



{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY "A" }



Table of Contents

Preface	3
Introduction	3
A Note on Lobbying	7
Engagement Phases	8
Recruit: Potential Allies	11
Recruit: Recruitment Basics	12
Recruit: Recognition Plan	15
Engage: Diverse Audiences	17
Engage: Social Media Resources and Tips	19
Engage: Using Social Media to Reach Journalists	25
Mobilize: Action Alerts	27
Mobilize: The Value of Phone Outreach	28
Mobilize: Hosting a Media Event	33
Mobilize: Media Training Tips	36
Mobilize: Why Op-Eds Matter	39
Mobilize: Meeting with Legislators	40
Mobilize: Days at the Capitol	42
Appendices	45
Key Messages: Pursuing Solutions to Ending Childhood Obesity	46
Lobbying vs. Non-Lobbying Checklist	48
Sample Emotional Op-Ed	49
Sample Rational Op-Ed	51
Action Alerts	53
Social Media Sample Messaging	55
Newsletter Blurbs	57
Sample Blog Post: Letters to the Editor	59
Case Studies	61
Content Articles	66
Index of Potential Allies	68

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

Preface

Voices for Healthy Kids®, a joint initiative of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and American Heart Association (AHA), works to help all young people in the United States eat healthier foods and be more active. Nearly one in three kids and teens are overweight or obese. By engaging, organizing and mobilizing people in communities across the country, Voices for Healthy Kids aims to help make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Our vision at Voices for Healthy Kids is to ensure that every child has access to healthy foods and drinks at home and in school, safe streets for biking and walking, and safe places to play after school. We are working to ensure that the places where children live, learn and play make it easy and enjoyable for them to eat healthy foods and be active. This toolkit is designed to help coalitions educate their communities on ways to make this vision a reality.

In order to ensure the most successful community education possible, we encourage everyone using this toolkit to engage the staff and partners of Voices for Healthy Kids. Stay connected to our work on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and on www.VoicesforHealthyKids.org or you can reach us directly at VoicesforHealthyKids@heart.org.

Introduction

Nearly one in three children today is overweight or obese, which puts them at risk for serious health problems. While multiple factors have contributed to the drastic increase in obesity rates since 1980, evidence suggests that the availability of unhealthy foods in the school environment offers both significant challenges to our children’s health as well as opportunity for improvement. Because children and adolescents can consume up to 50 percent of their daily calories at school, it is important to ensure that all schools offer nutritious options to our children.

The good news is that much progress has been made. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has taken important steps in recent years, and schools around the country are working to implement new standards. First, the USDA raised the standards for healthy foods in school lunches. More recently, the USDA released an “interim final” rule in June of 2013 increasing healthy eating standards for “competitive foods” in schools, making them “Smart Snacks in School.” “Competitive foods” is a technical term referring to all foods and beverages in schools that are not part of the school meal program—these snack and other foods and beverages are sold in the cafeteria à la carte line, in school vending machines, at school stores or in snack bars. Schools are required to comply with these updated standards beginning in the 2014-15 school year.

The impact of these USDA actions will vary significantly from state to state and school to school unless advocates across the country join the push to make sure all of our children have a school food environment geared toward improving children’s health, academic performance and general wellbeing.

Critical advocacy is needed at multiple levels. Most urgently, we need to make sure the new standards are implemented by states and schools districts so that all students receive the benefits of this new law, and then encourage state to leverage the new standards to strengthen state and school district policies and practices. Advocates may want to assess the policy environment in their state and consider the following opportunities:

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

1. **Aligning state laws and/or regulations with federal laws:** Your state may already be among the 37 states that have passed statewide competitive food policy. You can check here: <http://foods.bridgingthegapresearch.org/>.

Regardless of whether or not your state has a policy, schools will be required to meet the USDA standards. Thus, if your state does not have required nutrition standards for competitive foods or if your state guidelines are not as strong as USDA's, the USDA rule will supersede the current expectations. If your state does have a competitive food policy and any elements of that policy are stronger than the USDA policy, then your state may work through a process to harmonize your existing state rules with federal rules. This may take the form of state legislation, regulations, or guidance through the regulatory agency—usually the State's Department of Education or Department of Agriculture. If there are elements of your state policy that go beyond the new rules but are important to maintain such as extending nutrition standards into the out-of-school time hours or providing added incentive funding, it may require additional advocacy work on the state level to ensure that state policy is not rolled back to simply match the USDA standards.

