Legislative Education 101

SNAP-ED PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT TEAM

LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Housekeeping

- Please put your questions in the chat box for speakers to address at the end of the presentation.
- The session is being recorded and will be available for registrants after the webcast today.
- Please keep your lines muted to maintain sound clarity.
Purpose: Improve the consistency and effectiveness of Extension SNAP-Ed programming to address national health and nutrition-related problems facing individuals with low income in the context of Extension’s broader low-income nutrition education portfolio.

Representation:
- SNAP-Ed Coordinators and Program Leaders
- Representing all Extension regions
- 1862s and 1890s
- EFNEP program liaison
Legislative Education Matters

EDUCATING DECISION-MAKERS ALLOWS THEM TO MAKE DECISIONS GROUNDED IN A SOLID UNDERstanding OF THE PROGRAM’S DELIVERY, IMPACT, AND VALUE.

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE YOUR PROGRAM VISIBLE TO DECISION-MAKERS.

FORMING A RELATIONSHIP WITH DECISION-MAKERS AND THEIR STAFF INCREASES THE LIKELIHOOD THEY WILL CONSULT YOU WHEN FACED WITH DECISIONS RELATED TO SNAP-ED OR OTHER NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAMS.

IF DECISION-MAKERS DON’T KNOW WHAT THEY ARE FUNDING, IT IS EASIER TO DISCONTINUE THE FUNDING.
Poll:
What is your experience in visiting members of Congress or staffers (multiple choice)
The Farm Bill is the primary agricultural and food policy tool of the United States' federal government. The comprehensive omnibus (comprising of several items) bill is renewed every 5 years or so and deals with all affairs under the purview of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

- Last passed in 2018-2019 legislative cycle
- Next scheduled - 2023
- [https://www.usda.gov/farmbill](https://www.usda.gov/farmbill)
Farm Bill Titles

- Commodity Programs
- Conservation
- Trade
- Nutrition
- Credit
- Rural Development

- Research and Extension
- Forestry
- Energy
- Horticulture and Organic Agriculture
- Crop Insurance
- Miscellaneous
Child Nutrition Reauthorization

- Maintains current SNAP-Ed funding formula and caps the overall program spending
- Sets policies for child nutrition meals programs, Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP) and Women, Infant, and Children (WIC)
- Last reauthorization was in 2010 with the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act (discussion of reauthorization this year)
Know your institution’s rules.

- Some allow staff to visit law-makers and their staff in an official capacity; others do not.
- Many LGUs have a process staff follow to schedule visits which may involve working through a legislative liaison. You may need to send your infographics and talking points ahead for approval.

Know the boundaries of your role.

- Typically, LGU staff meet with law-makers and/or their staff to provide education about how federal programs are implemented in their state and answer their questions.
- Typically, LGU staff do not advocate in support of a particular policy decision.
Poll:
Do you know your institutions policy?
Preparing for your visit

Plan ahead
- Identify local elected officials and the committees on which they serve.
- Prioritize which ones to visit based on committee service and SNAP-Ed programming in their districts.
  - House Agriculture
  - House Education and Labor
  - House Appropriations
  - Senate - Agriculture
- Leave time between visits for breaks and unexpected delays
- Look for opportunities for state coffee hours or meet and greet with the member
Preparing for your visit

- Resources for advice
  - University Legislative Liaison – both in state and in Washington DC
  - Extension colleagues that have participated in Public Issues Leadership Development (PILD)
  - Colleagues from other states – possibly shadow a visit with them
- ASNNA Advocacy Committee
- SNAP-Ed Program Development Team
Considerations for after an election

➢ Identify newly elected officials
  ▶ May need additional background
  ▶ Members may have new committee assignment
  ▶ New or changed staff
Visiting during a pandemic

- Travel may not be allowed
- Video Conferencing or Phone Conference
- Have website, videos, or materials being shared cued up
- Meeting with more than one Legislative Aide
- Virtual meeting protocol
  - Virtual background from your LGU
  - Dress for success
Preparing for your visit

Materials
- Items should be quick to read and highlight the key points you plan to make
- Geared for lay audience
- Contact information
- Photos and stories (use a tablet to scroll through photos)
- Customize information to your elected official’s district when possible
  - Have a success story from their district ready - Ground truthing
- Something to hang up in their office
- Nothing bulky and no sealed envelopes (security)
Preparing for your visit

