

# Statewide Needs Assessment FY 2013 Request for Partners

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This needs assessment is prepared with the assumption that information in reports and databases is accurate, i.e. respondents answered to the best of their knowledge and database development and analyses were free of recording errors.

### 1. Existing Information:

To assess nutrition education needs of Pennsylvanians receiving or eligible to receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), data were compiled from several sources to assess demographics and health-related behaviors of this population. In Pennsylvania (PA), SNAP is administered by the PA Department of Public Welfare (DPW). The Pennsylvania State University (PSU) is contracted by DPW to manage and implement the approved SNAP-Ed plan, which is known as Pennsylvania Nutrition Education Tracks (TRACKS). DPW provided the most current information on selected characteristics of PA SNAP recipients. See *References* at the end of this document for sources of SNAP participant nutrition education needs.

### 2. New Information:

- *About Eating*, a web-based curriculum, consists of 5 lessons completed in participant-driven order and speed. Curriculum outcomes were assessed with the Satter Eating Competence Inventory (ecSI) modified for low-income populations (ecSI/LI). Previous work concluded there is a need to implement nutrition education to enhance Eating Competence in PA SNAP participants<sup>1</sup>. *About Eating* testing is completed and findings are being analyzed. This curriculum is now available for statewide use.
- National Healthy People 2020 fruit and vegetable objectives are to increase the percentage of Americans consuming  $\geq 2$  servings of fruit to 75% and  $\geq 3$  servings of vegetables to 50%<sup>2</sup>. A behavior monitoring survey was administered to a sample of students participating in PA SNAP-Ed, only 18.5% reported vegetable intake 3 or more times per day in the past 7 days<sup>3</sup>. This finding emphasized vegetable intake as a nutrition education need. The TRACKS 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Vegetable Core was implemented as a statewide intervention for the first time in the fall of FY 2009. A two-year impact study showed significant positive impact on vegetable related knowledge, preference, attitude and self-efficacy<sup>4</sup>.
- In FY 2011, 38 of PA's 67 counties received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education (SNAP-Ed). Twenty-two of the thirty-eight SNAP-Ed counties were ranked below the median for health outcomes and 16 SNAP-Ed counties ranked below the median for health factors. Philadelphia County was ranked lowest for both health outcomes and health factors indicating a great need for nutrition-related interventions in this county<sup>5</sup>.

## NEEDS ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

### 1. Demographic Characteristics of SNAP Eligibles in PA.

- Geographically, PA is largely rural with significant urban populations concentrated in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Harrisburg.

## Statewide Needs Assessment FY 2013 Request for Partners

- According to the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2010 Current Population Survey results, 12.2% (up from 11.1% in 2009) of Pennsylvanians are living below poverty, and approximately 15.8% (14.5%) are living below 125% of poverty. In addition, 43.6% (32%) of Pennsylvanians living in families with a female householder with children and with no husband present are living below poverty, and 49.5% (41.3%) are living below 125% of poverty<sup>6</sup>. (2009 data in parenthesis).
- The poverty level is dramatically different between races. For 2009, the rates are 9.3%, white alone; 28.4%, black alone; and 29.3% for Hispanic/Latino<sup>7</sup>. (See Figures 1 & 2)