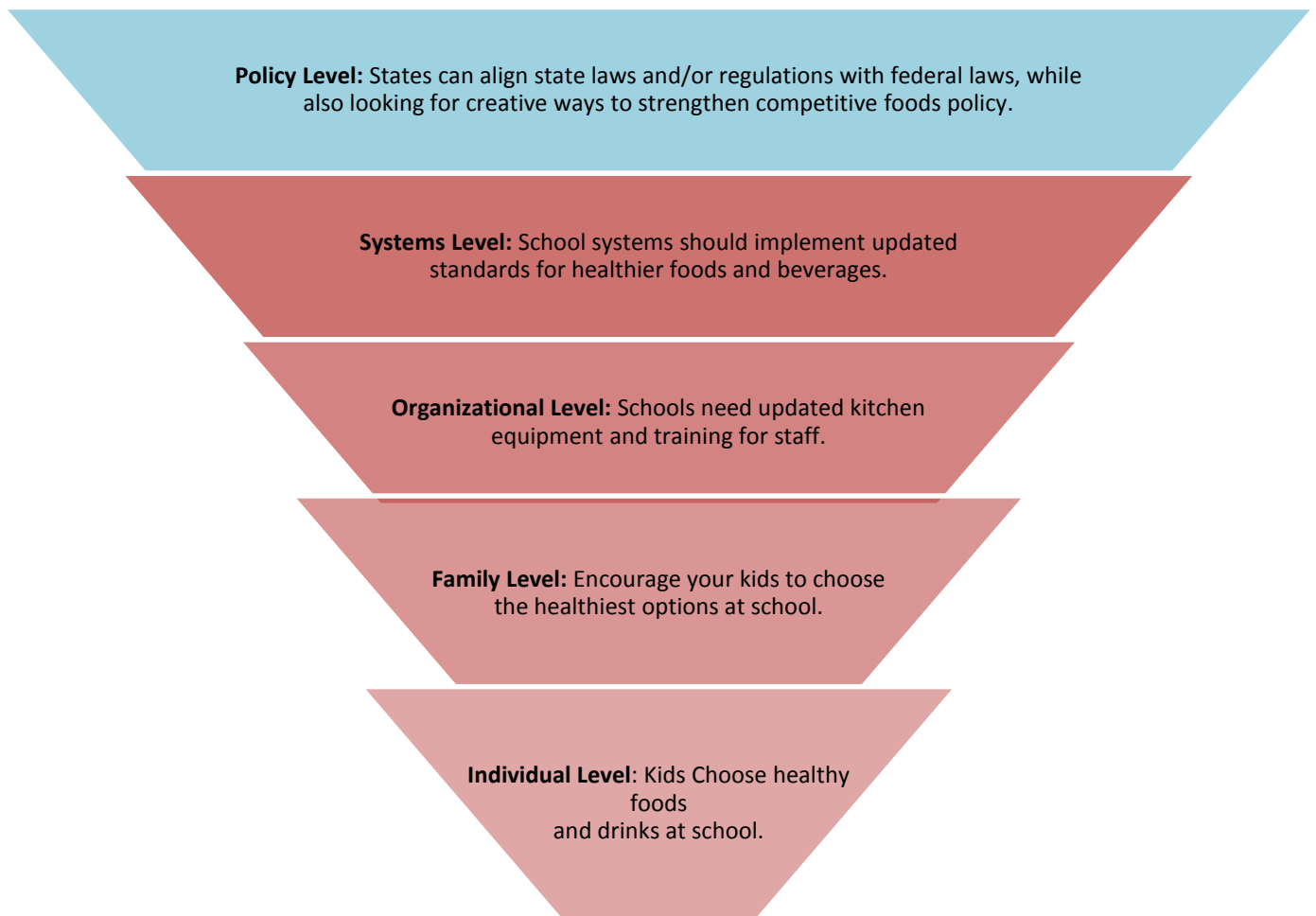
You should talk with your state agency leadership about their authority and plans to harmonize policy at the regulatory or guidance level, if any, in order to determine whether or not additional agency or legislative advocacy work is necessary.

2. **Extend the nutrition standards beyond the school day:** Extend the nutrition standards into the out-of-school time hours. Many children participate in before school, afterschool, and summer activities or programs that keep them on school grounds beyond the average 6.5-hour school day or 180-day school year. Ensuring that healthy eating and drinking standards are applied in the school environment during these out-of-school time hours may be achieved through state legislation or regulatory changes, or via school district policies that increase healthy eating standards for competitive foods in schools.
3. **Fundraiser policy:** The federal standards currently defer to the state agency to determine the number of fundraising activities per school year that may receive an exemption from nutrition standards. Advocates may need to engage with their child nutrition state agency, state lawmakers or local school districts to determine the allowable number of exemptions or to influence efforts to create a broad exemption. If the state agency does not specify the number of exemptions, then there are no exemptions allowed.
4. **Rewards or reinforcement for students:** The federal standards do not currently address classroom parties or rewards. State legislation or regulation may be needed to ensure that all school-based student rewards or reinforcement programs are aligned with the snack guidelines in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in Schools.
5. **Explore opportunities to enhance resources for meeting updated standards for schools.** Examples of resources could include:
 - a. Professional development for food service staff or other responsible parties;

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

- b. Implement regional buying co-ops to increase purchasing power;
 - c. Increase healthy food offerings provided through state and federal agencies;
 - d. Increase capital improvement resources for healthy food procurement, storage, refrigeration, preparation, and service;
 - e. Provide awards or other incentives for achieving US Healthier School Challenge Gold, Alliance for a Healthier Generation Healthy Schools Program Gold, or other equivalent recognition status;
 - f. Require increased transparency to parents in regards to school/district compliance with the standards such as addressing on district website or including all a la carte foods to be listed on school menus;
 - g. Increase accountability for meeting standards such as requiring goals tied to the school nutrition environment to be included on School Improvement Plans or progress reports included on district report cards.
6. **One school at a time:** Schools around the country are currently working to adopt the revised federal standards. They need new approaches, staff training and new kitchen equipment in many schools. You can make a difference in how these standards are applied in your local schools. Get involved in your local school, PTA, the district wellness committee, or other efforts.
7. **Expanding the impact:** The federal school nutrition standards apply to most schools, but not all. Schools that do not participate in federal meal programs are exempt. Most often, schools that do not participate are private schools or those representing higher-income populations with few or no students needing free or reduced price meals. Individual exempt schools and districts can adopt the federal standards on their own so that their students have the same benefits.
8. **Starting at home:** Parents, guardians and families have a critical role to play in school nutrition. Teaching healthy eating practices starts at home, and parents can support healthy eating for all children at school by providing healthy classroom snacks and non-food related celebrations.

