



## Afterschool Program Primer on Working with your Local Health Department

### **What is SNAP-Ed and why connect with your local health department?**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly called food stamps and now named CalFresh in California) is federally funded to provide nutrition education through the California Department of Public Health’s (CDPH) Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch (NEOPB). SNAP targets low-income people. Due to changes found in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, NEOPB (formerly the Network for a Healthy California) shifted distribution of a large proportion of its funding to local health departments (LHDs). New funding allocations for LHDs are based on county poverty rates.

The three priority areas for this funding are to 1) increase access to and consumption of healthy foods, 2) decrease consumption of less healthy foods and beverages, and increase consumption of water, and 3) increase physical activity (PA) opportunities for residents throughout the day. Primary target populations are low-income children and parents (185 percent of federal poverty level). If 50 percent or more of a school’s population is participating in the free- and reduced-price lunch program, the school site is considered to have an eligible target population. In addition, LHDs need to address environmental supports through implementation of one or more nutrition and physical activity standards or environmental reinforcement for nutrition education.

LHDs are advised to not develop new curricula or materials, but rather to use existing NEOPB approved curricula and resources.

### **How does afterschool fit in?**

Although LHDs are not required to partner with schools/afterschool programs, schools and afterschool programs (including summer programs) can provide LHDs with access to their target populations and help meet their priorities. LHDs can partner with schools/afterschool programs in a variety of ways to: directly provide nutrition education and PA expertise, help schools strengthen their wellness policies, and assess school baseline health practice status and improvements over time. LHDs may also build on school/afterschool expertise to achieve common goals through partnerships, and/or subcontract with districts, county offices of education (COE), and afterschool programs to do health-related work.

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Schools and afterschool programs are equipped to support a variety of strategies that LHDs may use to address their priority areas, including community engagement, nutrition education, public relations events/media, Rethink Your Drink tasks, and youth engagement. LHDs are required to establish a County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP) with input from county stakeholders. The CNAP work offers an opportunity for afterschool programs to engage in planning and implementation of countywide efforts with a variety of other stakeholders. CNAP committees include all funded providers plus other organizations that are involved in this work.

### What can you do to become involved?

Whether or not you are already providing nutrition education, physical activity, and food security (addressing



hunger) services, or are interested in increasing your ability to address childhood obesity, there now are opportunities to connect with your LHD's efforts to address the obesity epidemic. Identifying tasks and priorities where you can collaborate together will help build your working relationship. You may want to compete for a contract, partner with your LHD, or operate as the recipient of LHD support.

We can't stress enough the importance of establishing an ongoing, positive relationship with your LHD. Established rapport provides a powerful foundation for accomplishing mutual goals.

### To get started and find out what's happening in your county:

1. You can join your CNAP Committee (required in all LHD-funded counties) to find out what's going on, build relationships, and discover any existing requests for applications (RFA). Once you join your CNAP, you are encouraged to:
  - a. Share what you are already doing and describe your resources.
  - b. Be prepared with your own success stories—including outcomes from your work.
  - c. Identify what current resources are available from your LHD and use them to improve your program.
  - d. Identify opportunities for taking action on projects together.
  - e. Identify what priorities you would pursue if you had additional resources or funding.

Participating in CNAP committees is a great way to begin long-lasting relationships not only with your LHD, but also with other members of the committee. These relationships can pay huge dividends for you and your program over time as you create ways to partner to achieve common goals.

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2. You can contact your LHD to learn what its plans are for working with schools/afterschool programs in your county. Your LHD can also give you the name of the person responsible for the CNAP in your county.
3. Your LHD could be doing partnership work and/or issuing an RFA for the school/afterschool program to perform some of the work under its SNAP-Ed grant. If you're already doing the indicated work, you should consider responding with your school district to the RFA. It is unlikely that LHDs will consider afterschool programs not connected to the school districts they serve due to the added burden that would be imposed upon its work. If you feel qualified to compete for a contract, let the LHD know that you want to receive any RFAs they release, and see if your district(s) want to partner with you.
4. Get involved with your school district's wellness policy committee as afterschool can make an important contribution! This step could position you to be part of a school-afterschool team that would prove valuable to the LHD. If you would like access to resources to support development of your local school wellness policy (LSWP), please visit the CA Local School Wellness Policy Collaborative at <https://www.healthyeating.org/Schools/School-Wellness/California-Collaborative>

### What's in it for you?

LHDs are encouraged to work with schools and afterschool/summer programs to reach children and parents with messages and practices to ultimately increase access to and consumption of healthy foods and beverages. Students and parents should also receive instruction on how to increase their participation in physical activity.