Figure 1

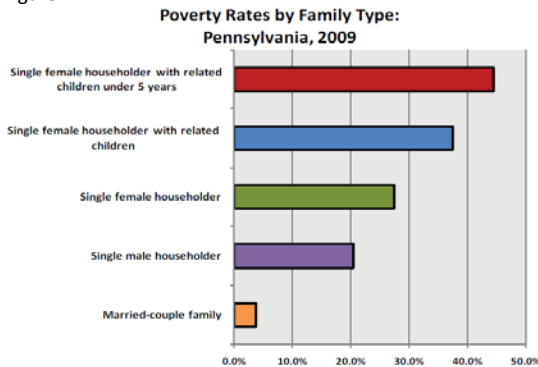
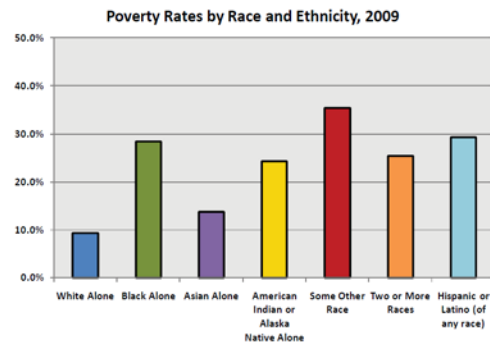
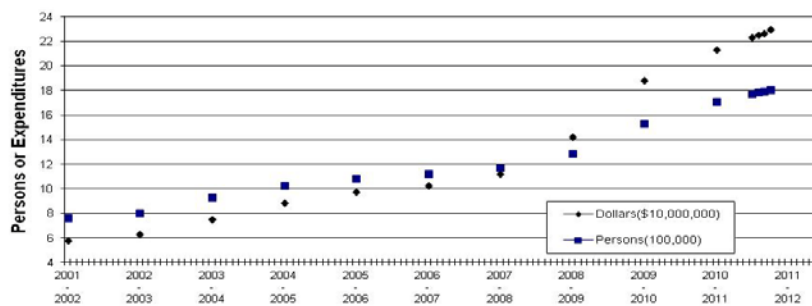


Figure 2



- 2010 data from the U.S. Census Bureau show that in the Philadelphia area 27% of all families with children under 5 and 47.9% of families headed by a female with children under the age of five live in poverty<sup>8</sup>.
- Since 2000-2001 the total number of SNAP eligible persons in PA increased by over 100% and by over 7% between October 2010 (1,685,043) and October 2011 (1,804,873)<sup>9</sup>. (See Figure 3)

Figure 3 Increasing number of persons and Expenditures in PA participating in SNAP



Source: DPW: MA, Food Stamps and Cash Stats Archives, October 2011

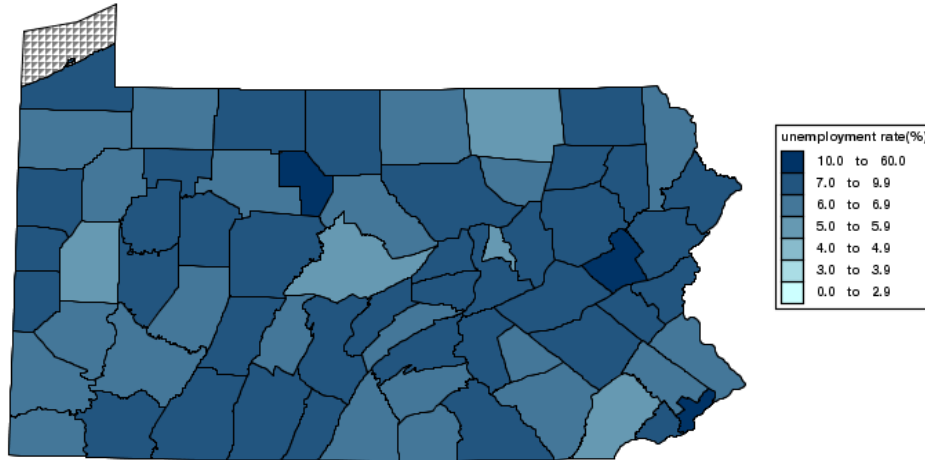
- Pennsylvania’s October 2011 overall SNAP eligible rate is currently 14.3%, up from 13.4% in October 2010<sup>9</sup>.
- Philadelphia and Fayette counties have the highest number of SNAP eligibles at 29.8% and 22.4% respectively as of October 2011. These numbers are up from 28.1% and 21.9% in October 2010<sup>9</sup>.
- In the recent economic downturn, Pennsylvania’s overall unemployment rate has risen from 5.6% in September of 2008 and 7.8% in March 2011 to 8.3% in September 2011.

## Statewide Needs Assessment FY 2013 Request for Partners

The highest rates of unemployment are noted in rural counties such as Cameron (10.3%), Pike (9.2%), and Carbon (10.1%). Philadelphia County's unemployment rate of 10.9% is also higher than the overall unemployment rate for Pennsylvania<sup>10</sup>. (See Figure 4.)

