

Rhode Island SNAP-Ed Impact Report

2025



Esquites of Mexico
inspired by our
Community Recipe
Project

📍 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education
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THE
UNIVERSITY
OF RHODE ISLAND



2025 AT A GLANCE

579 community-based **presentations** & policy, system and environmental (PSE) **technical assistance** encounters, including 24% in Spanish or bilingual

81 **partner organizations** collaborated

1,917 **children and adults** attended food and nutrition workshops in person or virtually

2,995 **adults** received SNAP-Ed handouts through table events

467 **community partner staff** participated in SNAP-Ed trainings including childcare providers, WIC nutritionists, family visitors, health care staff, adult education employees, food pantry volunteers, and summer meals program professionals

The Landscape

The University of Rhode Island SNAP-Ed partners with communities across Rhode Island to build on local strengths and expand access to culturally relevant food and nutrition resources. As **34% of households are impacted by food insecurity**, families continue to demonstrate resilience and resourcefulness (1). Together, these collaborative efforts support households to make healthy choices, maximize their food dollars, and strengthen community well-being.

SNAP-Ed participants enjoy a variety of cuisines and have diverse food preferences that include many fruits and vegetables. At the same time, diet quality remains a statewide concern. In Rhode Island, only **9.5% of adults report consuming the recommended amounts of two or more fruits and three or more vegetables each day** (2). Challenges to healthy eating include cost, lack of access, and perceived lack of confidence to prepare fruits and vegetables. Additionally, food advertisements and marketing towards youth promote energy-dense snacks and sugar-sweetened beverages, which account for **38% of youth's daily intake**. (3).

Collectively, these factors highlight the ongoing **need for statewide nutrition education** efforts to advance nutrition security.

Nutrition security means having consistent and equitable access to healthy, safe, affordable foods essential to optimal health and well-being (4).



SNAP-Ed Helps Fill the Nutrition Security Gap in Rhode Island by...

Learning about adults' food practices and offering additional ideas on how to plan, shop for, and prepare healthy meals they enjoy on a budget.

Sharing positive feeding and physical activity practices among parents/caregivers to improve the whole family's health and well-being.

Engaging youth in activities that encourage healthy eating habits through introducing new fruits and vegetables and raising awareness of energy-dense snacks and sugar-sweetened beverages.

Complementing community partners' efforts and expertise to facilitate changes in policies, systems, and environments (PSE) to make the healthier choice, the easier choice.

Celebrating communities by ensuring our nutrition lessons and recipes are relevant to all cultures and experiences.

Clockwise: Older adult planting vegetable seeds; Recipes: Sweet and Spicy Turkey Lettuce Wraps, Peri Peri Chicken, and Mofongitos; Pre-school children tasting vegetables as a part of the "Little Harvest" tasting program; Food pantry signage; Youth engaging in calcium activity

(1) Rhode Island Community Food Bank, 2025. "2025 Status Report on Hunger in Rhode Island" https://rifoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/2025-Status-Report_Digital_FINAL-1.pdf, accessed 1-27-26

(2) America's Health Rankings analysis of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, United Health Foundation, AmericasHealthRankings.org, <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/states/RI>, accessed 1-3-26.

(3) Bleich, SN. Trends in SSBs and Snack Consumption Among Children by Age, Body Weight, and Race/Ethnicity. Obesity 2015; 23: 1039-1046. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/oby.21050>

(4) U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2026. "Food & Nutrition Security: What is Nutrition Security?". https://sites.google.com/view/usdaap/our-priorities/food-and-nutrition-security?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed 1-25-26.

How SNAP-Ed Uniquely Advances Nutrition Education and Nutrition Security

Conduct needs assessments to learn strengths, areas of opportunity, and elevate Rhode Island community voice, informing a **multi-year proposal** that supports the community and builds upon itself with our state agency, Department of Human Services, to create strength and sustainability.

Determine evidence-based curriculums and toolkits for education and PSE community change, adapting them to reflect Rhode Island needs, while **developing and evaluating new resources** when gaps exist.

Employ and train nutrition education experts to lead programming and PSE community change initiatives, **mentor** students and interns, and **build collaborative partnerships with other federal programs and community organizations** to maximize reach and impact across Rhode Island.

Provide nutrition education and food access programming across the lifespan in everyday settings, expand reach through **train-the-trainer models**, and **implement PSE community changes** to redesign policies, systems and environments to make culturally meaningful healthy choices visible more visible, affordable, and accessible.

Utilize the national SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework to measure Rhode Island and national program efforts, including individual behavior improvements, community-level PSE change, and partner capacity for coordinated impact, and use the results to **adapt programs** to evolving community needs.



