



Your County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP) TOOLKIT



What is a County Nutrition Action Plan (CNAP)?

A CNAP is a plan for coordinating nutrition programs and resources modeled after the State Nutrition Action Plan process (now State Nutrition Action Coalitions-SNACs) encouraged by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The following is a description from USDA about SNACs:

FNS encourages States to implement a State Nutrition Action Plan process to facilitate coordination and collaboration on nutrition education and promotion efforts among FNS Programs within the State. This process encourages each program in each State to work together to identify one common nutrition goal and to plan and implement an action plan to accomplish the goal. This effort has been in place for about seven years. As of 2007, 48 States have formulated a State Nutrition Action Plan. Under the leadership of CNPP, the State Nutrition Action Plan process is being updated, enhanced, and renamed the State Nutrition Action Coalition to reduce confusion with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program.

The *Network for a Healthy California* requires the development of a CNAP by local health departments that receive SNAP-Ed funding. They would like to see counties develop “coordinated partnerships, which include Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) funded [as well as] unfunded partners to develop a plan of action that increases consistent messaging and access across all programs.”

In a nutshell, the aim of a CNAP is to coordinate and leverage nutrition messages, education, and services between USDA FNS partners in order to maximize resources and outcomes for the priority groups (low resource Californians at or below 185% federal poverty level) served by these programs. Many local health departments have also found it beneficial to involve other partners (not funded by FNS) who interface with the same community members as those served by FNS programs such as food banks or community based organizations. *Keep in mind that CNAPs are not intended to create new work or deliverables for your partnership, but to maximize outcomes by working together.* You may be building on an existing CNAP or starting fresh. If you have never seen a CNAP, you can find examples on the CCLHDN website at: <http://cclhdn.org/county-nutrition-action-plans-cnapp/>

The CNAP is a working document that outlines the jurisdiction’s goals, objectives and action items that align with its nutrition action priorities. The document can be simple or elaborate – that is determined by you and your partners. You may choose to post your CNAP to your county’s health department website, on your partners’ websites, or both. Some jurisdictions (such as San Francisco) have created brochures of their CNAP to showcase the partners involved with FNS in their jurisdiction. We recommend that you start with a basic CNAP plan (template provided in this toolkit) and then expand upon this plan to create collateral that would be most beneficial to your partners.

In addition to being a document, the CNAP is a guide to collaborating with your partners to address nutrition and physical activity objectives in your jurisdiction. The CNAP development process takes time and regular meetings to complete, and CNAP partners typically continue to meet at least quarterly to implement and evaluate their process and outcomes.

How Do We Begin Developing a CNAP?

The CNAP process starts in-house (the local health department) with you and your team. If you have the staff available, identify 2-3 key individuals who will be responsible for championing the CNAP process and moving it forward. Having several people responsible for stewarding the CNAP along is helpful in that, ideas, responsibilities, and outreach to partners can be shared. Clearly designate roles and responsibilities to your in-house team.

After you've identified your team, the next step is to connect with your potential partners. Planning your CNAP is a bit like planning a party: you have your VIPs – FNS funded programs; your honored guests – other County programs and organizations that have a nutrition component or relationship; and your friends and associates – other organizations in your county with missions that overlap in some way with yours. Like any good party, you are likely to find some of your guests asking if they can bring along someone you hadn't originally put on your guest list.

So, who are these VIPs?

- SNAP-Ed – the host, in many instances
- CalFresh Program
- CalFresh Outreach
- UC Cooperative Extension CalFresh Nutrition Education
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- School Meals
- Summer Food Service Program
- Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Child & Adult Care Food Program
- Food Assistance for Disaster Relief
- Food Distribution (Commodity SFP, Emergency FAP, food bank, FDPIR [Food Distribution Program for Indian Reservations])

And what about those "honored guests"?

- Maternal and Child Health
- Head Start
- First 5
- Homeless Services
- Senior Nutrition
- Agriculture Department
- Correctional Services
- Community Development

Don't forget your friends and associates:

- Staff from Board of Supervisors' offices

- Community based organizations that provide food, meals, shelter, or other basic needs
- Non-governmental health services
- Faith based organizations
- Farmers' market association/s
- Grocers and/or neighborhood market representatives
- City recreation departments
- Child care / after school care providers

Undoubtedly, there are guests we've failed to name here, but you get the picture. Who you decide to invite, and when, depends on what you want your CNAP to accomplish. The USDA's original directive to states, as noted above, was "to facilitate coordination and collaboration on nutrition education and promotion efforts among FNS Programs within the State," and the *Network* wants counties to create a "plan of action that increases consistent messaging and access across all programs." So, you may choose to start by connecting first with FNS programs and explore other partnerships later. Alternatively, you may want to get the buy-in of a larger group of partners early in your process—if so, you'll need to connect with them before your process gets very far.

For each organization that you decide to invite, you'll want to identify the appropriate contact person, establish a relationship, develop an understanding of their mission and services, and identify common threads between your mission and theirs. This will increase the likelihood of their participation in CNAP meetings.

