

## SNAP and SNAP-Ed in Michigan

Sections of this document that include new content or have significant revisions from FY 2018 are highlighted.

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** provides nutrition assistance benefits to eligible low-income households so they can purchase food from authorized food retailers. The **mission** of the USDA **Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)** is to increase food security and reduce hunger by providing children and low-income people access to food, a healthful diet, and nutrition education.

In Michigan, all SNAP programming is administered by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS).

As part of the SNAP program outlined above, USDA and MDHHS support nutrition education and physical activity promotion—**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed)**—for those eligible to receive SNAP benefits. MDHHS has established two SNAP-Ed Implementing Agencies—the Michigan Fitness Foundation (MFF) and Michigan State University Extension (MSU Extension).

**The goal of SNAP-Ed is** 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 most current [\*Dietary Guidelines for Americans\*](#) and the USDA food guidance.

“SNAP-Ed eligibles” is a label that refers to the target audience for SNAP-Ed, specifically SNAP participants and low-income individuals who qualify to receive SNAP benefits or other means-tested Federal assistance programs, such as Medicaid or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. It also includes individuals residing in communities with a significant low-income population.

### **The Federal focus of SNAP-Ed is:**

- Implementing strategies or interventions, among other health promotion efforts, to help the SNAP-Ed target audience establish healthy eating habits and a physically active lifestyle; and
- Primary prevention of diseases to help the SNAP-Ed target audience that has risk factors for nutrition-related chronic disease, such as obesity, prevent or postpone the onset of disease by establishing healthier eating habits and being more physically active.

Throughout the U.S., SNAP-Ed programs utilize behaviorally-focused, evidence-based nutrition education and obesity prevention interventions, projects, or social marketing campaigns that are consistent with the FNS mission and the goal and focus of SNAP-Ed. Nationally, SNAP-Ed maximizes its impact by concentrating on a small set of key population outcomes supported by evidence-based direct education, multi-level interventions, social marketing, policy, systems and environmental change (PSE) efforts, and partnerships.

### **USDA FNS Guiding Principles for SNAP-Ed**

1. SNAP-Ed is intended to serve SNAP participants, low-income individuals eligible to receive SNAP benefits or other means-tested Federal assistance programs, and individuals residing in communities with a significant low-income population. For this definition, significant is considered 50 percent or greater. The term “means-tested Federal assistance programs” is

defined as Federal programs that require the income and/or assets of an individual or family to be at or below 185 percent of the [Federal Poverty Guidelines](#) to qualify for benefits. (See SNAP-Ed Target Audiences for additional information about target audience qualifications.)

2. SNAP-Ed must include nutrition education and obesity prevention services consisting of a combination of educational approaches. Nutrition education and obesity prevention services are delivered through partners in multiple venues and involve activities at the individual, interpersonal, community, and societal levels. Acceptable policy level interventions are activities that encourage healthier choices based on the most current [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). Intervention strategies may focus on increasing or limiting consumption of certain foods, beverages, or nutrients consistent with the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).
3. While SNAP-Ed has the greatest potential impact on behaviors related to nutrition and physical activity of the overall SNAP low-income households, when it targets low-income households with SNAP-Ed eligible women and children, SNAP-Ed is intended to serve the breadth of the SNAP eligible population.
4. SNAP-Ed must use evidence-based, behaviorally-focused interventions and maximize its national impact by concentrating on a small set of key population outcomes supported by evidence-based multi-level interventions. Evidence-based interventions based on the best available information must be used.
5. The reach of SNAP-Ed is maximized when coordination and collaboration take place among a variety of stakeholders at the local, State, regional, and national levels through publicly or privately funded nutrition intervention, health promotion, or obesity prevention strategies. The likelihood of nutrition education and obesity prevention interventions successfully changing behaviors is increased when consistent and repeated messages are delivered through multiple channels.
6. SNAP-Ed is enhanced when the specific roles and responsibilities of local, State, regional, and national SNAP agencies and SNAP-Ed providers are defined and put into practice.