**Figure 4**

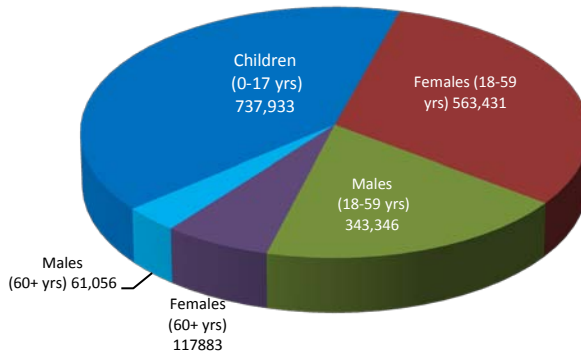
Unemployment rates by county, not seasonally adjusted, Pennsylvania September 2011



Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, County Data

- As shown in Figure 5, children represent 40%, the largest proportion, of PA SNAP participants followed by females ages 18-59 (31%) and males ages 18-59 (19%). Twenty-seven percent of SNAP participants in PA are children ages 5-17 and 13% are children ages 0-4. Two-thirds (494,163) of all children participating in SNAP are school-age children<sup>11</sup>.
- *Adult/Senior Track* - Adults 18 to 59 years account for the largest portion (50%) of SNAP participants in PA<sup>11</sup>. Seniors (60+ years) represented 9.8% of all PA SNAP participants during December 2011<sup>11</sup>, and 1.6% of SNAP-Ed participants are seniors<sup>12</sup>.
- *School-Age and Preschool Tracks* - School-age children represent the majority (90.2%) of SNAP-Ed direct education participants for FY 2011<sup>12</sup>. Beginning FY 2011, TRACKS required the inclusion of a caregiver component for School-Age Track and Preschool Track programming to reach the largest segment (50%) of PA SNAP participants, individuals ages 18-59. Indirect education strategies, such as newsletters, handouts, fact sheets, and food tastings are used primarily to reach

Figure 5. Total Number of PA SNAP Recipients, By Gender & Age, Dec. 2011



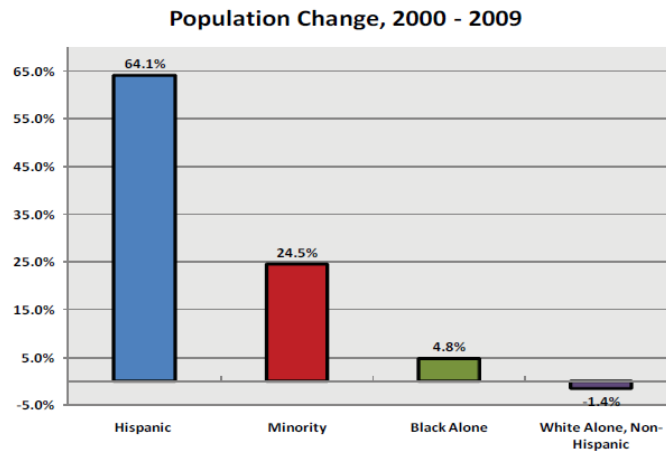
Source: DPW Enterprise Data Warehouse, December 2011.

## Statewide Needs Assessment FY 2013 Request for Partners

caregivers.

- In PA, 18.4% of households who participated in SNAP during FY 2010 included an elderly individual, and 29.5% of SNAP participating households included a nonelderly, disabled individual<sup>13</sup>.
- The majority of Adult/Senior Track SNAP-Ed direct education participants are non-Hispanic White (50%) followed by non-Hispanic Black/African American (38%) and Hispanic White (6.3%)<sup>12</sup>.
- Low-income (LI) households headed by non-Hispanic black adults have a high prevalence (16%) of low food security<sup>14</sup>, therefore increasing Black/African American participation in PA SNAP-Ed is necessary.
- PA's population is becoming older and more diverse each year. It is ranked 4<sup>th</sup> in the nation for people 65 years and older. The senior population (85 and over) has grown rapidly from .5 percent of the population to 2.5% in 2011. Seventy percent of those over 85 years are women. Population of minority groups has increased more quickly than overall population. Between 2000 and 2009, the Hispanic population has grown 64.1%<sup>7</sup>. See Figure 6.

