



ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE

This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators can be sent to you electronically each month. There is no charge. To subscribe or unsubscribe, contact Christa Albice, WSU Puyallup, 253-445-4541, e-mail albice@wsu.edu.

To access past issues, go to
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This Month's Focus- Part 3 of a Series on Policy, Systems, and Environment (PSE) - *The Roles of Policy and Systems*

This is our third and final issue of the *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* on "Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change." PSE is an emerging way of thinking about making food and physical activity choices easier for people in schools, workplaces and their communities. Our October 2014 issue provided an introduction to PSE, and the Early Winter 2014 issue focused on the "E" component, Environmental change. In this issue, we explore "P" and "S," Policy and Systems change.

Policy changes are always in written form. Policies can include guidance, resolutions, position papers, guidelines, laws or other written norms. Government bodies, whether they are local, state, or federal, can make policy changes. Organizations also make policy changes when they create a written statement about their position or decision on an issue. Policy changes can originate from school districts, school wellness committees, community advocacy groups, local health departments, boards of organizations and other entities.

Systems changes involve changing the way all aspects are carried out within an organization, institution, or business. Within the context of SNAP-Ed, this may mean changes in procedures and processes, which often have to do with staffing, funding, vendors, grants and volunteers. Systems changes are intended to continue over time, even when a nutrition education program has ended. There are different types of systems, including Community Services Offices (CSOs), schools, health care, transportation, food distribution, and parks and recreation. These systems have the potential for changes that will reach broad population groups who receive services across numerous organizations or institutions.

Often Systems and Policy changes go hand-in-hand, and they may include or lead to Environmental changes as well. A key point about PSE is that change can originate with anyone who wants to improve the contextual factors that affect nutritional or physical health. That person gathers a collaborative group of engaged partners who together craft ways to make changes, likely starting on a small scale at first. Establishing and maintaining committed stakeholders are key components when making effective Systems and Policy changes.

Here are some critical steps to include when embarking on making Policy and Systems changes:

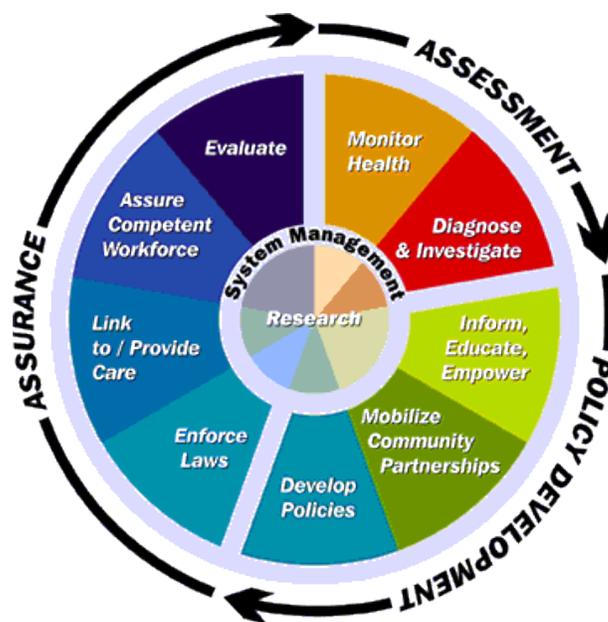
1. *Form partnerships and collaborations*, and recognize those who may oppose changes that your stakeholders may propose.
2. *Identify the issues*, tailoring this step to what works best in the situation. This could simply be conversations with partners to find out where they want to start, or it could be a needs assessment complete with baseline data.
3. *Determine the PSE strategies* that could be implemented to address the issues.
4. *Develop PSE priorities* to narrow down the strategies to a workable list, which may include near-term and longer-term efforts. For instance, initial steps may be those that require no or little monetary investment, while longer-term efforts may require some time to grow a larger community base to garner resources
5. *Create an advocacy plan* so that the coalition's stakeholders are equipped with consistent, effective messages to communicate the changes that they all are advocating.
6. *Implement and enforce* the PSE changes.
7. *Evaluate and refine* the changes to measure the extent to which the strategies actually made a difference, and whether modifications need to be made.

