

# Rhode Island SNAP-Ed Impact Report

# 2024



Sweet Heat  
Marinade of Korea  
inspired by our  
community recipe  
project

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THE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF RHODE ISLAND



## 2024 AT A GLANCE

**682** community-based **presentations** & policy, system and environmental (PSE) **technical assistance** encounters, including 27% in Spanish or bilingual

**89** **partner organizations** collaborated

**12** **physical and digital platforms** showcased social marketing and social media content

**1,887** **children and adults** attended food and nutrition workshops in person or virtually

**3,728** **adults** received SNAP-Ed handouts through table events

**480** **community partner staff** participated in SNAP-Ed trainings including childcare providers, WIC nutritionists, family visitors, health care staff, adult education employees, food pantry volunteers, and summer meals program professionals

## The Landscape

Rhode Island communities work collaboratively to offer a variety of food and nutrition resources. Households utilize these resources, with **62% of households being food secure**, meeting their food and nutrition needs through various means (1). Unfortunately, many households struggle to meet their food needs on a regular basis, with some communities more affected than others.

Audiences eligible for SNAP-Ed enjoy a variety of cuisines and have diverse food preferences. This includes an array of fruits and vegetables. However, nutrition security is a concern. In Rhode Island, only **9.5% of adults report consuming the recommended amounts of 2 or more fruits and 3 or more vegetables each day** (2). Challenges to healthy eating include cost, lack of access, and perceived lack of confidence to prepare fruits and vegetables.

In addition, food advertisements and marketing towards youth sway their purchases of energy-dense snacks and sugar-sweetened beverages with **38% of youth's daily diet consisting of these foods** (3).



*A family enjoying a recipe sample at the SNAP-Ed table at a farmers' market*

**Nutrition security** means having consistent access to healthy, safe, affordable foods essential to optimal health and well being (4).

## SNAP-Ed Collaborates with Rhode Islanders by...



*A child playing a SNAP-Ed game at a summer meal kick off event*

**Learning** about adults' food practices and offering additional ideas on how to plan, buy, and prepare healthy meals they enjoy on a budget.

**Sharing** positive feeding and physical activity practices among parents/caregivers to improve the whole family's health and well-being.

**Engaging** youth in activities that encourage healthy eating habits through introducing new fruits and vegetables and raising awareness of energy-dense snacks and sugar-sweetened beverages.

**Complementing** community partners' efforts and expertise to facilitate changes in policies, systems, and environments (PSE) to make the healthier choice, the easier choice.

**Celebrating** communities by ensuring our nutrition lessons and recipes are relevant to all cultures and experiences.

(1) Rhode Island Community Food Bank, 2024. "2024 Status Report on Hunger in Rhode Island". <https://rifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023-RICFB-StatusReport-FINAL-digital.pdf>, accessed 2-20-25

(2) America's Health Rankings, 2022. "Annual Report Fruit and Vegetable Consumption RI". <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/fvcombo/state/RI>, accessed 2-10-23.

(3) Bleich, SN. Trends in SSBs and Snack Consumption Among Children by Age, Body Weight, and Race/Ethnicity. *Obesity* 2015; 23: 1039-1046. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/oby.21050>

