

SNAP-Ed Toolkit

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LT18: Commercial Marketing of Healthy Foods and Beverages

Framework Component

Changes - Multi-Sector

Indicator Description

This Indicator focuses on sub-national, policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes in organizational systems where commercial food and beverage marketing practices—advertising, PR, promotion, and personal sales—are most likely to influence the food choices of SNAP-Ed audiences, especially children, youth, and low-income, limited-English and ethnic adults. Changes in commercial marketing activity are distinct from those reported in LT5 and LT6, which may include institution-sponsored marketing introduced as part of an evidence-based intervention. The changes will be made by community institutions that decide what commercial marketing to feature or decline. The marketing changes reported here are likely to result from public/private partnerships and are deemed to have occurred due, at least in part, to SNAP-Ed efforts.

Background and Context

Authoritative recommendations: Recommendations for changes in commercial marketing practices come from many authoritative sources. These include the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, the Partnership for a Healthier America, the Better Business Bureau (Children’s Food and Beverage Advertising Initiative), American Restaurant Association (Healthy Dining, Kids LiveWell Program), the Federal Trade Commission, and the federal government’s Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations. There are few data about in-language and ethnic-specific food marketing. As yet there are no publicly available data sources that track the mix of methods used in commercial marketing of foods and

beverages at the sub-national level. This Indicator is strategically important because it can focus local attention on pervasive and powerful marketing influences that only community residents, organizations and businesses can impact. When conducted in combination with other interventions, a change in food/beverage marketing is recommended by experts as necessary to achieve population-wide results. **State plan:** If interventions are being planned for any of the channels below, then changes in commercial marketing practices may be included among the SMART objectives for those interventions. **On-site assessments, targets:** On-site assessments can routinely include commercial marketing practices. This provides baseline values and allows tracking of change. Some assessment tools provide an overall score which may be used to incent positive change over time. Examples for different settings include the School Health Index and other school assessments, CX3, GO NAPP-SAC, and others. **Engage community members:** On-site assessments may be conducted by students as part of nutrition education and service learning projects or by community residents incidental to nutrition education or community engagement projects. **Comprehensive wellness policies** may already cover many of the commercial marketing activities listed above in institutional settings such as ECE, schools, CYOs, and worksites. **Implementing Agencies** may identify the number of total and SNAP-Ed qualified sites in some key settings/channels, such as:

- ECE, schools, and afterschool programs by virtue of free or reduced price meal free or reduced price meal eligibility
- Community youth organizations (the Y, Boys’ and Girls’ Clubs)
- Public properties like parks and recreation centers in qualifying census tracts; SNAP, social service, and public health offices
- SNAP-certified stores, including supermarkets, corner stores, and non-food stores
- Fast food chains with high patronage by SNAP-Ed audiences

Other marketing to children, youth, and vulnerable groups is addressed in MT13 Media Practices.

Outcome Measures

Increases in positive marketing practices, as above (advertising, PR, promotion, personal sales), in the following channels that are due, in whole or in part, to activities of SNAP-Ed and its partners:

LT18a.	Early care and education (ECE), school, and afterschool settings where USDA regulations apply: The number of organizations (ECE, CYO) and districts (schools) that have established written marketing policies (beyond those required by USDA) to create an environment where healthy choices are the easiest, most available, and most affordable for children and youth. Often, such decisions may grow out of wellness policies (See also MT9 , Education Policies).
LT18b.	Nonprofit community youth organizations (CYOs): The number of CYOs that have established written policies for procurement standards for foods/beverages, point-of-choice labeling, and favorable pricing of foods/beverages-to-encourage, as well as other marketing cited in LT18a, above. Often, adoption of such policies may grow out of work by nearby School Wellness Policy Councils