- Prepare your remarks
  - Familiarize yourself with the elected official’s committee assignments and consider how they may intersect with SNAP-Ed or SNAP or influence their position on the topic.
- Create talking points that are simple and clear.
  - You may have as few as 10 minutes and the person you talk to may have no background in SNAP-Ed.
  - Include a closing request that staff reach out to you should they ever have questions related to nutrition education for SNAP clients.
- Walk through the plan in your head if you’re nervous.
What to expect

- Most visits happen with a Legislative Aide aka a ‘Staffer’
  - The “Staffer’s” gather information and assist with the decision making processes.
  - These are often young people from the elected official’s home state.
  - They may or may not have a working knowledge of SNAP-Ed. Ask about this so you can tailor your remarks to their level of understanding.
  - Listen to their stories or interests and make connections
  - They may have many consecutive appointments, be mindful of time.
What to expect when in D.C.

- **Take business cards**: You will be asked for them in most office lobbies and during visits.
- **Lots of walking**: You will need your photo ID.
- **Time in airport-style security lines – you will need your photo ID**: You may be asked to walk with them to their next meeting.
- **Unpredictable time to converse**: Do not plan for an electrical outlet or an internet connection.
- **Unconventional meeting spaces which may include the hallway**:
Be Prepared

- For visits to be 5-45 minutes long (day of the week matters)
- To explain the difference between SNAP-Ed and EFNEP and how the programs complement each other through collaboration
- Consider what is happening on Capitol Hill that week such as high-profile votes
- Listen for their interest or for areas of interest – make the connection
- To connect to visits from others at your university
Why does SNAP-Ed matter?

- SNAP-Ed programs make healthy choices easier for Americans who are eligible for or participate in SNAP.
- SNAP-Ed is the educational component of SNAP which helps participants make healthier choices.
- SNAP-Ed is in all states and territories.
- SNAP-Ed documents behavior change impacts on an annual basis.
- SNAP-Ed can be delivered by a variety of implementing agencies with Land Grant Universities being one of them.
Sample infographic
# How to wrap up

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<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>State</strong></td>
<td>State that you are available for follow up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confirm</strong></td>
<td>Confirm your contact information and offer to serve as a resource for Extension or nutrition education issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Invite</strong></td>
<td>Invite staff to observe programming when they are in your home state. Example: Invite them to be a &quot;guest chef&quot; during a cooking class</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thank</strong></td>
<td>Thank them for their time, service and support.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Send</strong></td>
<td>Send a follow-up email thanking them for their time and attach an electronic copy of your infographic or other materials you left behind.</td>
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What to avoid

- Political party biases
- Personal biases about the functioning of the US Government, Congress or USDA
- Large amounts of literature and detailed research
- Getting caught up in opinion-based conversations about policy
- Wasted time or directionless conversations, time may be very short
Helpful Habits

- Remember you are the content expert.
- Try to visit the same staffer each year to build a relationship.
  - Get to know a bit of personal information about them, such as where they went to school, so you can connect with them easily next time.
- In years when you cannot visit offices, send infographics and success stories by email*
- Remind partners and professional groups of SNAP-Ed’s funding structure
- Follow members and staff on social media*
  - Tag them in your posts*
- Share what you learned and what was discussed at your meetings with colleagues back at your university
- Take a picture with the folks you meet with for posting on your LGU social media accounts.

*If allowed by your institution
Throughout the Year

- Visit in the local district office
- Host/attend local events & invite elected officials or staff
- Send communication flyers/fact sheets to office/email
- Send informal program updates via email
- Tag representative in programs social media
SNAP-Ed Resources

- SNAP-Ed Connection: https://snaped.fns.usda.gov/
  - Guidance
  - Evaluation Framework and Interpretive Guide
  - SNAP-Ed Toolkit
- ASNNA Advocacy Committee (National Association of SNAP-Ed Coordinators)
- SNAP-Ed Program Development Team
PDT Resources
(Will be sent to you in follow-up email)

- Infographic Teconomy
- Infographic EFNEP-SNAP-Ed Comparison
- Infographic of Legislative Process
Legislative Resources

- Find your Representative: [www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative)
- Find your Senator: [www.senate.gov/senators/index.htm](http://www.senate.gov/senators/index.htm)
- Senate Legislative Calendar: [www.senate.gov/legislative/2019_schedule.htm](http://www.senate.gov/legislative/2019_schedule.htm)
- House Legislative Calendar: [www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/Calendars+and+Schedules](http://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/Calendars+and+Schedules)
- Child Nutrition Authorization Information: [https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/IF10266.pdf](https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/IF10266.pdf)
What is one action you will do this year to educate your Congressional Delegation?

(Type your answer in the chat box.)
What questions do you have?
Thank you