Figure 6



Source: State of the Commonwealth 2011, Pennsylvania State University Data Center

- TRACKS serves a large, urban population; Non-Hispanic Black/African American preschoolers and caregivers represent the largest portion (61%) of all Preschool Track participants, followed by Hispanic White (17.5%) participants. Non-Hispanic Black/African American represent the largest segment of (47%) of School-Age Track participants, followed by non-Hispanic White (29%) and Hispanic White (18%)<sup>12</sup>.
- Spanish-speaking SNAP participants in PA are growing in number. Spanish was reported as a preferred language by 34,327 of SNAP households in April 2011<sup>11</sup>. In comparison, in August 2007 only 26,460 SNAP participants reported Spanish as a first language, an increase of 30%<sup>11</sup>.
- County-specific data from April 2011 indicate that the Spanish-speaking SNAP population is disproportionately high in specific counties and that the number of Spanish-speaking SNAP participants continues to grow within these counties. Nearly ¾ of PA Spanish speaking SNAP participants are located within 4 counties, Philadelphia

## Statewide Needs Assessment FY 2013 Request for Partners

with 41.6%, Berks (14.8%), Lehigh (8.2%) and Lancaster (7%). These data suggest a continued need for nutrition education materials available in Spanish <sup>11</sup>.

- 39.4% of children in Pennsylvania schools receive free or reduced priced lunches. Philadelphia County and schools in the Pittsburgh area have the highest participation rate at 77% and 71% respectively followed by Fayette County at 56.4%. Participation in Potter, Venango, Clinton, Erie and Forest Counties is about 50% <sup>15</sup>.

### 2. Nutrition-Related Behavioral and Lifestyle Characteristics of SNAP Eligibles in PA

- Dietary Patterns (DPs) of PA SNAP eligibles reveal inadequate intake when compared to USDA Food Guidance.
- Healthy People 2010 is a set of health promotion objectives for the nation. Two of the goals are for 75% of the population to consume at least 2 servings of fruit daily and 50% to consume at least 3 daily servings of vegetables. In Pennsylvania, 2009 results (most updated data) indicate that only 35% of adults over 18 years of age meet the goal for fruit intake and 24% meet the goal for vegetable intake <sup>16</sup>. The Healthy People 2020 goal for fruit consumption is 0.9 cup equivalents per 1000 calories and 1.1 cup equivalent per 1000 calories for vegetable consumption <sup>2</sup>.
- A separate study with adult female residents in three LI housing sites in Harrisburg, PA (n=91) found low fruit and vegetable intake, high fat intake, and low fiber intake using Gladys Block fruit/vegetable, fat, and fiber screeners <sup>17</sup>.
- The results of a related study conducted in rural Lewistown, PA (n=58) found lower than recommended fruit, vegetable, and fiber intake. Almost a third (29.1%) of study participants were overweight and almost 42% of participants were obese. These study participants reported an obesity rate well above the national average of 32.9% <sup>18</sup>.
- Fruit and vegetable consumption data from the National Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) and TRACKS statewide student monitoring data show:
  - Nationally in 2009 (most updated data), 22.3% of high school students reported eating fruits and vegetables 5 or more times per day in the past week (20.5% of females and 23.9% of males) <sup>19</sup>.
  - Statewide (2011 data), 26.7% of 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported eating fruits and vegetables 5 or more times per day in the past 7 days <sup>3</sup> up from 21.7 in 2010.
  - Philadelphia specific data reveal that in 2009 17.7% of high school students reported eating fruits and vegetables 5 or more times per day in the last week <sup>19</sup>.
- Milk consumption data from the National Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) and TRACKS Statewide monitoring data show:
  - Nationally in 2009, only 14.5% of high school students reported drinking 3 or more glasses of milk per day in the past week which is a decrease from 16% in 2005. The male/female breakdown is 19.8% and 8.7% respectively <sup>19</sup>.
  - Statewide in 2011, 30.7% of 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported consuming 3 or more cup equivalents of dairy per day in the past seven days <sup>3</sup>.
  - Philadelphia specific data reveal only 7.4% of high school students reported drinking 3 or more glasses of milk in the past week. These 2009 data show a decrease in consumption of milk from 9.7% in 2003 <sup>19</sup>.