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }



Let’s work together to improve healthy eating in schools across the country by strongly implementing USDA’s updated snack food and beverage standards through the steps outlined above. While we encourage all of the above steps and related advocacy, this guide is focused on items 1-4 as the actions with the widest scale of potential impact. However, individual, family and local school action is critical and we hope the tools in this guide are easily transferrable to those efforts as well. In this kit are guides for identifying and recruiting diverse volunteers, spreading the word online, alerting local media, holding events and meeting with state and local public officials to encourage policies that promote healthy foods in schools.

Your activities can be as simple or as in-depth as you want them to be, depending on your resources and those of the partners you engage to help. Even small actions can make a dramatic difference.

Thank you for taking action to ensure that the schools in your state offer nutritious foods at every opportunity. Together, we can **help make food choices an “easy A.”**^{®™}

A Note on Lobbying

It is always important to understand whether any activities you are planning could fall under the IRS definition of lobbying. This is especially true if you receive a Voices for Healthy Kids (VFHK) grant to support your efforts, because no VFHK funds can be used to support lobbying. Generally, any activity or communication that takes a position on specific pending or proposed legislation—for Congress, a state legislature, a city council or a town meeting—could be considered lobbying in some circumstances. Below are some examples of opportunities that may be considered lobbying or non-lobbying.

Lobbying	Non-Lobbying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Contact your legislator and ask him/her to support bill number XXXX.” • “Click here to sign the petition to support bill number XXXX.” • A communication that supports bills not yet introduced: “Missouri should adopt Kansas’ law banning unhealthy snacks and beverages in school vending machines.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Ask your legislator to support healthy food choices for our children!” • “Sign up to attend the walk for healthy foods in schools in St. Louis!” • “As a concerned member of the St. Louis community, I ask all my neighbors to join me in supporting healthy snack foods and beverages for our children while they’re at school.”

Look for the following icon throughout this toolkit, which identifies areas where lobbying may come into play:



When you engage in activities that may involve lobbying, consult your lawyer, as well as the checklist in the appendix of this toolkit, to help you determine whether you need to use lobbying funds for any of your efforts. Lobbying efforts must be supported with other funds, and these costs must be tracked separately from non-lobbying efforts. All types of activities, both lobbying and non-lobbying, can be valuable in helping to promote healthy lifestyles in your community. However, if your ultimate goal becomes the passage of legislation, you will probably need unrestricted funds to conduct some of your work.

This toolkit is written for organizations that are legally able to lobby and have lobbying and non-lobbying funds available. (Public charities are able to conduct a limited amount of lobbying, private foundations are not. Governmental entities are subject to different rules; check with your lawyer for details.)

Along the way, in this toolkit you will find important tips to understand the distinctions between lobbying and non-lobbying activities, as well as when to use lobbying funds versus non-lobbying funds. We have provided examples to help you understand the distinctions between lobbying and non-lobbying activities so you can plan your activities strategically, without violating restrictions on your non-lobbying funds. Please also be aware that some states have rules that may be relevant to your activities and may have registration and other requirements; this guide does not address those state rules.

Engagement Phases

No matter what the issue or which organization leads it, there are four key phases to each campaign: recruit, engage, mobilize and evaluate. The plan below outlines each of these phases; as you plan your campaign, make sure you have designated time for each one of these key steps.

Phase 1: Recruit

This first phase of the campaign is where you lay the groundwork that will ensure your success. It's where you recruit key advocates to your cause. Think about these questions: Who can be your spokespeople? Are there families in your community who would be willing to share their story through an op-ed or a letter to the editor? Where do members of various ethnic, cultural, socio-economic and racial groups in the community regularly congregate? What are the organizations in your community that advocate on behalf of different racial and ethnic communities? Are there any alliances with doctors, dietitians, nurses, researchers, school nutrition association, teachers, PTA or academics that could be explored? Who do you want to be your “everyday advocates,” the large group of people who speaks out about the issues at hand? Do these “everyday advocates” represent the diversity of the communities most impacted by the need for policy change?

Consider reaching out to specific audiences as they correspond to the policy you are working to address. For example, if you want to extend the nutrition standards into the out-of-school time hours, you will want to target parents/guardians whose children participate in before school, afterschool, or during the summer; school administrators who are involved in scheduling, managing, or implementing the programs; and school partners who provide out-of-school time activities and programs. However, if you are trying to influence school fundraiser policy, you may not choose to target these specific out-of-school time audiences.

