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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES: FOOD ACCESS AT YOUR LIBRARY

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SNAP-ED GOAL

“To improve the likelihood that persons eligible for SNAP will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the United States Department of Agriculture food guidance.”

- SNAP-Ed Plan Guidance FY2021
SOCIAL & CULTURAL NORMS & VALUES
- Belief systems
- Traditions
- Heritage
- Religion
- Priorities
- Lifestyle
- Body image

SECTORS
Systems
- Government
- Education
- Health Care
- Transportation
Organizations
- Public Health
- Community
- Advocacy
Businesses & Industries
- Planning & Development
- Agriculture
- Food & Beverage
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Entertainment
- Marketing
- Media

SETTINGS
- Homes
- Early Care & Education
- Schools
- Worksites
- Recreational Facilities
- Food Service & Retail Establishments
- Other Community Settings

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS
Demographics
- Age
- Sex
- Socioeconomic Status
- Race/Ethnicity
- Disability
Other Personal Factors
- Psychosocial
- Knowledge & Skills
- Gene-Environment Interactions
- Food Preferences

FOOD & BEVERAGE INTAKE
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
HEALTH OUTCOMES
THE SNAP-ED APPROACH

Direct Education  Nutrition Supports  Social Marketing
FEASIBILITY OF SNAP-ED/LIBRARY PARTNERSHIPS

Alignment with mission, purpose, and culture

Connections with SNAP-Ed eligible populations

Understanding barriers to healthy eating and active living

Opportunities for SNAP-Ed partnerships

Challenges for implementing SNAP-Ed programming

Themes identified in a study conducted with librarians in South Carolina (n=14). Draper C. Exploring the feasibility of partnership between public library libraries and the SNAP-Ed program. Public Library Quarterly. In press.
SNAP Education (SNAP-Ed)

SNAP-Ed teaches people to shop for and cook healthy meals. SNAP-Ed can help people learn how to make their SNAP dollars stretch.
State SNAP-Ed Programs

South Carolina State SNAP-Ed Program

In this state, SNAP-Ed is called
SNAP-Ed

Success Stories

SC Plants the Seed
Increasing Access to Fresh Produce within the SC SNAP-Ed Program through the FoodShare SC Model
SNAP-Ed Partners with Libraries to Bring Local Produce into Underserved Communities

SNAP-ED LIBRARY RECRUITMENT STRATEGIES

Recruitment flyer is shared to various libraries throughout the state via the State Library

Existing library partners expand nutrition strategies to a different branch within their library system

Community members and organizations assist with providing connections

INCREASING ACCESS to HEALTHY FOODS via PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The University of South Carolina (USC) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) team is recruiting public libraries to work with on implementing nutrition supports to increase access to healthy eating among customers/patrons.

Selected libraries will receive ongoing technical assistance on selecting, implementing, evaluating, and sustaining nutrition support strategies.

What do nutrition supports look like in libraries?

- Host a farmers’ market that accepts SNAP as a form of payment
- Create a produce garden
- Improve transportation options for customers/patrons to and from the library
- Designate a comfortable, safe space for breastfeeding

...and MORE!

If you are interested in implementing nutrition supports at your library, please complete this brief interest form:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SEMY99

For questions, please contact:
Ashley Page, MSW
pagea@mailbox.sc.edu

SNAP-Ed is a program created to support SNAP’s role in improving nutrition and preventing or reducing diet-related chronic disease and obesity among low-income populations. This project is funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
LIBRARY NUTRITION SUPPORT PROCESS

- Library completes interest survey
- Virtual or in-person readiness assessment is completed
- Library selects nutrition strategy
- Provide technical assistance during implementation phase
- Sustainability plan is completed after the nutrition strategy is implemented
- Continued ongoing technical support
Richland Library SC Farmers Market Model

Image courtesy Richland Library
How did it happen?

The University of South Carolina’s Arnold School of Public Health saw the potential of public libraries to play a role in improving access to healthy foods, especially among low-income community members.

The program started working with libraries in 2017. The Richland Library Main, located in the capital city, is in a low food access tract and in a school district where all children are eligible to receive free meals due to high poverty levels. The easy accessibility of the library made it the perfect place to start a weekly farmers market.

Image courtesy Richland Library
Richland Library SC Farmers Market/ Food Access Challenges in Columbia SC

Summary of Food Access Challenges

- Food available at nearby grocery stores is often of poor quality (where the same grocery chain in an affluent neighborhood offers better quality produce)
- No grocery stores nor healthy food options available locally
- Healthy food options are not affordable
- Lack of locally owned or operated community-based food retail outlets, and a lack of public investment/political will to cultivate and sustain these options
- Insufficient transportation options to markets, including difficulty using existing transit services
- Limited or inadequate nutrition education opportunities

A report from the Food Equity Subcommittee of the City of Columbia Food Policy Committee (December 2019) found:

- 21.3% of residents in the City of Columbia are Below the Poverty Level
- 65,430 Richland County Residents of All Ages are Food Insecure
- 14,560 Children in Richland County are Food Insecure
- 16.3% of Households in the City of Columbia receive SNAP Benefits

Red areas signify a “food desert”
Food desert map supplied by SC DHEC
Richland Library SC Farmers Market/Mission and Goals

Richland Library’s core mission is to connect people with resources, services and programs that will enhance their lives.

