discussion about this strategy*

Support group purchasing model for institutions to promote healthy/local food purchasing

- Sussex County working on pilot with local farms
- Food Shed Alliance working on purchasing with food pantries (ask Christine Parauda)
- Revolution Foods?

Promote healthy eating through outreach and education

- Challenge to partnering with schools with a lot of red tape. Work with the DOE directly, e.g. get blanket approval for SNAP-Ed to work in schools. Maybe easier to work with larger food service companies instead of DOE so that it is less political?

Promote healthy eating in childcare

- *No discussion about this strategy*

Collaborate with NJ EFNEP and SNAP-Ed to increase nutrition education to low-income families

- *No discussion about this strategy*

Promote healthy eating for employees through worksite wellness

- *No discussion about this strategy*

Additional items:

- We need more consistent systems, definitions, and standards (e.g. what does “client choice” mean, what are “healthy foods” at pantries)
- Feeding America is a national food bank network with guidelines that trickle down to NJ
- Food banks are fairly independent, how to work together more, better coordination. Some food pantries don’t work with banks and are even more independent.

“Hunger and Its Solutions in New Jersey” by the Food Research & Action Center/RWJF

<https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/Hunger-Solutions-New-Jersey-Report.pdf>

Overlap with several priorities from The Food Trust strategic plan:

- Create partnerships to increase participation in free and reduced meal programs, including the Summer Food Service Program.
- Work with partners to support the redistribution of food from retailers and gleaning for food pantries and other community venues.
- Create partnerships to promote pop-up food pantries and fruit and vegetables markets at faith-based institutions and other community venues.

Next Meeting: Monday, July 11 at 10am