Reach out to these people via all channels available to you: social media, existing member databases, personal emails, blogs, paid advertisements, community outreach, tabling at street fairs and festivals, public announcements at places of worship, etc. Be sure to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate materials, too; the wider you're able to cast your net, the more likely you are to recruit a diverse audience that cares about the changes you want to make. Stretch beyond your comfort zone.

Once you determine who is on your side, start thinking about how to garner support from public officials and other important leaders, especially school officials. In many cases, you'll want to share your message with supporters and ask them to send a letter to their representatives or key officials. You can do that through letters, e-communications, blogs, public service announcements, letters to the editor, op-eds, social media, etc. Check the appendix of this toolkit for examples of many of these tactics.

Finally, before you execute any of the tactics in this toolkit, make sure you establish your metrics of success. Determine how you'll measure the effectiveness of your communications: Media impressions? Likes? Comments? Open and click-through rates? Offline actions taken, such as signing up for educational opportunities or to volunteer? Set these parameters before you get started so you can measure your success throughout the campaign.

More information on how to implement the Recruitment Phase is found in the sections on [Potential Allies](#), [Recruitment Basics](#) and [Recognition Plan](#).

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

Phase 2: Engage

Phase 1 is for making introductions; phase 2 is for educating. This is when your introductory/educational email, initial media outreach (both traditional and social) and event planning take place.

Now is the perfect time to start building relationships. Stay in regular communication with your activists, keeping them engaged, informed and ready to take action when you need them to. Start working with the media, who tend to respond best to people who are organized, clear, polite and have interesting things for them to write about. Media engagement should include ethnic and mainstream press. This toolkit provides you with introductory language for your social media and e-communication efforts directed at advocates and media.

Additionally, this is the time to start working with a diverse group of spokespeople relevant to the community in which you are working. Use the media tips in this toolkit as a place to start and make sure your spokespeople are familiar with your talking points so they are confident when speaking in public or with media. Schedule your press conferences and events so that you give reporters and community members ample notice.

Phase 3: Mobilize

Now that your planning's done, it's time to act. Reach out to your advocates, your spokespeople, the media, etc., and let them know your campaign's in full motion. Make sure you keep a pulse on your evaluation metrics of success so you can deploy different communication methods to increase engagement as needed.

Keep in regular touch with your diverse community members to keep them informed and engaged. During all stages, but especially this one, make sure you track the movement of the policy at hand so you know how to instruct your supporters. You may need them to do educational outreach at local gatherings to build popular support in the community. At other times, a social action may be best to help bolster recruitment. They may need to write letters to their legislators because a vote in the statehouse is just around the corner. (The costs of planning and conducting these types of activities with legislators will require lobbying funds. However, many of your policy objectives for this issue can be solved through regulatory action, and planning and conducting such actions is not usually considered lobbying.)

As for media, this is the phase where you want to follow through on the relationships you established in phase 2. By this time, you have made connections over phone or email with reporters and local bloggers. Keep in regular touch with reporters to keep them informed and give them ideas for covering your campaign.

If you're planning media events like press conferences, this is the time to execute. Get your spokespeople ready to lead events (for more details on media training, take a look at the Media Training Tips section of this toolkit), and make sure they reflect the diversity of the audience you're trying to reach. Set up opportunities for new advocates to sign up to join the cause. Let media know the event is happening and give them special incentives to cover the story, like a behind-the-scenes press pass that



grants them an interview with your spokesperson and photo opportunities. To learn more about planning a media event, check the Hosting a Media Event section of the toolkit.

More information on how to implement the Mobilizing Phase is found in the sections on [Action Alerts](#), [The Value of Phone Outreach](#), [Hosting a Media Event](#), [Media Training Tips](#), [Why Op-Eds Matter](#), [Meeting with Legislators](#) and [Days at the Capitol](#).

Phase 4: Evaluate

Don't forget about evaluation—it's just as important as the rest of your campaign. Start by taking a look at the metrics you put into place at the beginning of the campaign. That will help you determine what worked and what didn't, and help you make changes for next time.

In whatever ways your campaign has been successful, make sure you let your advocates know so you can celebrate the wins together. Advocates need to know that their efforts meant something to the campaign, especially if they are going to return to your organization or to the cause to see how they can help out again.

Recruit: Potential Allies

Creating local support that enables healthy food choices in schools will be key to your campaign success, and working with partner groups is one of the best ways to build that support. Consider the below list of tips as you begin outreach to other organizations and consult the appendix for a detailed list of potential allies and possible detractors.

Who Can Help

There are many organizations working to improve students’ access to healthy food options. Some are singularly focused on nutrition in schools, while others look at broader issues, including childhood obesity, increased physical activity and civil rights. While some groups may not perfectly align with your plans for this campaign, it’s still worth reaching out to them—they may be valuable partners for other programs you’re pursuing or some of your long-term organizational goals.

Below are some suggestions for potential partners.

- Groups focused on social justice and civil rights in communities of color
- Groups focused on food justice
- Groups focused on educational justice
- Ethnic press
- Local faith leaders
- Groups looking to improve school food options
- Groups committed to reducing childhood obesity
- Groups focused on health, wellness and hunger for low-income families
- Groups focused on health and wellness for historically underserved communities
- Groups focused on child welfare
- Manufacturers of healthy foods
- Ethnic and mainstream Chambers of Commerce

Potential Challenges

The USDA standards for snack and a la carte foods and beverages in schools may be viewed as a political issue for some organizations. Additionally, the potential financial impact these new standards may have for food companies has drawn the attention of trade associations. As such, some organizations have spoken out against the government providing this type of marketplace oversight.