Policy Change Example: School Wellness Policies

Nationwide, school districts are mandated to develop school wellness policies and to put them into practice. Jen Hey, Food \$ense Program Manager in King County in WA state, has played a valuable role in shaping school wellness policies in both the Auburn and Kent School Districts. Stakeholders she's worked with include individuals representing Physical Education/health, teachers, principals, administrators, nutrition/food services and public health. The unique contribution that Jen provides is her technical assistance from a SNAP perspective. Her input is backed up by evidenced-based research to align policies with the current Dietary Guidelines and knowledge of needs of children from low-income families. She said that the written policies are generally short, however the procedures to carry them out are often lengthy documents that take considerable time to hammer out before they can be voted upon by the stakeholders. Jen has found her involvement tremendously worthwhile. Her advice: begin with the school district's nutrition director, attend wellness policy meetings to listen, make suggestions, and be a supportive resource for the people on the committee who are championing for healthful changes. Jen got her start volunteering as a parent serving on the school wellness committee for Seattle School District. (Contact: Jen Hey, Program Manager, WSU Food \$ense, King County, 206-263-1914, Jen.Hey@wsu.edu.)

Policy Change Example: Increasing Access to Healthier Foods

Taking the first step to become involved in Policy, Systems and Environmental Change can seem like a daunting challenge. Jeanne Rehwaldt in Shelton got her start through her role with the Master Gardener Program on an "ACHIEVE" grant through CDC to build healthier communities. Through this involvement, she was later invited to sit on a policy-shaping committee in her community. Jeanne is Program Manager, WSU Food \$ense and Master Gardener Programs in Mason County, WA and currently involved with the local Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). Through a survey, three priority areas were identified: Breastfeeding Support, Consumption of Locally Grown Food, and Healthy Eating Knowledge, Skills and Behavior. Partners on the work groups addressing the three priorities include: farmers, faith-based organizations, women's clinics, Food \$ense, public health, chefs, farmers' markets, hospital dietitians, the WIC Nutrition Program, physicians, and many more. Jeanne sits on the Healthy Eating committee that has agreed to include the implementation of the WSU Extension Food \$ense Whole School and Integrated Community Approaches comprised of key PSE strategies to support core education in community settings in Mason County.. One Policy outcome, passed by county commissioners, was to establish designated areas for breastfeeding and pumping in county-owned buildings. For nutrition educators interested in PSE, she recommends: get the word out about the work you are doing, find other agencies doing complementary work, meet face-to-face to grow those relationships, and develop new potential collaborations. She cautions that within collaborative groups, some people leave their jobs, go back to school, or lose interest, so it's important to be realistic and consider regrouping as needed. (Contact: R. Jeanne Rehwaldt, Extension Coordinator Supervisor, WSU Extension – Mason County, Food \$ense and Master Gardener Programs, 360-427-9670 ext 688, rehwaldt@wsu.edu.)



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Policy and Systems Change Example: Fast Food Labeling Beyond Calories

By December 2015, the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) policy requiring calorie labeling for standard menu items at chain food service restaurants will go into effect. Many studies have shown that this information will inform consumers to make lower-calorie choices. Adding even more weight to that rationale is a recently published study by pediatricians which found that parents ordering from menus with calorie information picked meals for their child totaling 200 fewer calories. The researchers wondered whether adding information about the number of minutes of physical activity or miles walking to burn off those calories would make an even greater difference. Their hunch was right: about 38% of parents indicated that they would very likely prompt their kids to exercise if physical activity were added to restaurant menus, compared to 20% with calorie-only information. (Source: Viera, AJ and R Antonelli, "Potential effect of physical activity calorie equivalent labeling on parent fast food decisions." *Pediatrics*, 135(2):376-382, January 16, 2015)

Systems Change – Farm to School

Farmers in the Spokane area were interested in selling their produce to schools and educating students about their farms, and schools were interested in buying from local farmers, but there was no system to connect them all. Joel Williamson and Beth Robinette, both MBAs in Spokane with family backgrounds in agriculture, began in 2014 to develop a system to solve that problem. They created an infrastructure to aggregate foods from many farms to make purchasing possible by schools. A farmer- and worker-owned co-op was formed called LINC Foods (Local Inland Northwest Cooperative). On its website www.lincfoods.com, customers order produce grown near Spokane, and they can even select a particular farm. Joel says that current customers include schools, universities, some restaurants, grocery stores and Food \$ense which uses these foods in classroom nutrition education. He says plans are already in place for the 2015-2016 school year for "Harvest of the Month" when a particular food is featured and a farmer may visit the school to talk about where that food comes from. LINC Foods works out of the 2nd Harvest Food Bank warehouse, which provides cold storage for perishables as well as dry storage. (Contact: Joel Williamson, LINC Foods, 509-230-1223, joel@camaspartners.com.)