The First CNAP Meeting

The first CNAP meeting with partners may address a number of things. First, it may simply be an opportunity to discuss each organization's objectives, target audience, and role in the Nutrition Education Obesity Prevention (NEOP) objectives. *Getting to know the work of your partners will only strengthen your ability to come together on creating a consistent, wide reaching message about your goals and objectives.*

What do initial meeting agendas of CNAPs generally entail?

- Introductions: provide a format for participants to give their names, organizations, and perhaps state briefly what they hope the CNAP can accomplish
- Round robin brief presentations: ask each participant to identify
 - Organization's mission
 - Organization's priority population
 - Description of any direct services offered by the organization

Speaking of Meetings... Did you know that how you manage and facilitate your meetings is one of the biggest "risk factors" for participation and member investment in your organization? ALL parts of a meeting are important--planning (especially thinking through agendas and goals); logistics; and chairing skills and principles. All of these parts impact on member participation and involvement.

- Brief description of any areas in which the organization is considering expanding (e.g. populations served, direct services, geographic area, etc.)
- Identification of areas of shared or overlapping interests: by population group, by need, by services, by geographic region, etc.
- Review of county-wide data related to food/physical activity issues:
 - Food security, food deserts
 - Utilization of nutrition assistance programs – SNAP, WIC, School Meals, Summer Food, etc.
 - Food and PA-influenced chronic disease rates
 - Adult and child obesity rates
 - Other available data – e.g., BRFSS data, CHIS data, CA Dietary Practices Survey data, CX³ data etc.
- Discussion of a goal that the group wants to pursue collectively
- Review, next steps, and next meeting time/date

Elements of Effective Meetings

When someone says, "Nice job. That was a good meeting," what do they really mean? A truly good meeting happens when attention is paid to the four phases of meeting management:

- Planning for the meeting (Agenda and goals)
- Setting up the meeting (Logistics)
- Running the meeting (Chairing/Facilitating)
- Following up (After the meeting ends...)

Essential Steps in Meeting Planning

- Determine meeting objectives
- Identify resources/ information you'll need for the meeting
- Identify the people who need to be there and invite them
- Plan your agenda – preferably not alone. Each agenda item should include
 - § A description of the agenda item / topic
 - § Objective for that item (discussion, review, decision, information, assign, etc.)
 - § How much time is allotted
 - § Who is leading the discussion
- It's also useful to include a section for noting action items

Ongoing CNAP Meetings

Initially, you will want to meet regularly (monthly to once every two months) with as many partners as possible to continue growing your CNAP. The time it takes to complete your CNAP varies, but anticipate that it will take several months for the initial draft of your CNAP document.

To support partner collaboration, give attendees different roles at each meeting. For instance, rotate who does the note-taking (and sending out for review), scribing (flip charts or white board), facilitation, etc. Consider rotating the location of the CNAP meeting, if possible, so that all partners get first-hand exposure to one another's work. Also, devoting a few minutes at the beginning of each meeting for one partner to share and highlight their organization's work will help all CNAP partners better understand and articulate each other's organizational goals.

Setting Objectives and Action Items

Every partner comes to the table with a scope of work and deliverables that support healthy eating/physical activity/food security in some way. Capitalize on this by finding the commonalities between what is being done at each partner organization that can contribute to your over-arching CNAP goal. Avoid adding objectives and action items that increase your (or other partners) workload.

Further, the action items should be spread across all partners, and not just fall on the Local Health Department (LHD). In some cases, each partner may contribute to the action item (such as posting the CNAP document or other products on their organizational website); in other cases the work will be specific to just one or a few partners.

The LHD is ultimately responsible for the CNAP and its outcomes, so you'll want to avoid obligating the plan and partners to doing more work than the LHD can be certain is feasible. You cannot oversee the work of your partners, nor do you want to take on their deliverables as your own. Remember, the purpose of the CNAP is to leverage, not create; coordinate, not manage; collaborate, not duplicate nor abdicate.

You can learn more about CNAPs from your colleagues by referring to the sample CNAPs to see examples of goals, objectives and action items in other county's plans. You can also visit <http://cclhdn.org/resources/webinars-and-events/> to view the content from the joint CNAP webinar offered by CCLHDN and CDPH.

Resources to help you take the next step

http://www.preventioninstitute.org/index.php?option=com_jlibrary&view=article&id=104&Itemid=127
Prevention Institutes "Developing Effective Coalitions: An Eight Step Guide"

<http://quality.wisc.edu/effective-meetings.htm>

This site, at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, has some audio content, lots of written content, and a number of useful tools and templates.

http://ctb.ku.edu/en/tablecontents/sub_section_main_1153.aspx

This is a section of University of Kansas' Community Toolbox, a product of the Work Group for Community Health and Development. The tool box is a resource on essential skills for building healthy communities.

<http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkill/RunningMeetings.htm>

Basic primer on meeting planning and management.

Good Luck and Enjoy the Journey!