

OSU Extension SNAP-Ed Policy – Nutrition Education Reinforcement Materials

A nutrition education reinforcement material is an optional enhancement product that may be given to a SNAP-Ed target audience to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity practices. These items must have a direct relationship to program objectives, and the desired nutrition and/or physical activity behavior change. Since reinforcements are optional, it is ultimately up to the discretion of the local SNAP-Ed Units to determine which qualifying interventions will benefit most from inclusion of a reinforcement. Food Hero and curricula-specific reinforcements are available.

Guidelines for use – The guidelines for use of Oregon SNAP-Ed reinforcements are based on several factors that include the following: compliance with the USDA FNS SNAP-Ed Plan Guidance, distribution methods with the greatest potential for behavior change (best practices), and budgetary considerations.

- Reinforcements must not exceed the cost of \$4.00 per individual item.
- Reinforcements should be distributed directly to participants during one of the following qualified intervention types: a SNAP-Ed event, single session, series of classes, or approved additional activity. The selected nutrition reinforcement should complement the educational theme or message.
- In order to help achieve fiscal responsibility and unless otherwise noted, the number of reinforcements distributed should be limited to one per family/participant in a qualified intervention.
 - Exception: Stickers, hand-stamping, pencils, and popsicle molds may be distributed in an amount necessary to ensure all family members receive an item.
- As much as possible, the Food Hero cooking reinforcements should be used in a demonstration and/or by participants during the actual intervention delivery to model their use. Participants should also be offered an opportunity to taste a sample of the recipe or food item that was prepared and/or demonstrated. Adhering to these best-practice methods will increase the likelihood of (reinforcement) use, and desired behavior change(s).
- Reinforcements may be distributed by a SNAP-Ed partner delivering a Train-the-Trainer activity, so long as the partner has been trained to distribute the reinforcements in a manner that is consistent with the best practices detailed in this policy.
- Typically, reinforcements should not be delivered to a partner site for distribution unconnected to a qualified intervention (e.g. dropping off in bulk for partners to distribute or left in baskets on a display table). Some exceptions do exist, and are noted here:
 - Exception 1: Food Hero calendars may be delivered to a partner site for early-calendar-year distribution by partners to program participants that will receive a qualified intervention within the fiscal year.

- Exception 2: For the Food Hero Parent Recipe Surveys, please distribute incentive reinforcements according to the directions given in the Parent Recipe Survey Consent Letter and protocol.
- Exception 3: The Food Hero Monthly may be delivered to a partner site for distribution by partners to program participants that will receive a qualified intervention within the fiscal year. Budgetary and supply limitations may exist. Please check with a state team member for additional guidance.

Note: Please contact a member of the state team to inquire about other situations that may qualify as an exception.

- Use with PSE work – Since PSE work is often complex and multi-faceted, distribution of reinforcements as part of these efforts warrants special consideration in regard to budget and project sustainability goal(s). Please contact a state team member for guidance if you would like to distribute reinforcements as part of a PSE effort.
- Distribution of curricula-specific reinforcements should follow the suggested use and best practices outlined in the curriculum contents.

Reporting – Typically, reinforcements should not be planned or reported as ‘Ed Materials Sent to a Site’ in NEP Online. The Food Hero Monthly is an exception, as it is uniquely considered to be both an educational material and a reinforcement item. If a Monthly is distributed as part of a qualifying intervention, then like other reinforcements it should not be logged as an ‘Ed Material Sent to a Site.’ However, if the Monthly is distributed to a partner site in a fashion that is unconnected to a qualifying intervention (see Exception 3 above), it should be reported as an ‘Ed Material Sent to a Site.’

Questions –

For general questions, please contact Stephanie.russell@oregonstate.edu or Rose.jepson-sullivan@oregonstate.edu.

For questions about use of reinforcements and Food Hero, please contact Lauren.Tobey@oregonstate.edu or Elaine.Schrumpf@oregonstate.edu.

To order reinforcements, please contact Brenda.Draper@oregonstate.edu.