

The Role of Racial Equity in SNAP-Ed Part 4: Equity Considerations for Conducting Needs Assessments

Q&A from training

Question: Cheri, could you speak to the number of staff or FTE you have dedicated to your needs assessment? The amount of qualitative data you've collected is great!

Answer: We were fortunate to have community members volunteer to assist at 5 of our 6 sites. We also had a partnership with the University of Wisconsin who assisted us in developing our conversation guide and assisted with data analysis. As for SNAP-Ed paid staff, me as program director and 3 nutrition educators participated in the process. I would estimate it is about 0.15 total FTE spent on this thus far.

Question: It would be great to hear from Cheri how they funded incentives for the community listening sessions.

Answer: We were very fortunate to connect with other programs such as early childhood programs in Wisconsin that were interested in hearing about the needs of the communities around nutrition, physical activity and general wellness. We were able to get \$5000 to reimburse our community facilitators for their time and for incentives. Our staff time was paid via SNAP-Ed funds.

Question: The NC needs assessment seems to highlight the mismatch between the greatest needs (poverty) and the things that SNAP-Ed dollars can fund. How can you show those who participated in the needs assessment that their efforts are leading to projects that really meet the needs?

Molly's Answer: Great question! There is a huge mismatch. Through this process, Mariela and our food council prioritized community members. They decided on all of the methods, we did some summarizing, but everything was checked through them. The next steps for action are being decided by the community members...how to tell the story, who to tell the story to, how to hold people in power accountable. This *'How can you show those who participated in the needs assessment that their efforts are leading to projects that really meet the needs?'* is harder because the community members' recommendations related to root causes. It is our challenge now to figure out how to answer your question. We will be looking to policy, systems and environmental change strategies.

Mariela's Answer: Yes, so as we got community expert this are community member who have already working with their own communities, so they are great advocates within their communities and they have taken part of finalizing this assessment so they can bring awareness to the spaces they advocate. One other thing that came out from this assessment is that community experts want to understand and learn when \$\$\$ decision are made so they can be present and advocate for their community. I and some of the team are preparing a small "course" about money processes in our district.

Question: The Orange County presentation was really inspiring. Question, was the SNAP-Ed program able to compensate the community experts for their time and experience? If so, can they please share how that (very important and amazing) expense was accounted for in their SNAP-Ed plan?

Answer: This is always on issue! Like Cheri's Community Conversations, we were able to get community organizations to cover some incentives. However, we also treated our community partners with lived

expertise as expert consultants. We are able to include independent contractor/consultants in our SNAP-Ed Plan...just like we would for consultants with other expertise like evaluation or road safety.

Question: for all panelists - how can equity best be included when timelines and short and budgets are low?

Answers:

I believe selecting and prioritizing efforts and projects that support engagement and inclusive strategies is where the answer lies – including in budget and program planning. Also, first focusing on listening, connecting, building relationships/trust with the vulnerable and underserved communities you wish to engage more with, and letting this effort take priority to the extent that is possible over other activities . . . and we have found, actually, that delivering classes and other program activities is actually a great way to do this!

We include in our SNAP-Ed budget, a consultant line and treat community members as expert consultants...to cover their participation and the guidance they provide.

Budgets--We were able to find partners who provided us with funding for our efforts. Ex. Early childhood programs who are interested in hearing about our efforts and outcomes. I think our key was getting community members interested, the community members created the buzz around our effort--I think many of our participants would have still wanted to share their stories even without any type of compensation.

Also from Beatriz:

One idea is to do collaborative work and join other community projects.

Keep communicating with stakeholders about the needs even when there are financial deficits.

Apply for community grants.

Question: Hi Mariah - Western alumna here. :) How crucial do you think your role as SNAP-Ed convener was in connecting the city with the neighborhood's stakeholders? To what extent would you say that the city's "equity lens" was active prior to and then after your communication with the transportation liaison about this neighborhood's issues?

Answer: Hello Laurel, thanks for the question! It is hard to know for sure, but I felt like it was because I had brought the city's attention to the Sterling Meadows area that the transportation planner reached out to them for the master plan.