### **The Focus of SNAP-Ed at the Michigan Fitness Foundation**

The Michigan Fitness Foundation (MFF) requests that SNAP-Ed programs focus on two of the USDA's identified SNAP-Ed behavioral outcomes:

1. Increased fruit and vegetable consumption; and
2. Increased physical activity (and reduced sedentary behaviors).

The primary emphasis of SNAP-Ed programming in Michigan should be on assisting the SNAP-Ed target population to establish healthy eating habits and physically active lifestyles to promote health and prevent disease, including obesity. SNAP-Ed programs, however, may have secondary or intermediate behavioral outcomes consistent with the SNAP-Ed objectives described above:

3. Improved behaviors associated with caloric balance (at all stages of the life cycle);
4. Increased whole grain consumption (make half your grains whole);
5. Switch to low-fat and fat-free milk and milk products; and
6. Other intermediary behaviors toward the above outcomes (1-5) (must be evidence-based as documented in the proposal).

Programs should consider the unique needs of people eligible for SNAP, specifically the need to make healthy choices on a tight food budget and to increase physical activity to achieve or maintain caloric balance. The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) are the foundation of nutrition education and obesity prevention efforts in all FNS nutrition assistance programs. Therefore, messages delivered through SNAP-Ed must be consistent with the most current [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

Please refer to the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion website ([cnpp.usda.gov](http://cnpp.usda.gov)) for complete information on the most current [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

SNAP-Education programs are required to coordinate their SNAP-Education efforts with other public- and privately-funded health promotion or nutrition improvement strategies, especially those implemented by other FNS nutrition assistance programs. The *Map To Healthy Living* website ([map2healthyliving.org](http://map2healthyliving.org)) was developed to support cross program collaboration in Michigan.

## **MFF SNAP-Education Program Approaches and Behavioral Outcomes**

Intervention strategies, behavioral outcomes, and evaluation strategies should be clearly identified in all proposals and detail how direct education and PSE programming will work in tandem to achieve outcomes. Changing health behaviors at any level is complicated, as is selecting the appropriate measurable indicators for evaluating the desired behavioral outcomes. Identification and evaluation of intermediate changes may be appropriate. If this is the case, SNAP-Education programs must provide rationale that describes the logic for including intermediary steps in achieving the desired behavioral outcomes.

Updated regulations and guidance for SNAP-Education allow and encourage additional layers of evidence-based approaches to behavior change. These approaches and their rationale are summarized in the most current [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). The Social-Ecological Model (SEM) on which these approaches are based offers an opportunity to integrate coordinated, multi-level and multi-component approaches, ensuring a comprehensive approach to SNAP-Education programming that is consistent with current public health practices for health promotion and disease prevention. SNAP-Education approaches must include Approach One and Approach Two and/or Approach Three, as indicated below. **Approach One activities must be combined with interventions and strategies from Approaches Two and/or Three.**

1. Approach One – Individual or group-based direct nutrition education, health promotion, and intervention strategies.

**AND**

2. Approach Two – Comprehensive, multi-level interventions at multiple complementary organizational and institutional levels.

**OR**

3. Approach Three – Community and public health approaches to improve nutrition and obesity prevention.

Approaches Two and Three relate to a focus on *policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change efforts\** that create a supportive environment in which people can engage in healthy behaviors. It is not enough to provide direct education to help people understand why and how to choose healthy foods and/or be physically active; SNAP-Education programs need to address PSE factors in venues where people are participating in learning and make changes that increase opportunities for them to make healthy choices.

*\*Note that SNAP-Education providers play a supportive but not leading role in PSE change efforts and partnerships.*

Programs must include multi-level approaches that **are related** to one another. All approaches must potentially and collectively have an impact on the nutrition and physical activity behaviors of the **same target population** that the SNAP-Education program is proposing to work with.

Please refer to the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) for detailed information on the *Social-Ecological Framework for Nutrition and Physical Activity Decisions* depicted below. MFF encourages comprehensive interventions that address multiple levels of this framework to reach the SNAP-Ed target population in ways that are relevant and motivational to them, while addressing constraining environmental and/or social factors in addition to providing direct nutrition education and physical activity promotion. Working with partners to achieve this furthers SNAP-Ed's collaborative efforts, reduces the likelihood of duplication of effort, and aligns SNAP-Ed's strategies with current public health practices for health promotion and disease prevention.

