

Eat Smart New York Environmental Approaches 7/2012

The purpose of employing environmental approaches is to make healthful food and physical activity choices easier for community members, consequently supporting direct education efforts. Environmental approaches may include changes in policies that impact availability of food and physical activity, direct interventions at the community level that bring more healthful food and physical activity opportunities to members of the community, and/or education of key stakeholders, including staff in partner agencies, to increase their awareness of the need for environmental change and provide them with skills and materials to undertake environmental change efforts themselves. Below are examples of environmental activities that may be undertaken as a part of CCE-ESNY. Other activities could also be considered as this is not an exhaustive list.

Policy change

1. Work with committees or coalitions promoting healthy eating and active lifestyles that will have an impact on behavior change for low-income residents eligible for SNAP.
2. Work with community-based coalitions to develop policies related to the certification of 'healthy' businesses and restaurants. Businesses and restaurants will then have certificates to be displayed for marketing.
3. Work with community members, customers, and store owners to increase the availability of healthful food choices in grocery stores serving the SNAP population.
4. Work with school nurses, school wellness committees, and/or parent teacher organizations of low-income school(s) (50% or more of children are in receipt of USDA free or reduced priced meals) to establish and/or reinforce school nutrition and obesity prevention policies focusing on healthy eating and active lifestyles.
5. Work with low-income day care center administration to influence policies for healthy eating and active lifestyles for staff and children.
6. Partner with YMCA's and community action agencies or other low-income recreational facilities in low-income communities to develop healthy eating and active lifestyle policies.

Community-based environmental change projects

7. Establish a school/community garden that will provide fresh vegetables and herbs through the summer months. Coordinate with parent teacher organizations to organize a volunteer schedule for maintaining the garden through the summer months.
8. Coordinate community organizations to provide gardens plots for use by low-income families.
9. Coordinate with community-based coalitions to bring healthier foods to emergency feeding sites. Provide nutrition education training to staff and volunteers of emergency feeding sites.

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10. Work with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to bring more farmers markets or “veggie mobiles” to low-income communities.

Education of key stakeholders/agency partners

11. Provide education to school staff including administration, food service, and teachers about environmental changes in low-income schools
12. Offer materials, guidelines and policy recommendations to staff in low-income schools and other agencies that serve ESNY clientele and/or where the majority of staff are low-income to facilitate changes in the worksite.
13. Provide technical assistance to Head Start, low-income day care or YMCA administrative and dietary staff to assess the environment using NAP SACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity Self Assessment for Child Care) or CHASE (Cornell Healthy After-School Environmental Self-Assessment Tool), to identify opportunities for improving the food environment for children.