




The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) used innovative approaches to continue to serve Iowa's low-income youth and older adults during COVID-19.

Challenge → Actions Taken → Results




Direct Education

<p>Elementary schools closed for in-person classes in March.</p> 	<p>AND</p>	<p>Pick A Better Snack and Fresh Conversations began delivering virtual direct education to participants.</p> 	<p>24,124 students were reached in 107 schools within 22 school districts across Iowa.</p> <p>+</p> <p>1,811 older adults were reached at congregate meal sites and in their homes through conference calls and video conferencing.</p>
 <p>Congregate meal sites and senior centers closed in early spring.</p>			

Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change Interventions

<p>Everyone was encouraged to socially distance and stay at home which limited opportunities for physical activity.</p> 	 <p>Conducted needs assessments, mapping and surveys to improve walkability and bikability for older adults.</p>	<p>26 new partnerships formed within the Physical Activity Access Project to help improve older adults ability to be physically active.</p>
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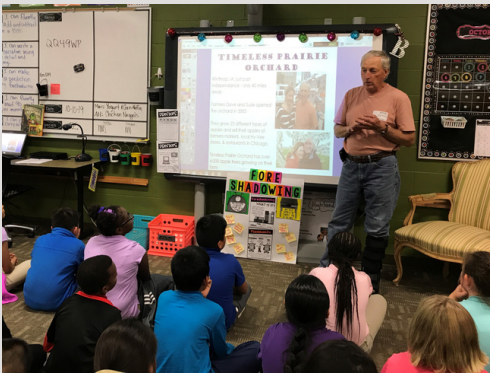
Sectors of Influence

 <p>Schools closed, which made it more difficult to reach students and families with program materials.</p>	 <p>The Pick A Better Snack and Play Your Way social marketing campaigns were updated with new branding and new photos.</p>	<p>The Pick A Better Snack campaign reached 329,216 people and the Play Your Way campaign reached 392,934.</p> <p>AND</p>  <p>Digital marketing had improved audience engagement with increased click through rates.</p>
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Success Stories from 2020

Enhancing Farm to School

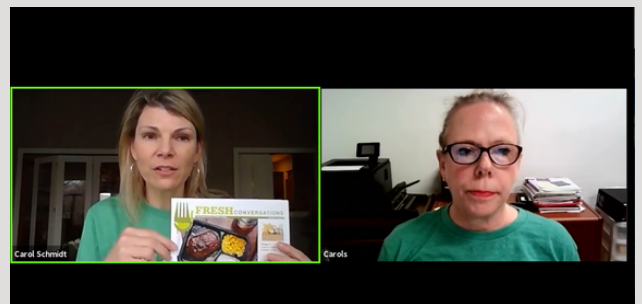
SNAP-Ed schools managed 22 school gardens this year with 86% of sites adopting at least one nutrition PSE change. One school district hosted an event, "The Great Apple Crunch," during National Farm to School Month at nine schools, reaching 4,030 students. The event increased stakeholder engagement and increased student excitement for eating healthy local fruits and vegetables. During the event, students were able to taste apples and local producer, Farmer Dave, visited classrooms to teach students about the apple growing season.



“What a wonderful opportunity for a grower to share our love of guiding Mother Nature through the natural cycle of the apple growing season. To be able to share this experience with elementary students and have them taste the varieties of apples we grow is very rewarding. I think each student has an excitement for tasting an apple they may have never experienced. And that interest will follow them through their life as they will try other untasted foods. - Farmer Joe”

Adapting to Reach Older Adults

The IDPH SNAP-Ed program, Fresh Conversations, is an older adult nutrition and physical activity education program that has traditionally taken place at congregate meal sites and senior centers. During the pandemic, educators began delivering the program virtually with conference calls and video meetings. The transition was difficult at first. Materials needed to be adapted, new guidance needed to be created, educators needed to be trained, and creative strategies needed to be used to recruit and train older adults to use online technology. Educators rated their level of comfort with delivering Fresh Conversations virtually. During the first month, the average reported score was 2.75 (somewhat uncomfortable), but by the last month of the year the average score was 4.2 (somewhat comfortable). Participation has slowly increased and educators feel like participants are enjoying the new format.



“I have been attending Fresh Conversations on Zoom the last few months. What we eat is so important to our health. So many common illnesses can be prevented by diet and exercise. I enjoy getting the newsletters each month. The topics are timely and interesting. - Fresh Conversations participant”

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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