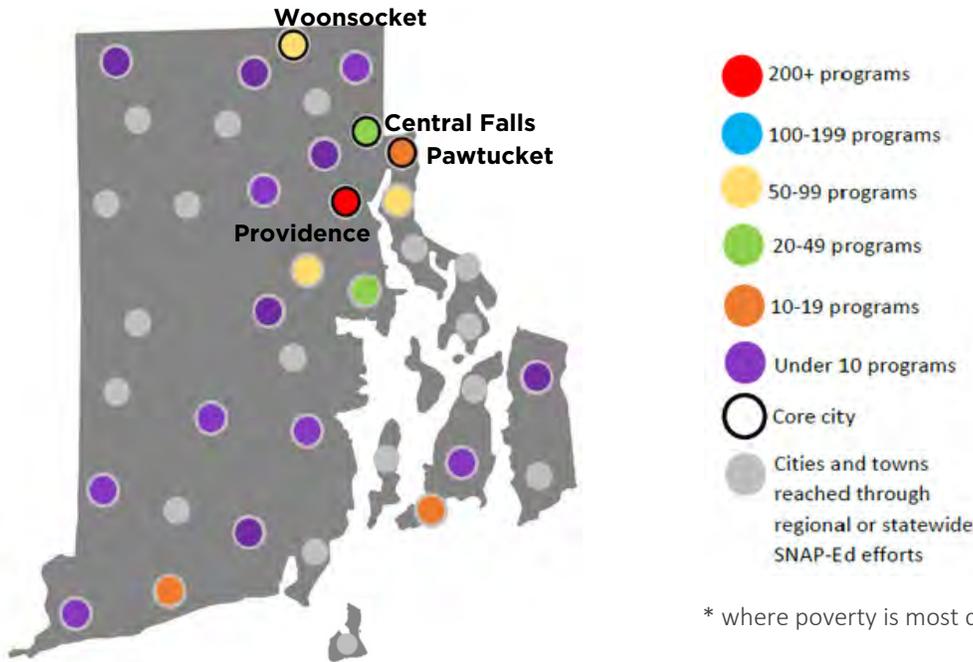
Federal Funding Changes have defunded the SNAP-Ed program nationally, leaving gaps in Rhode Island community nutrition collaboration and statewide efforts. The University of Rhode Island is grateful to have spent over 30 years building relationships with community partners, learning and growing from community members, and being trusted as a reliable nutrition resource.

Top to bottom: Mother and daughter at a family evening program, Youth cooking at a summer camp, Adult day care participants at a workshop, Youth engaged during an in-school program, Resources at the farmers' market, Early childhood educators receiving professional development training

Partnerships and Reach

URI SNAP-Ed collaborated with **81 community partners** to promote statewide reach to community members, both in-person and virtually. These partnerships provide an opportunity for RI SNAP-Ed to **engage with youth, parents, adults and community partners** in various settings throughout the state. The map below describes the location and concentration of programming.

Where are we in the state?