## Statewide Needs Assessment FY 2013 Request for Partners

- A sample of Adult/Senior Track participants completed a Calcium post/retrospective-pre survey. Prior to SNAP-Ed, 9.4% of respondents report consuming  $\geq 3$  cups of dairy products each day. After SNAP-Ed, the number increased to 15%<sup>3</sup>.
- Reported barriers to healthy eating behaviors relevant to the urban setting were explored with a LI audience in Harrisburg, PA. Barriers identified included distance to a grocery store, transportation issues, higher produce costs as compared to less expensive snack foods, and influence of children on food purchasing decisions<sup>17</sup>.
- In Southeastern PA (SEPA), the Philadelphia area, 40% of all adults eat fast food at least once a week vs. 48% of those living in poverty<sup>20</sup>.
- Almost half of SEPA adults do not consume recommended amounts of fruits/vegetables each day. Some groups are overly represented in this data such as men (56.9%) more so than women (41.5%), Black (62.4%) and Latino (62.2%) more than Asian (51.9%) or White (43.9%) adults and those living below the Federal Poverty Line (66.5%) compared with those above (46.4%)<sup>20</sup>.
- 28.4% of SEPA adults travel out of their neighborhoods to purchase food<sup>20</sup>.
- 11.2% of SEPA adults have had to alter or skip a meal due to lack of money for food<sup>20</sup>.
- An assessment of community/consumer nutrition environment was recently researched in two LI neighborhoods in Philadelphia, West Parkside and East Parkside. Since there are only 3 grocery stores and 16 convenience stores within close proximity, available, affordable healthy food options are difficult to obtain<sup>21</sup>.
- In 2010, the state secretary of health reported that one-third of PA's students were overweight or obese and 43 of 67 counties had even higher rates<sup>22</sup>.
- According to a 2011 report, Pennsylvania is the 19<sup>th</sup> most obese state, 28.5% of adults in PA are obese (BMI>30). The combined obesity/overweight (BMI>25) rate is 64.7%, up from 52.9% 15 years ago and 57.5% 10 years ago<sup>23</sup>.
- PA Department of Health statistics indicate males had a significantly higher percentage of overweight (42%) compared to females (30%). Non-Hispanic black adults presented with a significantly higher percentage of obesity (40%) compared to Non-Hispanic white adults (27%)<sup>24</sup>.
- The Pennsylvania data from Healthy People 2010 shows the percent of adults that engage in no leisure-time physical activity has not changed significantly over the last 5 years. The goal for 2010 is 20% and the 2009 results are 25.1% for all adults. The group that has the least amount of leisure-time physical activity consists of adults over 25 years of age with less than a 9<sup>th</sup> grade education<sup>16</sup>. At this time, Pennsylvania goals for Healthy People 2020 have not been set.
- National YRBSS data from 2009 show that only 27.7% of female and 45.6% of male high school students met recommended levels of physical activity defined as 60 minutes daily during 5 or more of the past 7 days. Philadelphia specific YRBSS surveys from 2009 revealed lower percentages of high school students actually meeting recommended levels of physical activity<sup>19</sup>.
- FY11 TRACKS data showed that 47.7% of students (8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades) reported 60 minutes of physical activity on 5 or more days in the past 7 days after participating in SNAP-Ed<sup>3</sup>.
- Accessibility of web-based nutrition education for the target audience is supported by cognitive interview findings from a TRACKS formative evaluation project that found 80%

## Statewide Needs Assessment FY 2013 Request for Partners

of LI persons interviewed had access to the internet at home or another location <sup>25</sup>. FY11 TRACKS data shows that 88% of respondents (grades 8-12) connect to the internet from home, 78.7% use a cell phone when connecting and 50.8% of those students conveyed they would use an app to increase their knowledge of nutrition and health<sup>3</sup>. A Philadelphia Coalition recently received an \$11.8 million stimulus grant. Public housing residents and formerly homeless youths will benefit from the distribution of over 5,000 computers along with hands-on training <sup>26</sup>. A recent study suggests that access and educational programming could increase the use of the internet in the low-income population <sup>27</sup>.