As part of its strategic focus area on “Advancing Our Community,” Richland Library is interested in hosting farmers markets that provide access to fresh, healthy foods. This programmatic effort connects to the Library’s mission in the following ways:

- Customers have access to fresh foods, as well as learning opportunities related to health literacy and nutrition.
- Community cohesion is strengthened through connecting vendors who supply fresh local foods with their neighbors who are in need of healthy food options.
- Customers in need are able to make market purchases using their SNAP benefits, which contributes to the Library’s goal of eliminating barriers for customers struggling to meet their basic needs.
At inception, the library planned to pilot the market for 2 months and then take a break before opening back up a few months later. However, due to high customer demand, and vendor satisfaction, the library decided to keep the market going year-round without a break.
We began our pilot farmers market at our Main location on Assembly Street in Columbia, SC.

Benefits to this location:
• Central area of the city
• Near public transportation lines
• Indoor space for set-up thus we could operate rain or shine (or humidity and heat!)
• Social Work office located in our Main location

Schedule:
• Weekly
• Wednesdays
• 10am-1pm
• April through November
Social workers employed by the library, and interns from the Master in Social Work program at the University of South Carolina, have been present during market hours to help SNAP-eligible customers sign up for SNAP.

Payment methods include food stamps, SNAP and WIC benefits.

Our goal is that all our vendors accept SNAP and Ashley Page has been instrumental in guiding them through the process of obtaining a permit to become SNAP retailers.
In March 2018, an additional library branch, Sandhills, decided to open a farmers market based on the success at the Richland Library Main location.

Located inside of Richland SD 2’s R2i2 building, it offered an additional indoor location, and also had the benefit by a ready-made customer base – school district staff.

In May of 2019, we launched a monthly Farmers Market at our North Main location.

The interior courtyard at North Main provides a lovely, grassy setting and the afternoon into evening hours (3-6pm) gave opportunities to customers to shop after school and work.
Experience taught us that a clear, detailed vendor contract is crucial. Many of the guidelines we included removed library personnel from time-consuming tasks - a necessity when you have limited staff.

USC SNAP-Ed will enter into an agreement with participating vendors that outlines the following:

1. Market Dates, Times and Locations
   - Vendors must agree to be reliable and dependable in their participation.
   - Vendors must notify Richland Library staff as far in advance as possible if a conflict arises.
   - Vendors must agree to stay for the entire agreed-upon duration of the market.
   - Richland Library will notify vendors as far in advance as possible of library closings or other market conflicts.

2. Market Guidelines
   - Vendors must agree to hold any required licenses or permits.
   - Vendors will sell primarily fresh, healthy foods – with an emphasis on locally-grown foods when possible.
   - Vendors will not sell primarily non-food items.
   - Vendors will accept SNAP and/or other benefits.

3. Facilities and Clean-Up
   - Vendors will bring their own tables and equipment.
   - Vendors will park in designated spaces as assigned by Richland Library staff.
   - Vendors will be respectful of not blocking customer entrances/ exits when moving their equipment and goods in and out of the Library.
   - Vendors are responsible for properly bagging and disposing of any trash they may generate at the market.
   - At the conclusion of each market, vendors are responsible for returning their space to its neat, clean and orderly pre-market condition.
   - Vendors assume responsibility for any damage to Library facilities and equipment arising from their misuse or negligence.

   - The vendor is entering into an agreement directly with USC SNAP-Ed.
   - The period of the agreement should be for six months from the signing, renewable for additional six month periods.
   - Either party may agree to end the agreement at any time by giving notice to the other.
   - Richland Library may direct USC SNAP-Ed to end their agreement with vendors who are not dependable or who do not follow the guidelines outlined above.
   - Subject to applicable law, each party is responsible for liability arising from its own conduct and retains all immunities and defenses available pursuant to law. No party agrees to insure, defend or indemnify the others.

Richland Library enlisted the expert assistance of Ashley Page and USC SNAP-Ed to recruit, vet, and approve vendors for our markets with Richland Library serving as the primary ongoing contact for vendors.
Our marketing department brings awareness of our farmers markets through ongoing social media promotion, blog posts, and a weekly event announcement on our website.
EZE Farms is a sustainable urban farm started in 2016 by Ezekiel Ministries in Columbia, SC. EZE Farms exists to mentor urban youth in faith, farming and entrepreneurship.

EZE Farms creates apprenticeship opportunities for middle and high school boys. Through the apprenticeship, these young men learn the principles of sustainable farming and small business management, thus helping to #breakthecycle of generational poverty.
Jason and Ami Roland describe their farm, Organically Roland, as a small growing operation that focuses on organic, biodynamic and sustainable growing methods for fruits and vegetables in Lexington County, South Carolina.