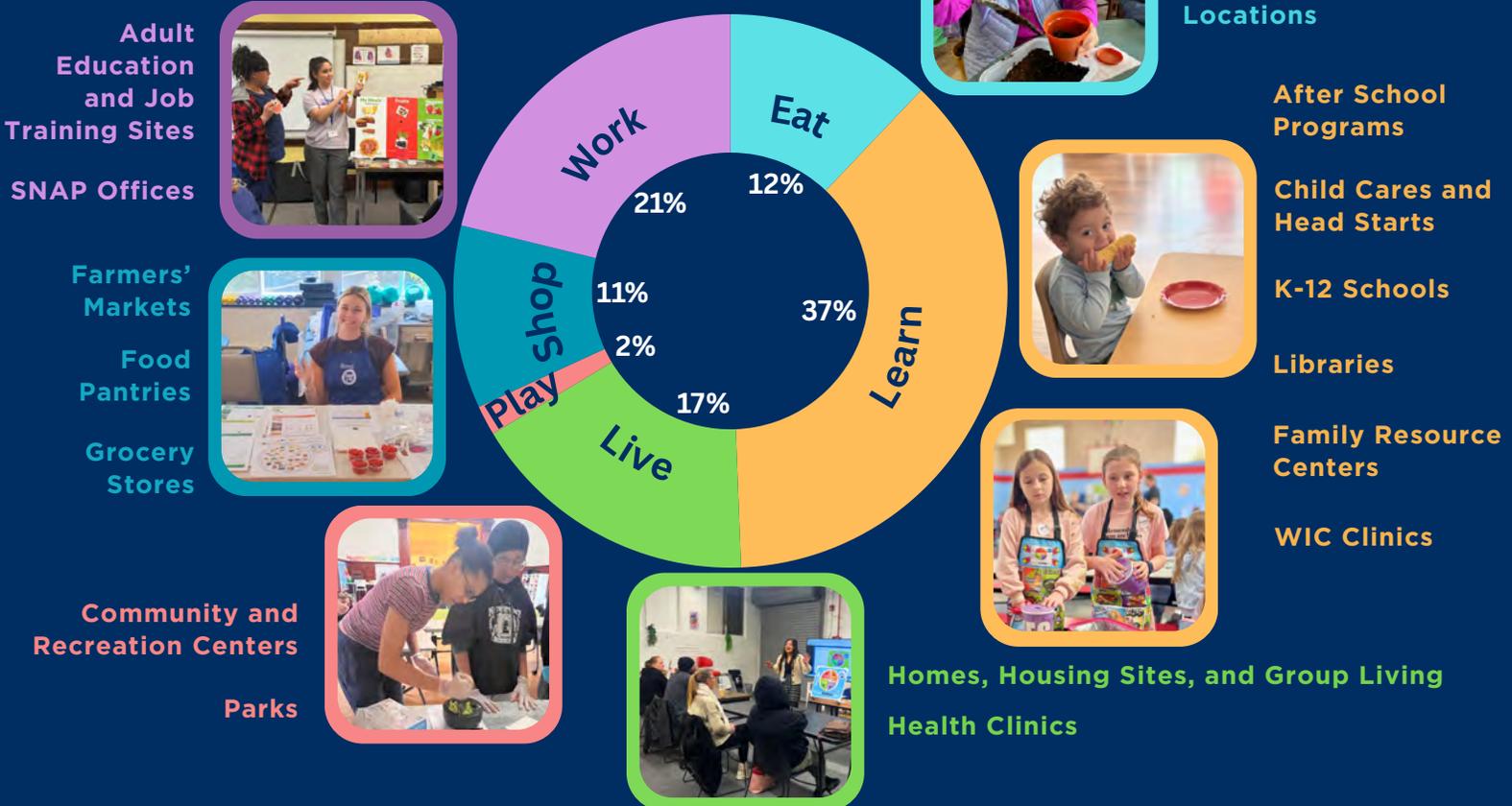


62% of URI SNAP-Ed programming efforts were in core cities*

* where poverty is most concentrated

What settings can you find us in?

The donut chart illustrates the percentage of programs and PSE initiatives by setting type.



SPOTLIGHT: | Little Harvest Produce Box Supports PSE EFFORT | Rhode Island Child Care Nutrition



Healthy habits start young and child care sites use that as their foundation for education. The Little Harvest produce box pilot was created with this vision in mind, **aiming to empower sites to impact the children and**

families they serve through increased access and exposure to fresh produce. Thirty-two early care and education (ECE) centers and family child care homes (FCCHs) in high-poverty areas received bi-weekly boxes of locally grown produce and education resources over 20 weeks, along with professional development, PSE support, and a Farm to ECE Learning Collaborative.

Fifteen sites shared in a post-survey how they utilized the produce they received, most commonly distributing it to families (80%), including it in meal preparation (73%), and implementing taste test activities in the classroom (73%), with many sites using multiple strategies. They also widely (93%) used the SNAP-Ed education materials included in each box. Materials included family newsletters, recipes, teacher activity sheets, and a rainbow poster to track fruits and vegetables tried.

The Farm to ECE Learning Collaborative enhanced the produce box program, with **all six FCCHs improving their Farm to ECE self-assessment scores through learning sessions, assessments, and individualized technical assistance.** Gains included better communication about local foods, stronger connections to family food resources, and increased staff participation in Farm to ECE professional development.

The Little Harvest Produce Box Program shows how ECEs can use local produce and food education to build lifelong healthy habits early.



ECE educator teaching children about fruits and vegetables

Key Partnerships

ECE centers and FCCHs championed the program by integrating it into their sites to support their children and families.

Participating staff and educator leadership was strengthened through multi-partner collaboration:

- **Southside Community Land Trust** sourced local produce
- **Farm Fresh Rhode Island** aggregated and distributed produce
- **Brown University** evaluated the program's effectiveness
- **Rhode Island Department of Health** provided coordination and oversight
- **URI SNAP-Ed** led material development, Spanish-speaking communication, and a Learning Collaborative

...my families have truly enjoyed the boxes with the recipes...I've noticed a wonderful level of participation from parents, as well as the kids' activities and focus on nutrition."