Photo courtesy of Joel Williamson, LINC Foods

Systems Change Example: Dairy at Food Banks

In food banks, perishable foods, particularly those in the Fruit, Vegetable and Dairy food groups can be in short supply. In a national survey, only 3% of foods available at food banks are dairy foods, which presents a challenge to meet nutrient needs among people who rely on food banks, particularly children. In order to increase access to milk at food banks, a group of stakeholders gathered to shape a novel approach which they called Northwest Farmers Fighting Hunger. At the table were representatives in Washington and Oregon from the Departments of Agriculture, Fred Meyer supermarkets, Food Lifeline, 2nd Harvest, Oregon Food Bank and dairy commodity commissions. During the month of June, they conducted a food drive and donation program which in 2014 brought 85,000 pounds of food to food banks in Oregon and Washington. This program will take place again in June 2015, with QFC as a new retail partner. In another Systems change, Food Lifeline and dairy farmers started nationwide program called the Great American Milk Drive in which people text a dollar amount they choose to a food bank in a zip code they select in order to buy milk. In an ongoing Systems change, a handful of dairy farmers in the Yakima area regularly donate gallons of their own milk directly to local food banks. (Contact: Martha Marino, Washington State Dairy Council, 425-744-1616, marino@EatSmart.org.)

IN THE MEDIA

New Let's Move Director Announced by First Lady – First Lady Michelle Obama announced that FoodCorps co-founder Debra Eschmeyer will succeed Sam Kass as Executive Director of the Let's Move initiative and senior policy advisor for nutrition policy. In a statement put out by Mrs. Obama's office, Eschmeyer comes from FoodCorps, a national AmeriCorps service program that places emerging leaders in schools in limited-resource communities to support School Nutrition healthier guidelines. (Source: <https://foodcorps.org/about/press-room/press-releases/foodcorps-co-founder-selected-for-leadership-role-at-the-white-house>.)

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

School Wellness Policies – Where Do Your Schools Stand? If you want to read the wellness policy for a particular Washington school, to the website for Coordinated School Health in Washington for an alphabetical list, http://healthyschools.ospi.k12.wa.us/waschool/wellness_policies/wa_policies.html. Most policies were developed by coalitions of interested stakeholders. Where "the rubber meets the road" is in the Systems which put the Policy in place, which presents a good opportunity for nutrition educators to provide valuable assistance to stakeholders. For examples from Washington schools as well as information about training, see www.actionforhealthykids.org/in-your-state/washington/welcome.

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Farm-to-School Resources. Washington has a fantastic bounty of foods that are a great fit for school meals. Here you can find general information, recipes, sample menus, and nutrition facts. There are a set of 20 posters that can be used in the community venues to promote fruit and vegetables. The WA Grown Food Kit is an evolving and growing resource adapted for many learning environments. Review it at: <http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/ToolKit>. Also, our state has developed cookbooks for schools based on local agricultural products: <http://www.wafarmtoschool.org/Page/77/cookbooks>.



WSU School of Biological Sciences
Marion Ownbey Herbarium

WASHINGTON GROWN

Fresh This Month – During winter months, supermarkets may have fresh produce that was grown locally, but it would be foods that store well, such as yellow onions, apples, various types of winter squash and cabbage. Napa, Savoy, red and green cabbage are good sources of vitamins C and K, and are featured in this month's beautiful issue of "Give Your Family More of the Good Stuff," by Oregon State University's Food Hero program. This handout, as others in the series, includes these sections: Shop and Save, Store Well Waste Less, Common Types, and recipes. For the current handout about cabbage, go to https://foodhero.org/sites/foodhero.org/files/monthly-magazines/February%20Food%20Hero%20Monthly_0.pdf. To see back issues featuring healthful low-cost foods (also in Spanish and Vietnamese) or to sign up to receive the free handouts each month, go to <https://www.foodhero.org/monthly-magazine>.



Courtesy of WSDA WA Grown Food Kit

DID YOU KNOW?

Washington State Governor Jay Inslee set a goal to increase access to healthier foods at food pantries and meal programs by 5% through 2017. To monitor progress, EFAP food pantry and TEFAP meal program subcontractors will track foods distributed by their programs through the Healthier Food Options Report. (Source: Washington Food Coalition's newsletter "Food for Thought," Fall 2014.)

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