### A Social-Ecological Model for Food and Physical Activity Decisions



### Using Evidence-Based Interventions

Using evidence-based interventions means that you are more likely to achieve intended outcomes with your target audience(s), resulting in desired, sustainable healthy behaviors. SNAP-Ed projects and programs must be either evidence-based or practice-tested, implemented with fidelity (i.e., delivering an intervention as intended including using all intervention components and following scope and sequence), and have:

- Evaluation outcomes that clearly demonstrate effectiveness of the intervention with specific target audience(s) (If an evidence-based or practice-tested intervention is modified, further justification and data are necessary to support that the intervention, as modified, can be expected to have the desired impact); and
- Effective education strategies including behaviorally-focused nutrition education and physical activity promotion, use of motivators and reinforcements, multiple channels of communication of messages, opportunities for active personal engagement (behavior practice), and justification of duration and intensity of messages.

A good place to find potential interventions is the [SNAP-Ed Strategies and Interventions: An Obesity Prevention Toolkit for States \(Toolkit\)](#). The Toolkit, however, is not an exhaustive list, and not all of the interventions listed are fully SNAP-Ed allowable or are appropriate for Michigan. In addition, FNS created a [checklist for evidence-based programs](#) to classify interventions according to levels of evidence.

### Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) Change Interventions

The 2015-2020 [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) recognizes that everyone has a role in helping support healthy eating patterns in multiple settings nationwide, from home to school to work to communities, in which people live, learn, work, shop, eat, and play. PSE efforts can be implemented across a continuum and may be employed on a limited scale as part of the multi-level interventions of Approach Two or in a more comprehensive way through the community and public health approaches of Approach Three.

Taken together, education, marketing, and PSE changes are more effective than one strategy alone for preventing overweight and obesity. While PSE changes have the potential to reach more people than can be served through individual or group contacts, PSE efforts will benefit by combining them with reinforcing educational or marketing strategies used in SNAP-Ed or that are conducted by partners such as other FNS programs or CDC.

One way to envision the role of SNAP-Ed is to provide consultation and technical assistance to organizations in creating appropriate PSE changes that benefit low-income households and communities. The organization that receives the consultation and technical assistance is ultimately responsible for adopting, maintaining, and enforcing the PSE change.

The definitions and examples below help clarify SNAP-Ed's role in implementing PSE.

**Policy:** A written statement of an *organizational* position, decision, or course of action. Ideally policies describe actions, resources, implementation, evaluation, and enforcement. Policies are made in the public, non-profit, and business sectors. Policies will help to guide behavioral changes for audiences served through SNAP-Ed programming.

*Example:* A school or school district that serves a majority low-income student body writes a policy that allows the use of school facilities for recreation by children, parents, and community members during non-school hours. The local SNAP-Ed provider can be a member of a coalition of community groups that works with the school to develop this policy.

**Systems:** Systems changes are unwritten, ongoing, organizational decisions or changes that result in new activities reaching large proportions of people the organization serves. Systems changes alter how the organization or network of organizations conducts business. An organization may adopt a new intervention, reallocate other resources, or in significant ways modify its direction to benefit low-income consumers in qualifying sites and communities. Systems changes may precede or follow a written policy.

*Example:* A local food policy council creates a farm-to-fork system that links farmers and local distributors with new retail or wholesale customers in low-income settings. The local SNAP-Ed provider could be an instrumental member of this food policy council, providing insight into the needs of the low-income target audience.

**Environmental:** This includes the built or physical environments which are visual/observable, but may include economic, social, normative or message environments. Modifications in settings where food is sold, served, or distributed may promote healthy food choices. Signage that promotes the use of stairwells or walking trails may increase awareness and use of these amenities. Social changes may include shaping attitudes among administrators, teachers, or service providers about time allotted for school meals or physical activity breaks. Economic changes may include financial disincentives or incentives to encourage a desired behavior, such as purchasing more fruits and vegetables. Note that SNAP-Ed funds may not be used to provide the cash value of financial incentives, but SNAP-Ed funds can be used to engage farmers markets and retail outlets to collaborate with other groups and partner with them.