- ECE educator

SPOTLIGHT: NUTRITION EDUCATION & PSE STRATEGIES COMBINED

Advancing Student-Led Change in School Meals

URI's *Students Take Charge!* (STC) curriculum provides older elementary students the opportunity to see foods from their community reflected in school meals and to recognize the power of their meaningful voice in shaping both school and home food environments. The classroom-based curriculum interweaves nutrition education with policy, system and environment (PSE) strategies, incorporates community-inclusive recipes into school menus while strengthening student self-confidence.

A USDA Team Nutrition grant administered through the Rhode Island Department of Education strengthened STC through partnerships with URI SNAP-Ed, Farm Fresh Rhode Island, the Rhode Island Healthy Schools Coalition, and Johnson & Wales University, integrating local agriculture, wellness committee alignment, and community-diverse culinary expertise into a comprehensive toolkit.

“ We got to be role models for the school and convince others to try the recipe using the strategies we learned, like through slogans.”
-5th grader

Nutrition Education

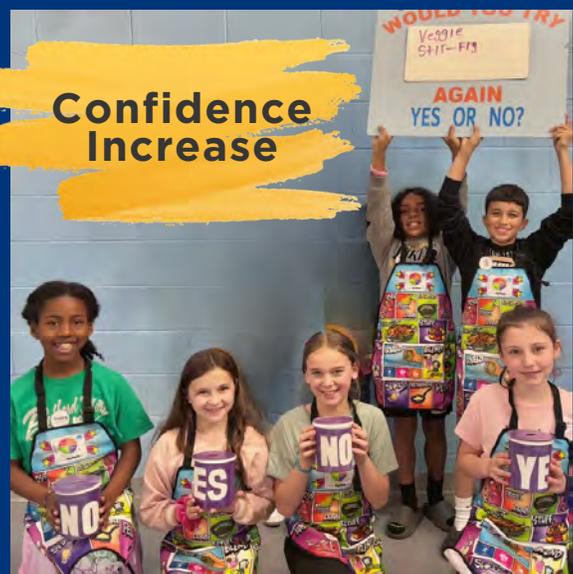


Learning about fruits and vegetables

Policy Influence



Sharing preferences with the School Wellness Committee



Confidence Increase

Systems Change

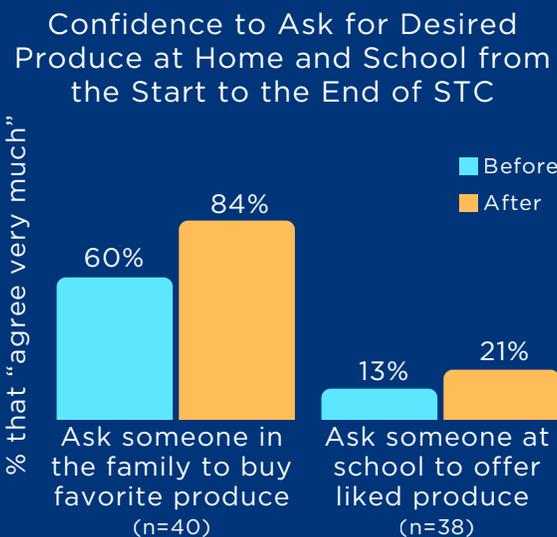


Testing, voting, and adding a new, community-inclusive recipe to the lunch menu

Environmental Cues



Creating advertisements and messaging to encourage healthy habits



SNAP-Ed Participants Improve Healthy Habits

Youth and adults that participate in SNAP-Ed series programming build on their lived experience and knowledge to improve healthy habits. The data below showcases these improvements over series programming for youth and adults.

SNACK CHOICE

Youth chose sweet and salty snacks less often

Percentage of youth that decreased how often they ate sweet and salty snacks from the beginning to end of the series.

26%



Sweet
133 youth

24%



Salty
133 youth

Youth Highlights

83% of school-aged youth who participated in series programming and completed surveys at the start and end (181 youth) improved on at least one nutrition practice.



From the left: Elementary student playing Fruit and Veggie BINGO, Student learning about the importance of produce variety, Youth cooking at a family program, Participant learning about MyPlate at a pediatric clinic family program

Adult Highlights

88% of adults who participated in series programming and completed surveys at the start and end (152 adults) improved on at least one nutrition, money saving, or parenting practice.

SAVVY SHOPPING

Percentage of adults that positively improved a behavior from the beginning to end of the series.

Adults use a grocery list when shopping



110 adults



Adults discussing money-saving tips

Adults use a nutrition label to make informed decisions



150 adults

HEALTHY HABITS

Adults increased their intake of vegetables and fruits, moving closer to the recommended three servings of vegetables and meeting the recommended two servings of fruit daily.

Average Servings of Produce Usually Eaten Each Day by 150 Adults from the Start to End of Series Programming