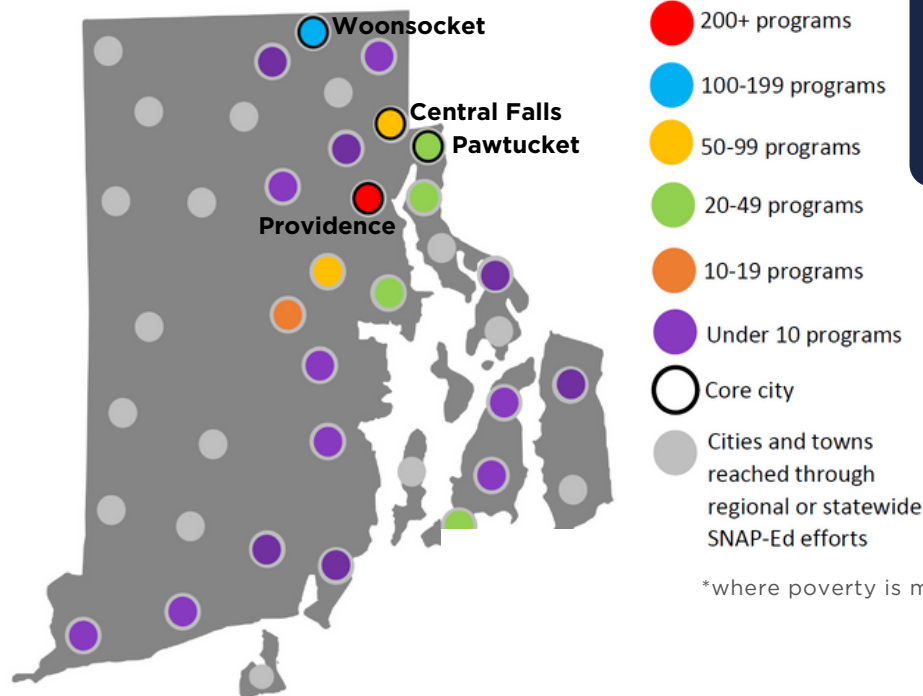
(4) U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Food and Nutrition Security", <https://www.nal.usda.gov/human-nutrition-and-food-safety/nutrition-security>, accessed 3-5-25



## Partnerships and Reach

URI SNAP-Ed collaborated with **89 community partners** to promote statewide reach to community members, both in-person and virtually. These partnerships provide an opportunity for RI SNAP-Ed to **engage with youth, parents, adults and community partners** in various settings throughout the state. The map below describes the location and concentration of programming. The word cloud depicts the types of sites SNAP-Ed partners with.

### Where are we in the state?



**68% of URI SNAP-Ed programming efforts were in core cities\***

\*where poverty is most concentrated

### What settings can you find us in?

Setting Word Cloud: larger words represent settings where more programs were held; like colors represent similar setting types.



**Early care and education/child care/Head Start**

**WIC clinics**

**Food stores**

**Faith-based centers/places of worship**

**Tribal Nation**

**Congregate meal/senior site**

**Community/Rec Centers**

**Schools K-12**

**Adult education/job training**

**Family resource centers**

**Virtual**

**Group living homes**

**Before/After school programs**

**Food assistance sites/food pantry**

**Libraries**

**SNAP offices**

**Individual homes/public housing sites**

**USDA Summer meal site**

**Health care clinic**

**Farmers' markets**

# SPOTLIGHT: Food Ambassador Team Extends Healthy PSE Effort Eating Messages in their Community

Rhode Island's Health Equity Zones (HEZ) are spaces for community partners and residents to work together to improve specific health outcomes in their city/town. **The Food and Nutrition Task Force through the Pawtucket Central Falls HEZ**, of which SNAP-Ed is a member, uses a collective impact model to address challenges and solutions to food access and healthy eating behaviors in the two cities. This past year, the group hired and trained a Food Ambassador team to increase healthy options at food access locations and provide nutrition education in the community.

SNAP-Ed provided a Food Ambassador training series **focused on healthy eating concepts and best practices for teaching those topics in community settings**. SNAP-Ed provided teaching materials including MyPlate boards, hands-on educational kits, handouts, and recipes, to help facilitate education in the community. Additionally, SNAP-Ed met with the Food Ambassador team several times over six weeks to co-create a lesson plan and offer teach back opportunities to ensure the Food Ambassador and their team had the confidence to implement one-time healthy eating workshops in the community.

In FY24, the Food Ambassador team **provided one-time "Flavor Fiesta" healthy eating workshops in Cape Verdean Crioulo, Spanish and English to 136 youth and adults at a church and a community center**. Workshop topics included MyPlate, sugars and fats, whole grains and Nutrition Facts labels. Classes also included recipe demonstrations of RI SNAP-Ed's Tropical Salsa and Liberian Gingerade recipes. Participants reported having high engagement and wanting more workshops. This collaboration uplifts champions in the community and helps meet the community's desire for relevant, high-quality nutrition education opportunities.

## What is PSE?

Policy, system, and environmental efforts help make the healthy choice the easier choice. Efforts include:

- shaping policy through state or local coalition work
- affecting system changes through professional development training for community partners and assessing strengths and areas for opportunity in community settings to maximize healthy food access
- providing visual, gentle nudges to remind of healthy options



SNAP-Ed staff and the HEZ Food Ambassador team at the completion of the training series.