LT18c.	Other public properties where the SNAP-Ed audience is a high proportion of the public being served: The number of other government agencies and jurisdictions (city, town, county, and district) that have written policy decisions or zoning requirements that encourage marketing of foods/beverages-to-encourage for cafeterias, concessions, and vending on public property. Examples would include procurement contracts that go beyond product specifications to also specify visual, promotional, pricing, and sponsorship marketing of foods/beverages-to-encourage (See also MT7 , Government Policies).
LT18d.	Low-wage worksites: Number of low-wage worksites that made policy decisions about the marketing of foods/beverages, point-of-choice labeling, favorable pricing of foods/beverages-to-encourage, and company sponsorships. Such decisions may grow out of SNAP-Ed interventions and be similar to contract provisions to public agencies in LT19c, above.
LT18e.	Retail food stores: Number of retail food stores that have established marketing practices that promote the choice of healthier foods and beverages. These may include, but are not limited to, in-store merchandising, labeling, promotion, and family-friendly placements (including check-out lanes) that intentionally encourage the choice of foods/beverages-to-encourage; partnerships with SNAP-Ed projects to support community marketing events; and projects to support consumer uptake of foods/beverages-to-encourage. These business changes should extend past those that occur only while a SNAP-Ed intervention is being conducted and may include changes a company makes on its own that can be attributed in whole or in part to SNAP-Ed influence. (Retail outcomes also are found in LT12 , Food Systems.)
LT18f.	Fast food chain restaurants/franchisees: The number of fast food companies or franchisee organizations that institute marketing practices that promote healthier kids' meals and meal-deals. May include franchisee organizations that advocate for corporate promotions (movie tie-ins, toy giveaways, kids' meals, and specially priced meals and snacks) that encourage the purchase of healthier choices. These changes may grow out of SNAP-Ed school or CYO interventions, social marketing campaigns, and assessments of restaurants or of the community food environment, such as CX3.

Decreases in marketing practices that promote the purchase of foods/beverages-to-discourage in the following channels:

LT18g.	ECE, schools, and afterschool settings where USDA regulations apply: The number of organizations (ECE, CYO) and districts (schools) that prohibit on-site advertising, food/beverage donation policies tied to brands or purchasing contracts, and contracts that contain business incentives to increase exposure to calorie-dense/nutrient-poor foods and beverages that go beyond the scope of regulations (See also MT9 , Education Policy).
LT18h.	Community youth organizations: The number of CYOs that have established written policies to limit or prohibit marketing practices that encourage purchase and consumption of foods-to-discourage through vending machines, snack shops, signage, pricing, promotions and sponsorships. Similar to those for schools, above.
LT18i.	Other public properties: The number of other government agencies and jurisdictions (city, town, county, district) that place prohibitions or controls on advertising and signage for foods/beverages to-avoid on public property; procurement contracts that prohibit marketing of and incentives of foods/beverages-to-discourage (See also MT7 , Government Policies).

LT18j.	<p>Low-wage worksites: Number of low-wage worksites that establish standards and policies to prohibit commercial marketing practices that encourage the purchase of foods/beverages-to-discourage.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Retail food stores: Number of retail food stores that establish policies and practices to limit in-store merchandising, labeling, promotion, and placements of foods/beverages-to-discourage. (See also LT12, Food Systems) 2. Value-oriented fast food chain restaurants/franchisees: The number of fast food companies/franchisee organizations that do not participate in corporate promotions (movie tie-ins, toy giveaways, kids' meals and specially priced meals and snacks) that encourage consumption of foods-to-avoid.
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What to Measure

This indicator will report the number of SNAP-Ed qualified organizations in key channels that intentionally introduce written policy changes. As per authoritative recommendations, the new marketing policies are designed to:

- Make the healthy choice the easy, appealing, desired, and affordable choice to SNAP-Ed audience segments, including through behavioral economics and default choices.
- Restrict or discourage the marketing of unhealthy foods to children and youth
- Restrict or discourage the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to vulnerable groups, including through ethnic and in-language outreach and programming.

Sub-national marketing practices to general audiences, children or in-language segments:

- Advertising: TV, radio, outdoor, transit ads; on-site signage, placements, banners, posters, wraps (vending, vehicles)
- Public relations; Online games, contests, give-aways, community events/sponsorships
- Promotion (to consumers): Special pricing, seasonal specials, rebates, incentives, celebrity appearances, movie or event tie-ins
- Personal sales (to intermediaries): Sponsorships, trips, contests, donations (school supplies, athletic equipment), charitable contributions, sales incentives

Examples of how changes may be verified:

- Procurement standards
- Contracts with suppliers/vendors
- Pre-post on-site assessments
- Key informant interviews with organizational leaders
- Policy documents, such as worksite or school wellness policies
- Executive orders, resolutions, initiatives

Population

N/A

Surveys and Data Collection Tools

CX³ Food Environment Assessment (food stores, quick service restaurants, school environment); NAP—SACC, CHOICE (ECE). Additional evaluation tools to measure LT18 can be found in the [SNAP-Ed Library](#).

Key Glossary Terms

[glossary]Marketing activities[/glossary] [glossary]Earned media/public relations[/glossary]

Additional Resources or Supporting Citations

These changes embody recommendations from a variety of credible sources, including the federal government, foundations, universities, and advocacy organizations, including those focusing on the prevention of childhood obesity and other chronic diseases.