As you begin your efforts, you should be aware of potential opposition, including:

- Groups opposing federal support for nutrition programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Although some potential allies and opponents will be publicly outspoken about their opinions on standards for snack and a la carte foods and beverages, others will take a more subtle approach. Before making a decision on any potential partner or opponent, make sure you look at their goals, mission statement, programs and activities.

Recruit: Recruitment Basics

Deploying a campaign isn't just about mobilizing your supporters to take action or helping bring in school snack and a la carte food and beverage standards to your community schools. It's an opportunity to draw more supporters to your cause and, hopefully, retain them for future campaigns to improve the health of your community. The following recruitment guidelines will help you accomplish these goals.

Note that these tips are suggestions, not requirements. Choose the approach and tactics that work best for your organization and your community. Regardless of how you decide to recruit new supporters, make sure you dedicate sufficient resources to communicate with the diverse audience you hope to engage. For instance, if you are hoping to reach Latino audiences, consider working with translators or translated materials; if your target group does not have access to or utilize the Internet, emphasize offline recruitment opportunities.

Recruiting at Events

Every event your organization initiates and those events you attend should include an easy way for people to join your efforts to support healthy snack and a la carte food and beverage standards in your state. There are several ways to collect information at events; a few ideas are listed below.

- **Bring tablet computers.** Easy to use and extremely portable, tablet computers can be a simple and effective way to collect names and emails on site.
- **Be sure to have the ability to speak the relevant language of the event.** If you do not speak the language, find another supporter who does.
- **Offer sign-up forms.** Tried and true, this option is easy and cheap to initiate. Asking people to fill out a pre-written postcard to an elected official can provide a compelling reason for people to share their personal information. Remember that transcribing these names into a computer-friendly format will take time.
 - Asking people to write their legislator about a general policy issue is not lobbying, unless the request is tied to specific legislation or a specific legislative proposal.
- **Try business card recruitment.** The less effort it takes to sign up, the more people will do so. For example, if you're hosting an event with key business leaders in your community, ask everyone to leave their business cards behind to join the cause. You may pull in more names than with a traditional sign-up form campaign because this sign-up process is so easy.



Recruiting around Issues

It's important to show potential advocates that joining you will make a difference. Potential recruits are much more likely to take action when they believe that doing so will have an impact.

- **Expand the ask.** When recruiting, ask for more than just a name. Ask your potential advocates to take part in an action, such as signing a petition or sending a letter to officials or school leaders asking that USDA standards are implemented in their schools. They could also advocate that snack foods consumed outside normal school hours on the school campus are healthy and will fall under the USDA standards.
 - Asking people to write their legislator about a general policy issue—or about implementing regulations, such as the USDA standards referenced above—is not lobbying, unless the request is tied to specific legislation or a specific legislative proposal.



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- **Address issues head-on.** Don't be afraid to use conflict or controversy where appropriate. People like to engage on issues where there are strong opinions.

Recruiting Online

Don't limit yourself to recruiting via in-person events. There may be a large pool of new advocates you can reach online.

- **Engage social media friends and followers.** If you have affiliate or state online properties, use posts to ask your fans to tell their friends about your organization and school foods, or ask your followers to retweet invitations to join your efforts.
- **Add a sign-up form to Facebook.** If you add a special tab to your Facebook page, fans will be able to take advocacy actions without leaving the Facebook platform.
- **Use Facebook advertising.** Advertising on Facebook can be inexpensive, targeted and effective. Studies have shown that nonprofits use this medium to get people to sign petitions, volunteer and/or attend free events, as well as generate awareness for a campaign. You can even narrow the reach down to the city level and localize content to make engagement more likely.

Recruiting via Word-of-Mouth

Are your advocates telling their friends and families about the importance of healthy foods in schools? Healthy living is not just a volunteer opportunity, it's a way of life—so encourage advocates to mention it at the other groups in which they participate (e.g., civic organizations, fitness classes, etc.). Be sure to include culturally and linguistically appropriate materials for these recruitment opportunities.

- **Ask parents** to bring up snack and a la carte food and beverage standards at the local PTA. Other parents may want to improve access to healthy food at their children's schools and become advocates for your cause.
- **Ask professionals** to mention snack and a la carte food and beverage standards to the regional Chamber of Commerce. A business-minded group may see an economic benefit to bringing more healthy snacks to schools.
 - For example, if you're trying to make the food distributed via school fundraisers healthier, consider reaching out to a health food manufacturer to be the distributor for your school fundraising gifts.
- **Ask faith leaders** to get involved. The faith community is a great way to connect with community members as well, especially in under-resourced communities.
- **Reach out through civic organizations** in your community. Ask to speak at a meeting or luncheon of the Junior League, Kiwanis Club, Delta Sigma Theta sorority or other local organization.

Recruiting via Competition

Some healthy competition among your existing advocate base can help bring new followers to your organization.