Jason and Ami provide a diverse selection of fruits and vegetables to us throughout our market season, including blueberries and tomatoes in summer, and sweet potatoes and collards in fall.

They have begun sharing their entrepreneurial knowledge with others in agriculture, especially since reimagining their business model because of Covid 19 and its effects upon both retail markets and the restaurant industry.
Josh Fabel of Fabel Farms came to farming late in life, and as a hobby in addition to his career in the Richland County Sheriff’s office, he was recently the recipient of a $10,000 Feeding Innovation award.

Feeding Innovation participants engage in a ten week entrepreneurial training program featuring Clemson Agribusiness curriculum. The courses cover everything needed to develop a basic healthy food business plan from marketing to financial planning to negotiations and deal-making. Participants refine their ideas and develop their business plans over the ten week period before presenting them to a panel of judges during a final pitch event. The three entrepreneurs with the strongest business plans are awarded $5,000, $10,000, and $30,000 in seed capital.
Local Author Showcase
We feature a weekly local author showcase, where a Columbia-area author may greet customers to talk about their works and sell and autograph their books.

We welcome occasional guests as vendors, such as the Richland County Master Gardener Association, who sold spring flower bulbs at the market.

RL’s weekly entrepreneur/business gathering, One Million Cups, coincides with our Main market hours, and speakers at that meeting sometimes showcase their wares at the market. Most recently, we hosted City Roots, a local urban organic farm.
Prior to our Covid 19 closure in March 2020, we had offered a free “take one, return one” seed library, housed in an old card catalog.

In order to offer the same resource to our customers while we are closed to walk-in traffic, we have added various “seed bundles” to our Library of Things which customers can request online and pick up curbside.

Images courtesy Richland Library

https://www.richlandlibrary.com/seed-library
The newly-redesigned Richland Library St. Andrews, which opened in November 2017, features enhancements outdoors. There are several garden beds that will enable our staff to offer programming about planting, vegetation and nutrition to children, teens and adults.
Following renovations and reconstruction, our Northeast location, which reopened in October 2018, includes a Teaching Kitchen.

Being part of the International Corridor, our Northeast location offers an environment where customers can learn about different cooking techniques, regional and international cuisine, and nutrition.
Richland Library also received funding from an IMLS Planning Grant to launch a project called – Fresh Food, Fresh Thinking.

Over the last couple of years, we have worked with Lower Richland High School students to design a Farmers Market/Library in an effort to expand access to library resources and prove a solution to challenges common to rural communities.

Images courtesy Richland Library
Richland Library SC Farmers Market/Future

Although our March 2020 Covid 19 closure cancelled our entire 2020 market season, we have plans to come back strong.

- We have a tentative opening date of April 21, 2021 at our Main location
- In response to customer feedback, we have plans to add more vendors and a larger variety of products
- By early summer 2021, we will expand to two additional RL locations, Edgewood and Wheatley, for a total of four
Thank you!

Leighan Cazier
Experience Support Specialist
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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES: FOOD ACCESS AT YOUR LIBRARY

Rebecca Antill, Youth Services Consultant
Just a little background...

• There are 43 county and regional public library systems in SC
• Population estimate 5.1 million (2019)
• 12% of our population is considered “food insecure”
Anderson County Library System established a courtyard garden
STEM Kits

Sprout Houses

1. Wet each sponge then wring it out. The sponges should be damp, but not dripping.
2. Use one sponge as a base. Cut the other sponge to make your house as you desire.
3. Use the toothpicks for architectural support as needed.
4. Snip off any toothpick ends.
5. Push grass seeds into the tiny holes.
6. If you are having trouble, use the scissors to make small x shapes into the sponge and push the seeds in.
7. When you're finished planting, put your sprout house in a warm, sunny spot. Spray it daily to keep it moist, covering it loosely with a plastic bag, plastic wrap, or a plastic container if it dries out too quickly. Depending on how warm it is, you should begin to see seeds sprouting in anywhere from 3-10 days.
Calhoun County Unveils Children's Educational Garden

Charles Ringwalt, WLTX  11:44 p.m. EDT July 26, 2015

*Calhoun County Library unveiled their new educational children’s garden.*

Calhoun County, SC (WLTX) - There’s a new garden in Calhoun County and those who built it are hoping to spread an important message.

The Calhoun County Library and other members of the community unveiled their educational children’s garden Sunday.

"It was amazing. All of these things fell into place very quickly," said Kristen Simensen, the director of the library and leader of the project

"When you’re an agricultural community pollinators are responsible for a whole lot more. They’re honestly responsible for everything we eat, so every consumer should be concerned about pollinators” she said.
Other libraries statewide:

- Lexington County has gardens at three of their branch libraries.
- Charleston County is installing raised beds at their newest branch, which will include a pollinator garden.
- Multiple library systems serve as pickup points for produce boxes.
- Seed libraries.
State Library Support

• Grant opportunities each year for public library projects
• SC Read Eat Grow
• SC Plants the Seed
• Partnerships, partnerships, partnerships!
THANK YOU!

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