*Example:* A food retailer serving SNAP participants or other low-income persons increases the variety of fruits and vegetables it sells and displays them in a manner to encourage consumer selection of healthier food options based on the most current [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#). A SNAP-Ed provider can provide consultation and technical assistance to the retailer on assessing its environment, expanding its fruit and vegetable offerings, and behavioral techniques to position produce displays to reach the target audience.

**Examples of partnerships and initiatives to implement PSE changes**  
(Examples provided below are not an all-inclusive list of possibilities.)

- *Collaborating with community groups and other organizations such as Food or Nutrition Policy Councils to improve food, nutrition, and physical activity environments to facilitate the adoption of healthier eating and physical activity behaviors among the low-income population;*
- *Delivering technical assistance to a local corner or country store to create a designated healthy checkout lane. Other activities might include providing training to retailers on healthy foods to stock and strategies to encourage people to purchase and use such foods or partnering with other groups on a healthy food financing initiative;*
- *Conducting health promotion efforts such as promoting use of a walking trail or selection of healthy foods from vending machines.*

## **SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework**

The [SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework: Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention Indicators \(Framework\)](#) includes a focused menu of outcome indicators that align with the SNAP-Ed guiding principles and lend support to documenting changes resulting from multiple approaches in low-income nutrition education and obesity prevention efforts. Practitioners use the *Framework* to identify and map out indicators of success when implementing multi-component programming, Direct Education (DE), and PSE where low-income residents eat, live, learn, work, play, and shop for food as well as across states, cities, towns, tribes, and communities.

The *Framework* can look overwhelming; to help navigate it, think about the three approaches to SNAP-Ed programming outlined above and how they align with outcome indicators at each level of the *Framework*.

- Individual level aligns with Approach 1 (direct education);
- Environmental Settings level aligns with Approach 2 (PSE changes at an organization or specific setting); and
- Sectors of Influence level aligns with Approach 3 (community or public health approaches influenced by multiple sectors working together).

In general, short-term indicators relate to getting ready to make a change, medium-term indicators relate to adopting a change, and long-term indicators relate to maintaining a change. Using the *Framework* will enable SNAP-Ed programs to monitor and evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of the strategies and interventions while also communicating outcomes to SNAP-Ed stakeholders and funders.

The *Framework* must be used to identify indicators of success when implementing multi-component programs. MFF-funded SNAP-Ed programs will focus on *Framework* indicators and outcome measures at the Individual level and the Environmental Settings level. In addition, funded programs are encouraged to use a collaborative, multi-sector partnership and planning approach to achieve program goals (Indicator ST8 in the Sectors of Influence level).

Programs should focus reporting on outcome measures aligned with the SNAP-Ed priority indicators identified by the USDA:

- MT1: Healthy Eating Behaviors;
- MT2: Food Resource Management;
- MT3: Physical Activity and Reduced Sedentary Behaviors;
- ST7: Organizational Partnerships;
- MT5: Nutrition Supports Adopted; and
- ST8: Multi-Sector Partnerships and Planning.

In addition, Michigan has included other priority indicators and related outcome measures in its focus:

- ST5: Needs and Readiness;
- ST6: Champions; and
- MT6: Physical Activity and Reduced Sedentary Behavior Supports.

# SNAP-ED EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

## Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention Indicators



Multi-sector partnerships and planning is a collaborative approach that includes actively working with representatives from multiple sectors to achieve changes in the nutrition and physical activity environments. Changing health behaviors at any level is complicated, as is selecting the appropriate metrics for evaluating the outcomes. Identification and evaluation of intermediate changes can be appropriate.

At a minimum, SNAP-Ed Partners must include **one Individual level indicator plus one short-term and one medium-term Environmental Setting level indicator** in their programming, as well as demonstrate how a multi-sector collaborative approach will be used to implement chosen interventions.