- **Challenge your existing advocates** to recruit friends and family. Then, host a celebration to welcome new advocates to your organization.
- **Offer a prize** to whoever can recruit the most new friends and followers online. Create pre-written tweets and Facebook posts and then count shares and retweets. When possible, make sure the prize is health-related or at least does not send an unhealthy message.

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

Recruiting in the Community

What does your target audience like to do? Instead of creating new events, meet them where they currently gather.

- **Attend community festivals.** Host booths at street fairs, cultural festivals or carnivals, and ask attendees to sign up.
- **Attend school sports events.** Some communities rally around the local school sports teams. If this fits your community, it may be a good opportunity to influence the types of foods that are sold at these times. Consider attending sports events to meet parents and teachers who may want to be involved.
- **Partner with universities.** Host a table at school fairs and encourage students to form an on-campus group in support of standards for ensuring that all foods and beverages sold in schools are healthy.
- **Reach out to local places of worship.** Recruit members to attend local events and organizing meetings through bulletin advertisements and in-person announcements.

Recruiting via Politics

Leverage the response of your state legislators to encourage advocates to recruit more friends to the cause. For example:

- **Send emails** with subject lines or topics featuring legislator opposition or support—and encourage existing advocates to recruit their friends and family. For example, “We need more people to tell Senator Jones that we care about healthy snacks in schools!” Or “Please thank Senator Garcia for supporting healthy school foods.”
 - This email would not be lobbying unless “healthy snacks in schools” clearly refers to legislation pending in Senator Jones’s statehouse. Usually, general statements about accessing healthy snacks for kids in school is not lobbying, although it may be lobbying to urge the adoption of specific laws to ensure schools provide healthy food choices. Referring specifically to the USDA “Smart Snacks in School” standards generally will not be lobbying, because it is regulatory in nature.



Recruit: Recognition Plan

Recognition: we all want it. It’s no surprise that happy advocates are more likely to submit a letter to the editor, sign a petition or attend a rally. As you conduct your campaign, recognizing your advocates for their contribution to your efforts will be crucial in gaining and retaining your support base.

Volunteer Recognition

Recognize New Volunteers

A strong campaign starts with a strong recruitment push. By creating a foundation of supporters early, you’ll have them ready to activate when the time comes. Consider the following ways to grow your base of support and recognize new advocates.

- **Small gifts branded with your organization’s logo** (for example, water bottles or USB drives) can be a fun reward for signing up. To make resources stretch a bit further, consider offering incentives to the first 50 or 100 people who sign up on a specific day or giving prizes to advocates for recruiting the largest number of new supporters.

Recognize Existing Volunteers

Gaining new advocates is never the end of the story. It’s also important to maintain a good relationship with your existing supporters, making sure they know how valuable they are to your cause. One of the best ways to show appreciation is through recognition. Consider offering the following:

- **Exclusive opportunities**, like the chance to meet with your organization’s leadership or serve on a volunteer advisory panel.
- **Certificates or trophies**, especially when presented at a public event.
- **Invitations** to attend volunteer happy hours, receptions or trainings.

Choose the Right Time

Whether you’re reaching out to new or existing advocates, we suggest taking advantage of specific times of the year when engagement is traditionally high.

- **Leverage local festivals.** Consider creating recognition pieces around local street fairs or festivals, like free entry or food tickets.
- **Speak up when it’s time to vote.** If the local government is voting on measures pertaining to snack and a la carte foods and beverages for schools, this is a key time to recognize existing and potential advocates. If you have the lobbying resources to do so, asking advocates to contact their legislators to vote for the measures you care about—and then thanking the advocates when they do—is an important step.
 - This will be grassroots lobbying, because it’s a communication to the public that reflects a view on legislation and contains a call to action. Make sure you have the resources to pay for these activities and track them appropriately.
 - **Remember: School board members are not legislators.** Asking a school board to implement a measure to meet the USDA healthy snack and a la carte food and beverage standards is not lobbying, because school boards are not legislative bodies under the IRS lobbying regulations. But asking the city or county council to pass the same measure would be lobbying.



{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

- **Use the calendar to inspire you.** Create recognition pieces around key health observances taking place throughout the year (e.g. National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month in September or School Lunch Week in October) where you spotlight and thank advocates for their efforts to improve community and school nutrition.

Staff Recognition

Volunteers aren't the only ones who make a campaign a success. As you thank your volunteers for their efforts, make sure to also thank the staff members who keep the campaign running every day.

- **Celebrate them publicly.** If you hold an annual gala or celebration, highlight the good work the staff has done over the past year. Offering awards or opportunities to publically acknowledge good work lets employees know their work has been noticed and is valued.
- **Ask your strongest recruiters of new advocates to lead a call** or webinar, so they can share their tips with other staff members.
- **Conduct a staff contest** to see which members can bring in the most new advocates over a specified period. In return, offer a day off or a gift card as an incentive.
- **Highlight the diversity of your staff** to demonstrate its importance in engaging all parts of the community.

Engage: Diverse Audiences

No matter the issue you’re working on or the policy goals you’re trying to advance, engaging with diverse audiences should be a core part of your campaign. This is especially true if you’re working on an issue that will have a direct impact on communities that are different from the ones in which you or your team lives. Engaging with diverse audiences makes good sense: the most successful campaigns are often the ones that speak to and engage as many different people as possible. Priority populations (people living in high-poverty urban areas, particularly African-American and Latino; people living in high-poverty rural areas; people living in the South; and people living in Tribal Nations) are particularly important to engage as partners and advocates.