Working with your LHD to improve the health of your students can result in positive payoffs for your students, their families, and your staff. **The bottom line is that kids who are physically fit and eating well attend school (and afterschool) more regularly and perform better academically!** Children who are overweight or obese are at a huge risk for developing type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases in their lifetime. If current trends continue, half of children of color will develop type 2 diabetes or other chronic diseases in their lifetime! You can save lives by helping children and adolescents adopt healthy habits.

Whether you are already doing something positive in nutrition education, physical activity, and/or food security, or are interested in increasing your ability to address childhood obesity but are not yet actively doing something, your LHD can help you in the following ways:

1. Partner with you to develop and strengthen implementation of your school district's student wellness policy, and include your program in the process

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2. Help you partner with your school district's food services department to start serving Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meals or improve the quality of the snacks/meals the school district provides.
3. Provide support for increasing access to healthy food and beverages (including water) within your program. Specifically, they can:
  - a. Help with engaging farmers/growers in the farm-to-school program and providing Harvest of the Month produce items in cafeterias.
  - b. Develop a school gardening project including garden-based nutrition education.
  - c. Support implementation of healthy food procurement policies in vending machines, fundraiser activities, and school/afterschool events.
  - d. Provide support for healthy school/afterschool campaigns.
4. Help you achieve your obesity prevention and health goals in partnership with your district.
5. Help increase your school day's commitment to obesity prevention work. This could include providing support for aligning health promotion during the school day with the work that you are doing in afterschool.
6. Provide local information to help you understand the statistics and risk factors for the children and families in your community. The data are also excellent for including in grant writing.
7. Help conduct a healthy school/afterschool assessment summarized in a comprehensive report to evaluate your obesity prevention work.
8. Provide free nutrition education resources for improving your practices and potentially extending your reach to children and families with childhood obesity prevention strategies. These can include curricula, posters, recipes, materials and food supplies for nutrition education, and food tastings.
9. Help you improve the physical activity you offer.
10. Provide free training to improve your practices to successfully reach your children and families with childhood obesity prevention strategies.
11. Help you engage parents/families through back-to-school nights, open houses, health fairs, and Parent Teacher Association meetings to inform and provide training to parents regarding nutrition education/obesity prevention interventions and campaigns.
12. Use your expertise in a partnership model to expand the reach of the work that you are doing already (potential future funding through the LHD or other grants).



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13. Partner with you to seek funds for community-based interventions to expand your work.
14. Contract with you to use your expertise for reaching your targeted children and families, training school-day staff, or educating parents/guardians regarding health practices. LHDs can also provide funding to you for implementing parts of this work or helping other sites perform this work.

### What's in it for your local health department?

There are many reasons why an LHD would want to work with your program:

1. Afterschool programs serve the SNAP-Ed target population (50 percent free- and reduced-price lunch is a surrogate for 185 percent of the federal poverty rate, representing its target population).
2. Afterschool programs provide access to their target population of children and youth over time, increasing the likelihood of success for improving healthy eating and physical activity behaviors, and addressing childhood obesity.
3. Afterschool programs provide access to families over time. LHDs will not have to perform excessive work to reach families.
4. Afterschool programs can serve as a gateway to working with a school district and can ensure that the same messages and policies are in place throughout the whole day, increasing the impact of any school day interventions.
5. Afterschool programs have existing After School Education and Safety (ASES)/21st Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) funding that can be leveraged to address the SNAP-Ed objectives (cost-effective for the LHD).
6. Afterschool programs have an infrastructure to build on (staff, components, administrative support, and facilities) for supporting its work.
7. Afterschool programs have the flexibility to address nutrition education through enrichment, building on snack or meal time themes.
  - a. Note: Nutrition education can use existing curricula, supplemented with resources like Harvest of the Month, and incorporate hands-on work in healthy cooking classes and school gardens.
8. Afterschool programs can expand or strengthen the physical activity they already offer.