## The Michigan Nutrition Network at the Michigan Fitness Foundation

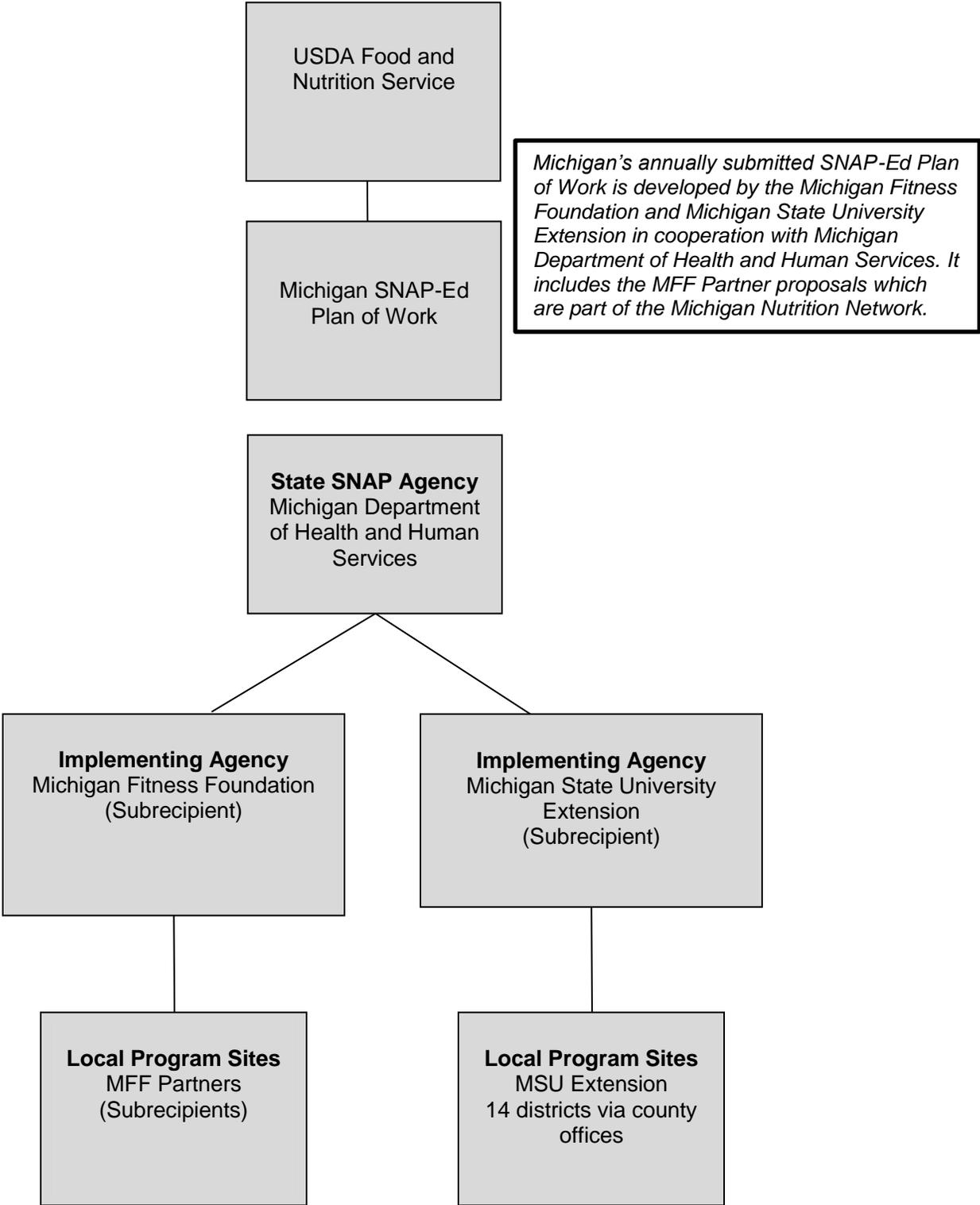
The Michigan Fitness Foundation (MFF) facilitates the implementation of SNAP-Ed programs in Michigan through a network of local partner agencies, also known as the Michigan Nutrition Network (MNN). These agencies implement programs that combine DE and PSE and are behaviorally-focused, evidence-based nutrition education and physical activity promotion serving people in Michigan who are eligible for SNAP benefits.