Below are some questions designed to make you think about who you’re reaching out to and how. They are intended to be thought-starters, not an exhaustive list.

- **Who’s on our team?** Take a look at your volunteer base, your advisors and your staff. Are your teams made up of leaders and advocates representing priority populations? Do they represent the communities where you want to have the most impact—particularly if those communities are historically underserved? If not, where are the opportunities to do more?
- **How are we recruiting and engaging?** If your teams are less diverse than they could be, consider expanding the ways you recruit and engage volunteers. For instance, not everyone has access to the Internet; if your campaign is heavily based online, you may be limiting who is able to join your efforts. Pen-and-paper recruitment and offline volunteer opportunities can help make sure more people are able to get involved.
- **Where are we recruiting and engaging?** When it comes to getting people involved, location is just as important as technique. Are you reaching out to local faith communities and the ethnic small business community? Many faith communities have separate services in different languages. If you aren’t already, try having a presence or table at events that draw a diverse crowd or partnering with a local ethnic Chamber of Commerce.
- **Who are we talking to?** Make sure you’re working with non-mainstream news outlets in your area. There may be newspapers, radio stations or television networks geared towards diverse communities, particularly non-English-speakers and people of color. Ethnic media coverage can both provide new and different angles on your campaign and encourage diverse audiences to get involved with your work.
- **Is language a barrier to access?** If there are non-English-speakers in your area, consider having your materials translated and easily accessible at events and online. If you’re planning on hosting phone banks, engage multilingual volunteers. And if you’re planning on having a presence at events where people are likely to speak another language, make sure you have people staffing your table or booth who speak those languages.
- **Do our team members feel welcome and listened to?** Getting people to sign up or take action is one thing; fostering a welcoming, affirming environment is another. Listen to what your volunteers, advisors and staff members say about your campaign, and strive for an environment where everyone has a seat at the table.
- **Are we considering unique cultural and community perspectives?** Every culture and community has its own nuanced way of thinking and talking about issues. Try to learn what these issues are ahead of time. For instance, if you are supporting walk to school efforts, the salient issues for one

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neighborhood might not be focused on childhood obesity, but rather a neighborhood safe from crime where kids can walk and play outside.

- **What else can we do?** Throughout your campaign, keep asking yourself the types of questions listed above. There are always opportunities to open your doors wider and expand your reach further.

Engage: Social Media Resources and Tips

It’s going to take community support to fully implement the “Smart Snacks in School” guidelines. Fortunately, social media platforms allow you to share your message with a wider audience than traditional door-to-door grassroots work can. With a few clicks, you can access the right people at the right moment, making them aware of the issue and garnering their support. The following tips were created to help you do just that: extend your community of advocates online to create an even bigger groundswell of support for nutrition standards for snack and a la carte foods and beverages in schools. National experts may already have example resources you can model or tailor for use in your campaign.

Using Images and Videos

Posts with multimedia drive higher engagement rates and increased reach—people like looking and clicking on images and video. Below is a quick overview of how you can best put multimedia to use on Facebook and Twitter.

Images

- **Choose a diverse range of people.** It’s important that different groups see people that look like themselves in the images you use.
- **Only use content you own.** The images, videos or graphics you post should be either created by your team or purchased on stock photography sites. If your organization has an existing photo library, search to see if anything can be repurposed.
- **Ask your advocates to sign release forms.** Photos of real-life advocates are always ideal. Just remember that anyone you spotlight online—whether in stories, photos or videos—must sign an authorization release form. Ask your organization for the appropriate forms.
- **Repurpose print materials online.** The postcard, flyer and fact sheet included in this toolkit can easily be posted or linked to on Facebook and Twitter.
 - The postcard is especially useful as a featured image to supplement your Facebook posts.
 - Invite advocates to print off the flyer and post it at work or around their neighborhood.
 - Save a PDF of the fact sheet and link to it from your post, inviting advocates to read and learn more or share it with friends and family.