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9. Afterschool programs have the time for students to participate in projects that produce changes in their own behavior and possibly their families' behavior.
10. High quality afterschool programs have a strong youth development emphasis, which encourages student-led work that is more effective in promoting change. Students become an additional resource for effecting change in their peers, families, and community. Project-based learning can focus on changes that students want to see in their communities related to healthy eating, physical activity, and food security.
11. Afterschool programs can promote water consumption throughout program hours and can initiate projects to improve access to drinking water throughout the school day.
12. Afterschool programs often have partnerships with community organizations to increase access to healthy foods (food banks, for example) or to increase access to family benefits necessary for increasing access to healthy food (such as SNAP or WIC). Afterschool programs can encourage student participation in school breakfast and lunch programs.
13. Afterschool program staff often are low-income themselves. They may serve as role models of change for students based on positive behaviors they have incorporated into their own eating and physical activity practices.
14. Afterschool programs can often develop even stronger wellness policies than the school district, while complementing the district's policies.
15. Afterschool programs represent a suitable context for implementing obesity prevention work using the social-ecological model. Interventions that address the broadest level of the social-ecological model are called policy-systems-environmental changes. NEOP utilizes the social-ecological model because it is effective in producing behavior change. For more information on the social-ecological model, visit [https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/NEOPB/CDPH%20Document%20Library/LASS\\_A11\\_SNAPed12SEM.pdf#search=social%2Decological%20model](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/NEOPB/CDPH%20Document%20Library/LASS_A11_SNAPed12SEM.pdf#search=social%2Decological%20model) and <http://www.balancedweightmanagement.com/TheSocio-EcologicalModel.htm>  
This second resource provides a good description of the relationship between individual, interpersonal, organization, community, and policy elements which slightly differs from the socio-ecological model.



The Healthy Behaviors Initiative case studies illustrate the social-ecological model in afterschool programs. Go to [https://www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/documents/HBI\\_Mar2010CaseStudies.pdf](https://www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/documents/HBI_Mar2010CaseStudies.pdf). For additional information on the kind of obesity prevention work afterschool programs can do, read the Healthy Behaviors Guide: Changing Lives, Saving Lives, A Step-by-Step Guide to Developing Exemplary Practices in Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Food Security. This resource is full of illustrations and guidance. It can be

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downloaded from <http://www.ccscenter.org/afterschool/Step-By-Step%20Guide> or you can contact Ngoc Nguyen (see below) for a hard copy. This document is an approved NEOPB resource.

### Examples of Successful Partnerships:

- You may compete for a contract or partner with your LHD to become the recipient of LHD programmatic support, such as training or materials. Sacramento Students Today Achieving Results for Tomorrow (Sacramento START) secured \$100,000 a year for three years in LHD funding through a partnership with the Health Education Council. Fitness for Life and Mt. Diablo CARES received funding through direct grants (\$60,000 and \$88,000 respectively).



- LHDs will likely be eager to collaborate with you, as will rural healthcare districts, if your program is located in areas where these entities exist. Your LHD can make Harvest of the Month and other materials available. Your county department of social services can provide information on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

- Work with your LHD to train your staff on how to prevent and deal with asthma attacks, type 2 diabetes, and any other medical problems experienced by children and young people in your program.

- Link up with other providers in the local health community. Most health-related organizations already have a high level of community involvement and will potentially be open to collaborate to provide resources,

information, and support to the students in your program. To connect with your LHD SNAP-Ed program, start by contacting the local County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP) committee which brings many local partners together to address the LHD's SNAP-Ed goals. CNAPs will most likely want to work with you. Getting to know the players and building relationships are key steps in creating partnerships. Share your goals and what you offer.

- LHDs are excellent partners to furnish supplies for use with your community resource tables in your after school program. They may be able to provide you with pamphlets and information on local

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resources such as Farmers' Markets, health clinics, WIC offices, community food programs, local food banks, and summer resources, etc. Modesto City Schools partnered with its LHD to create family information tables at its sites.

- Partner with LHDs to do health presentations during your after school family nights and events. They may be able to help you with health classes for parents, cooking demonstrations, physical activity classes like Yoga or Zumba, or perhaps they can set up a health booth during your sports season when you invite your families to come watch their students play intramural sports.

### For more Information

You can go to CDPH's NEOPB web site and see the information provided to LHDs.

[https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/NEOPB/Pages/Nutrition\\_Education\\_Obesity\\_Prevention\\_Branch.aspx](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DCDIC/NEOPB/Pages/Nutrition_Education_Obesity_Prevention_Branch.aspx)

You can also contact Ngoc Nguyen at the Center for Collaborative Solutions ([NNguyen@ccscenter.org](mailto:NNguyen@ccscenter.org) or 916-567-9911) for additional background/information.

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