[A previous workshop attendee] shared that she had successfully reduced her A1C level by half and attributed much of her progress to changed eating habits...It was a powerful reminder of how our work truly makes a difference."

~Food Ambassador



# SNAP-Ed Participants Improve Healthy Habits

Youth and adults that participate in SNAP-Ed series programming build on their lived experience and knowledge to improve healthy habits. The data below showcases these improvements over series programming for youth and adults.

## Youth Highlights

**96.5%** of school-aged youth who participated in series programming and completed surveys at the start and end (113 youth) improved on at least one nutrition practice.

### CHOICE

Youth chose sweet and salty snacks less often

Percentage of youth that decreased how often they ate sweet and salty snacks from the beginning to end of the series.

**31.5%**



Sweet  
108 youth

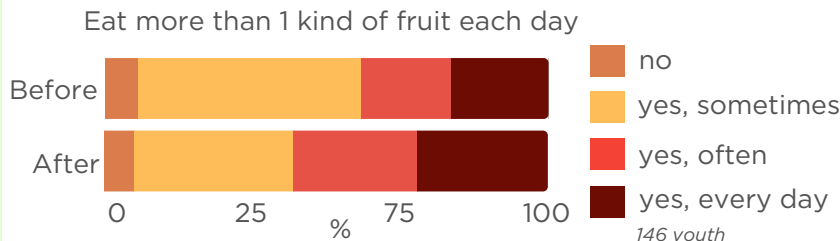
**37.7%**



Salty  
106 youth

### VARIETY

More youth started eating a variety of fruits more frequently



### AMOUNT

More youth started eating the recommended amount of vegetables

Percentage of youth who stated they ate at least 2 vegetables in the previous day

**39.0%** Before  
**45.5%** After

146 youth



## Adult Highlights

**87.9%** of adults who participated in series programming and completed surveys at the start and end (239 adults) improved on at least one nutrition, money saving, or parenting practice.

The following data shows the percentage of adults that positively improved a behavior from the beginning to end of the series.

### SAVVY SHOPPING



Adults use a nutrition label to make informed decisions

185 adults

**42.7%**



Adults choose whole grain foods more often

198 adults

**36.9%**



### WHOLE GRAINS



### PARENTAL PRACTICES



Parents let their children decide how much to eat more often

12 parents

**66.7%**



# SPOTLIGHT: MULTI-LEVEL IMPACTS

## Improving Feeding Practices in Head Start through a Socio-Ecological Approach

Preschool-aged children are exploring and learning a great deal about what foods they like and dislike, making it an important age for exposure to healthy foods. However, children can be reluctant to try new foods. The Woonsocket Head Start Child Development Association (WHSCDA) had a plan to encourage life-long healthful eating habits, and SNAP-Ed was invited to be involved. WHSCDA utilizes a socio-ecological model as part of their whole family mission and SNAP-Ed supports this model to improve nutrition access.

### POLICY LEVEL

To provide community partner support, SNAP-Ed **participates in WHSCDA's Childcare Health Advisory**. This group provides an opportunity for staff, parents, and community members to come together to discuss the organization's policies and systems that impact students' health.

### ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

To support nutrition education and family-style meals in the classroom, the education team requested a one-hour refresher train-the-trainer on *Healthy Habits for Life (HHFL)* from SNAP-Ed. At this training, **56 educators received curriculum and feeding resources**.

### INTERPERSONAL LEVEL

To encourage healthy eating at home, the family development team encouraged participation in a SNAP-Ed series that covered nutrition, positive feeding practices, and food resource management tips. Twenty parents/caregivers across the WHSCDA sites participated. Quotes such as **"I have been incorporating veggies into my grandson's food"** showcase behavior changes. SNAP-Ed also interacted with 147 parents and their children at WHSCDA health and nutrition fairs.

### INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

To highlight *HHFL* activities for students, WHSCDA invited SNAP-Ed to visit each classroom. These 45-minute workshops focused on "anytime" and "sometimes" foods and included a **story, a game, and a vegetable taste test** with a SNAP-Ed Creamy Ranch Dip.

## The Socio-Ecological Model



### Average Parent Self-Reported Behavior at the Start and End of the SNAP-Ed Series