In FY 2018, MFF SNAP-Ed programs and activities reached approximately two million Michigan citizens. MFF is currently partnering with more than 35 subrecipient organizations—called MFF SNAP-Ed Partners—that receive SNAP-Ed funding to implement nutrition education and physical activity promotion throughout Michigan. The SNAP-Ed Team at MFF provides a variety of support services to SNAP-Ed Partners and Michigan citizens eligible for SNAP benefits including, but not limited to, training and compliance support, the statewide social marketing campaign, development of nutrition education and physical activity promotion curricula and interventions, Nutrition Education Reinforcement Items (NERI), evaluation services, and [Map To Healthy Living](#).

MFF is one of two SNAP-Ed Implementing Agencies in Michigan. The second SNAP-Ed Implementing Agency is Michigan State University Extension (MSU Extension). At MSU Extension, SNAP-Ed programs are managed by the Institute for Health and Nutrition and are implemented through the MSU Extension's 14 districts via county offices. MDHHS, MFF, and MSU Extension work collaboratively to ensure that SNAP-Ed best meets the needs of people eligible for SNAP throughout Michigan.

# SNAP-Ed in Michigan – Organizational Flow Chart

SNAP-Ed is maximized when the local, State, and national agencies involved with programming have defined roles and responsibilities. The chart below highlights the organizations involved with SNAP-Ed in Michigan. Additional information about the specific roles and responsibilities of these organizations can be found in the [USDA SNAP-Ed Guidance](#).



# SNAP-Ed Target Audiences

When your organization applies for Michigan SNAP-Ed funding, you identify the target audience(s) for the various interventions and activities you will implement. It is critical that your programming focus on the audiences identified in your proposal. According to USDA regulation, these target audiences fall into four categories.

Alternate delivery sites for SNAP-Ed activities and interventions that do not meet the general low-income categories described below may be submitted individually to MFF for pre-approval.

Refer to the category descriptions below to determine if your proposed program target audience qualifies.

## Category 1 – Income-based:

- Persons eligible for other means-tested Federal assistance programs such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the WIC Program, or TANF; and
- Persons typically not eligible for SNAP such as incarcerated persons, residents of nursing homes, boarders, or college/university students are ineligible for SNAP-Ed.

## Category 2 – Qualifying locations:

- Persons at qualifying locations that serve low-income individuals such as food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens, public housing, SNAP/TANF job readiness program sites, and other such sites.

## Category 3 – Locations serving low-income populations:

- Persons at other venues when it can be documented that the location/venue serves generally low-income persons where at least 50 percent of persons have gross incomes at or below 185 percent of poverty guidelines/thresholds. This would include, for example, persons residing or schools or childcare centers located in census tract areas or other defined areas where at least 50 percent of persons have gross incomes that are equal to or less than 185 percent of the poverty threshold, or children in schools where at least 50 percent of children receive free and reduced priced meals.
- Venues/locations identified in qualified census tracts.
  - For a statewide view of eligible tracts, go to [map2healthyliving.org](http://map2healthyliving.org) and follow these steps:
    1. In the “What to Look For” section, scroll to the Geographic section and click the “Eligible Census Tract” layer; and
    2. Click “Go”.

## Category 4 – Retail locations serving low-income populations:

- Persons shopping in grocery stores when the store has been documented to redeem average monthly SNAP benefits of \$50,000 or more, or persons shopping in grocery stores located in census tracts where at least 50 percent of persons have gross incomes that are ≤185 percent of the poverty threshold. States may submit proposals to their respective Regional Office with alternate methods for defining grocery stores that serve the low-income target population as potentially eligible for SNAP-Ed. For example, in rural areas, a particular store may not redeem a monthly average of \$50,000 in SNAP-benefits but may be serving the majority of the SNAP low-income population or be the only grocery outlet in the community for the entire population, including the low-income population. When SNAP-Ed receipts are less than \$50,000 monthly, a store may be able to show average monthly SNAP redemptions that are significant compared to overall sales or some other indication that the low-income population shops at that location.