### 3. Other Nutrition-Related Programs Serving LI Persons in PA

Numerous programs that deliver nutrition education to LI audiences operate within PA. These range from federally or state funded programs to those operated by local non-profit agencies or charitable organizations.

- The PA Department of Health administers the WIC program in all PA counties.
- The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) conducts nutrition education programming to LI adults who have children and are responsible for planning and preparing family meals. EFNEP is not funded statewide; however, this program is available in 50 of the 67 PA counties.
- The PA Department of Education (PDE) coordinates Team Nutrition Initiatives, providing school foodservice departments with materials and resources to improve meal preparation, increase understanding of the nutritional needs of children, and promote healthy school food environments by emphasizing the nutritional value of school meals. Additionally, PDE implements national school meal programs in PA.
- Head Start, a preschool program with a nutrition component, serves LI children throughout the state.
- The PA Department of Aging administers congregate meals at senior centers and home-delivered meals to homebound persons.
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the State Food Purchase Program are administered by the PA Department of Agriculture, providing regional food banks with commodities and fresh foods to supply the local non-profit food pantries serving the LI population across the state.

### 4. Areas of PA Where SNAP Eligibles Are Underserved Or Have Not Had Access to SNAP-Ed Previously

- **Adults** in general are an underserved population. Currently adults (including caregivers) account for only 4.2% of PA's SNAP-Ed participants <sup>12</sup>.
- **Preschool-age children** are an underserved SNAP-Ed population. Only 8,717 preschoolers (<5 years) were served by TRACKS in FY 2010; however, during FY 2011, 12,245 students participated; a 42% increase in just one year. Preschoolers account for only 5.7% of SNAP-Ed participants <sup>12</sup>. These data indicate efforts that have been implemented to reach this audience are working. However, the need to continue

## Statewide Needs Assessment FY 2013 Request for Partners

expansion of preschool-age SNAP-Ed programming in Pennsylvania remains, especially in rural counties. Less than 10% of PA SNAP-Ed preschool participants are located in rural areas. The majority of programming, (90%), is provided by one partner's programming in the urban counties of Philadelphia and Montgomery<sup>12</sup>.

- **Rural PA counties** are historically underserved by SNAP-Ed because of difficulty in identifying viable cost share sources of the magnitude needed to administer and deliver SNAP-Ed programming. For FY 2011, 38 Pennsylvania counties were served in some capacity by TRACKS: through Local Partner SNAP-Ed programming, or PA NEN food pantry and CAO programming<sup>12</sup>.

### 5. Implications of Your Needs Assessment and How These Findings Were Applied to This Current Year's SNAP-Ed Plan

Based on underserved needs of adults/seniors, males, and preschoolers, statewide goals have been developed to better direct programming efforts to these groups.

- Based on needs assessment conducted during FY 2011, venues and education materials relevant to male SNAP eligibles will be explored.
- *About Eating* modules, designed for low-income adults, are available for statewide use.
- Continued efforts will be made to increase expansion of programming to preschoolers especially those in rural areas. Development and testing of TRAILS for Tots, a curriculum for preschoolers and their caregivers, is on-going.
- Continue to emphasize the importance of nutrition and physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle for primary prevention of obesity and illnesses.
- Given the increased availability of internet access and technology, education materials and methods using technology will be explored.

## Statewide Needs Assessment FY 2013 Request for Partners

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## Statewide Needs Assessment FY 2013 Request for Partners

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**Statewide Needs Assessment  
FY 2013 Request for Partners**

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