ST7: Organizational Partnerships*

Framework Component

Readiness & Capacity – Organizational Motivators

Indicator Description

Partnerships with service providers, organizational leaders, and SNAP-Ed representatives in settings where people eat, learn, live, play, shop, and work. *SNAP-Ed Priority Outcome Indicator

Background and Context

Local SNAP-Ed nutrition educators are accustomed to developing partnerships with leadership, staff, volunteers, clients, and community representatives when delivering nutrition education at specific sites. When implementing PSE change strategies, the scope of partnerships expands from coordinating logistics for direct education delivery to planning for and adopting changes in nutrition and/or physical activity practices, leveraging resources, and planning for sustainability—many of the key indicators that come later in the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework. Unlike ST8—which focuses on multi-sector partnerships at the local, state, territorial, or tribal level—indicator ST7 defines partnerships at the site level (e.g., elementary school), organization (e.g., school district), or complementary sites. [glossary]Organizational partnerships[/glossary] of relevance to SNAP-Ed may include school health advisory councils, wellness committees, and site councils that focus on bringing together collaborators and local champions (see ST6) to change the context or environment surrounding individual physical activity and nutrition choices offered to clients at the site. An organizational partnership may exist between a local SNAP-Ed provider and leadership of a local site; in some instances, a written agreement may delineate the roles and responsibilities of the SNAP-Ed provider and the site’s leadership. For instance, a local SNAP-Ed agency may agree to install a food garden at a senior housing site and teach seniors how to grow and harvest foods using seeds and starts they purchase with their SNAP dollars. The senior housing community site manager agrees to irrigate the garden and organize a shuttle bus to the local farmers market accepting SNAP for seniors to purchase seeds and plants that will produce food to eat. Partnership evaluation can help to identify whether it is worth the SNAP-Ed staff time and resources to participate in an organizational partnership effort—as a member, or in some instances, as a lead or co-lead.
Partnership strategies may include identifying new opportunities for partnership, sharing information and resources, participating in or leading meetings with partners, developing an action plan with partners, or tracking and communicating partnership outcomes.

**Outcome Measures**

ST7a. The number of active partnerships in SNAP-Ed qualified sites or organizations that regularly meet, exchange information, and identify and implement mutually reinforcing activities that will contribute to adoption of one or more organizational changes or policies such as those listed in MT5 and MT6. For each partnership being evaluated, the following should be measured:

   ST7b. Description of the depth of the relationship (network, cooperator, coordination, coalition, collaboration) ST7c. Description of partnership accomplishments and lessons learned.

**What to Measure**

This indicator measures active partnerships, depth of the relationship, and for more mature partnerships, specific accomplishments and lessons learned from the partnership. Active partnerships may include two or more individuals who regularly meet, exchange information, and identify and implement mutually reinforcing activities that will contribute to adoption of one or more organizational changes or policies such as those listed in MT5 and MT6. Partnership members should understand their roles and responsibilities. The unit of analysis is the site or organization with an active partnership. RE-AIM suggests that the site or organization participating in the partnership should be increasing its own capacity to adopt nutrition and/or physical activity supports by redirecting activities or staff, contributing in-kind or out-of-pocket resources, and leading or participating in the development of a plan to maintain/sustain the new supports once original grant funding is over, including how to maintain or diversify the funding base for the project of interest. For partnerships subject to evaluation, assess the depth of the organization’s progress along a continuum shown below. Deeper relationships produce more opportunities and outcomes. In this indicator, each organizational partnership should be assigned an environmental settings domain: eat, learn, live, play, shop, and work. This is to ensure that there is diversification of partnerships across the different types of settings relevant in SNAP-Ed. Some partnerships may affect multiple SNAP-Ed settings with representation from parks and recreation (Play) and school personnel (Learn).

**Population**

N/A

**Surveys and Data Collection Tools**

[collapse title="Qualitative Approach"] Qualitative approaches through direct observation, content analysis, and documentation review can include one or more of the following methods to identify:

- Key informant interviews with partnership members to identify activities, partnership maturity level, barriers and success factors, and outcomes
Key informant interviews with nonparticipating members to identify partnership activities and outcomes

Content analysis of partnership communication, meeting minutes, and/or partnership plans

Review of organizational chart or partnership structure

Network: Organization has signed on as a member of a formalized nutrition education network, such as those supported by SNAP-Ed. There is ongoing dialogue and information sharing. **Cooperator:** Organization assists with information such as referrals, providing space, distributing marketing and client education materials, and hosting events open to the clients and community members. **Coordination:** Organization maintains autonomous leadership, but there is a common focus on group decision-making; emphasizes sharing resources to aid in the adoption of policy, systems, environmental changes, and associated promotion listed in MT5 and MT6. **Coalition:** Organization has longer-term commitment to join action in adopting nutrition or physical activity practices, supports and/or standards. Key characteristics include: shared leadership, definition of roles, and generation of new resources. **Collaboration Organization:** contributes to joint activities and has identified personnel who help advise and make decisions about effective strategies and interventions. Key characteristics include: a system with shared impacts, a consensus-decision making process, and formal role assignments.

Annual Partnership Self-Assessment

1. What is the purpose of the partnership (e.g., plan development and implementation, advisory group for a specific task or objective)?
2. What does success look like for the partnership? Are there specific activities or objectives for the partnership?
3. What roles do members need to fulfill? What resources or skills do they need to provide to ensure the success of your partnerships?
4. What organizations, agencies, and leaders need to be represented to ensure success? What assets are needed?

Additional evaluation tools to measure ST7 can be found in the SNAP-Ed Library.

Key Glossary Terms

Active partnership, Coalition, Collaboration, Cooperation, Coordination, Network

Additional Resources or Supporting Citations