

# Iowa Physical Activity and Nutrition Virtual StEM Meeting Series Snapshot

[The Iowa Nutrition Network School Grant Program](#) has been in existence for nearly two decades, and reaches 117 schools through 18 contractors. The program has traditionally been focused on nutrition education, however over the last few years, the scope of the project has expanded to include more of a focus on sustainable nutrition and physical activity efforts through Farm to School and the new Play Your Way physical activity project.

To strengthen the current and to increase the number of Iowa Nutrition Network School Grant Program sites implementing policy, systems and environmental changes, Iowa conducted a Physical Activity and Nutrition Virtual State Engagement Meeting (StEM) series. This brought together a diverse group of contractors and partners from across Iowa to develop a collective impact action plan. The Iowa meetings took place in January and February of 2021 and included a mix of 40 contractors and partners. The group refined an Aim statement to help create a vision for their future.

## [Aim Statement:](#)

By September 30, 2024, **strengthen current** nutrition and physical activity policy, systems and environmental **changes** and **increase the number** of Iowa Nutrition Network School Grant Program **sites implementing** a nutrition and physical activity policy, systems, and environmental change **from 43 to 56**.

## [Selected Action Plan Key Activity Priorities:](#)

- **Educate, engage, and motivate school administrators, school wellness committees, and school personnel ("champions")** - Provide support, technical assistance and tools to engage school wellness committees. Work with schools to revisit school wellness policy to include nutrition and physical activity policy, systems and environmental changes. Assist with making the policies inclusive to benefit all students and staff.
- **Assess readiness and capacity to develop collaborative plans for PSE implementation at the school level** - Provide technical assistance to schools on how to strengthen nutrition and physical activity work by including policy, systems and environmental change. Could include assessments, a menu of options, communication tools, success stories, etc.
- **Establish and maintain community and state level partnerships for farm to school-** Work with food service to promote availability of school meals and with local producers, grocers, food hubs and distributors to add local foods to the school menu at a reasonable cost. Engage with the Iowa Farm to School and Early Care Coalition and Network.
- **Establish and maintain community and state-level partners for physical activity that support the development of inclusive, accessible, high-quality physical activity and physical education** - Provide resources and technical assistance to ensure physical activity opportunities are inclusive and accessible for all students in the classroom, at recess, before/after school, and PE, with adapted equipment, and programs.

## [Fiscal Year 21 Next Steps](#)

1. Conduct a school administration survey with Iowa Nutrition Network school grant schools to learn more about their readiness and needs for nutrition and physical activity policy, systems and environmental change work. (April 2021)
2. Open Farm to School and Play Your Way optional PSE funding up to all schools. Allow more flexibility to contractors choosing both projects. (May 2021)
3. Provide an information session to school grant contractors on school wellness policies, requirements and applicable tools. (June 2021)
4. Work with the University of Iowa to develop a series of webinars to increase the capacity of grantees and contractors to support communities in reaching their nutrition and physical activity

- goals. The content will include the Socioecological Model, policy, systems and environmental change, and supporting health equity through community engagement. (July 2021)
5. Provide a training to school grant contractors featuring two states implementing successful nutrition and physical activity policy, systems and environmental change work. (July 2021)
  6. Create a Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) guide that outlines strategies for early care and education, schools, communities, and work sites to improve nutrition and physical activity. (August 2021)
  7. Analyze and provide a report on the findings of the administration survey to schools and contractors to guide planning and implementation. (August/September 2021)
  8. Conduct an action planning session at the Iowa Nutrition Network school grant contractor fall training to determine further actions and timelines for the StEM action plan for 2022 and 2023. This could include establishing an advisory group on implementing the StEM action plan. (September 2021)
  9. Offer customized technical assistance to contractors who desire additional assistance with their farm to school plans in a small group setting.

Trainings, educational events and action planning meetings will be open for all contractors and partners who participated in the StEM meetings. Dates are approximate.

### State Resources

- [Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy, Systems and Environmental Change Idea List](#). This list of potential nutrition and physical activity policy, systems and environmental changes has been compiled using the PEARS data-management system, language from the INNSGP RFA, and CDC Healthy Schools.
- **5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count!** Sign up as a [5-2-1-0 Healthy Choices Count! Registered Site](#) and join an important network of sectors working towards healthier environments where young Iowans live, learn and play. Find resources around the 5-2-1-0 [10 Strategies of Success](#) and their corresponding action items.
- **Iowa Department of Public Health Nutrition and Physical Activity profiles**. These fact sheets highlight Iowa nutrition and physical activity data, and give a high-level overview of some of the department's programming.
- [Iowa Department of Health Healthy Weight Scorecard](#)

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