Videos

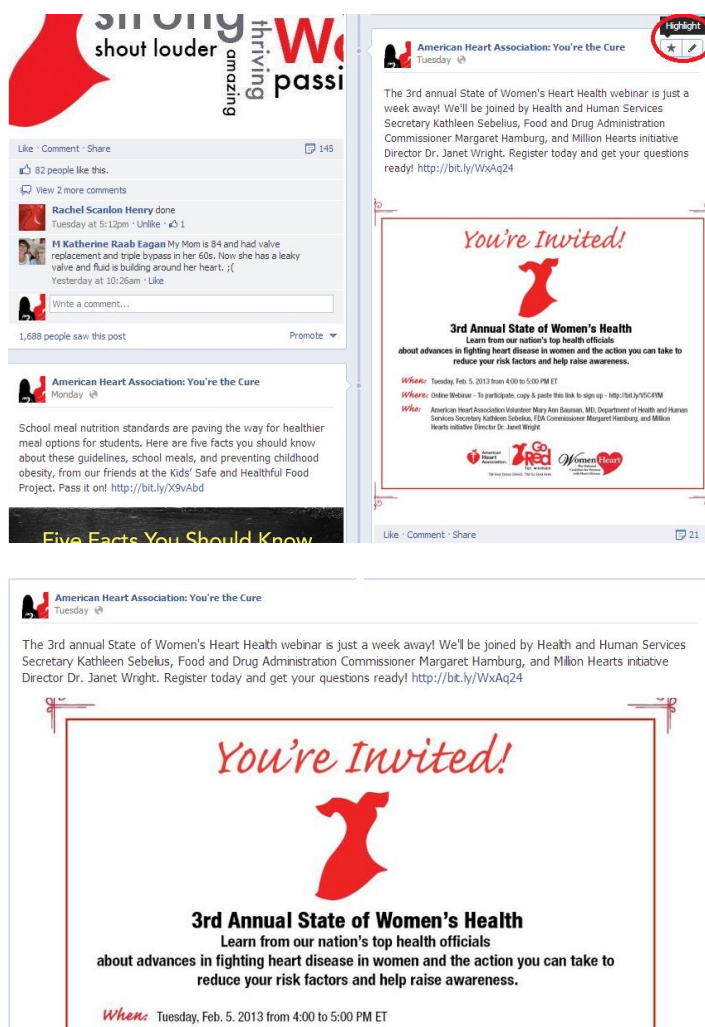
- **Highlight your advocates.** If you have access to a video camera or even a smartphone, consider creating a video of advocate stories. Ask your advocates to talk about their role in the campaign and why they support nutrition standards for snack and a la carte foods and beverages in schools.
 - Stories of real-life advocates can be one of the most effective measures for swaying decision makers, because they represent actual constituents’ opinions on the policies you care about.
- **School footage and photos.** Get permission and obtain releases to film children at school. Take photos of healthy or unhealthy vending or other school food options.
- **Create mini-documentaries.** A short film following kids through their day at school can highlight instances where kids are presented with both healthy and unhealthy food options. This can illustrate how many times kids face food choices each day and how important it is to increase healthy options in schools.

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Facebook

Especially if you already have an established presence, Facebook can be an excellent way to engage your existing advocates and recruit new ones. Below are a few tips for spreading the word on Facebook.

- **Use your existing account.** Don't create a new page just for snack and a la carte food and beverage nutrition standards. This way, when new people “like” your page because of school food nutrition standards, they will also stay in the loop on your other initiatives.
- **Recruit new members right from Facebook.** Consider creating a registration app on your page so users can sign up to be a part of the effort without even leaving Facebook. You can point potential advocates to the registration app through Facebook ads and posts on your wall.
- **Highlight key posts.** Facebook allows you to select posts you'd like to draw specific attention to and expand them across your page to catch your readers' eyes. See the following graphics for an example.



- **Use images to help advocates identify with your cause.** The postcard in this toolkit can be repurposed to create an image advocates can use on their own profiles. Consider using the front side of the postcard to do the following:

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- Make it your page’s cover photo and ask advocates to tag themselves and their friends in the image. That way, their tags show up on their newsfeed and in their friends’ notifications.
- Encourage advocates to make the postcard their cover photo or profile picture as well. The advocates’ friends will see the images on their profiles, helping to raise awareness about the issue. Make sure to give advocates a caption to go with their post, which tells viewers to go to your site to help out.
- On Twitter, encourage advocates to make the postcard their banner picture, so their followers will see the image.
- **Share the message with decision makers.** Many states’ decision makers have an online presence, which can be an effective venue for them to hear from advocates.
 - As advocates tag themselves in your cover photo, encourage them to tag their decision makers as well. Note that some decision makers may have set their privacy to restrict this.
 - Encourage advocates to tag their decision makers in their Facebook posts about snack and a la carte foods and beverages in schools. Check the appendix for examples of what these posts could look like.

Note: A post that does not tag a legislator is a public communication and will be lobbying only if it reflects a view on specific legislation and it includes a call to action. Note that if a social media post constitutes lobbying, the staff time related to writing the post is attributable to lobbying, however small the cost of that staff time may be.
- **Ask advocates for a response.** Create posts that encourage advocates to interact, including the use of online quizzes.
 - Ask questions: “What do you know about nutrition standards and snack and a la carte foods and beverages in schools?” “What percentage of their daily calories do you think children consume at school?”
 - Encourage story-sharing: “What does the food selection at your area school look like? What would you change?”
 - Keep them accountable: “How have you helped to bring healthy food to our local schools?”
- **Highlight partners.** There may be other community organizations that are also working to bring healthy food options to schools.
 - Consider working with them to highlight each other’s work in Facebook posts. That way, your mention will show up on their social media channels (and vice versa), giving you leverage to reach their community for recruitment purposes.
- **Take online actions offline.** There are many creative ways to share several items in this toolkit—the poster, flyer, fact sheet, etc.—on Facebook and encourage people to distribute them in their communities.
 - Ask advocates to print the flyers and hand them out at events in their town or post them on community message bulletin boards in parks, libraries or coffee shops.
 - Bring the action back online by asking advocates to post a picture of themselves putting up the flyers.
 - Post the decision-maker fact sheet on your Facebook page so that it is available to advocates to use in their own meetings with decision makers. And of course, ask them to come back to the Facebook page to report on what they are doing, and how their own meetings went.



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Ad Campaigns

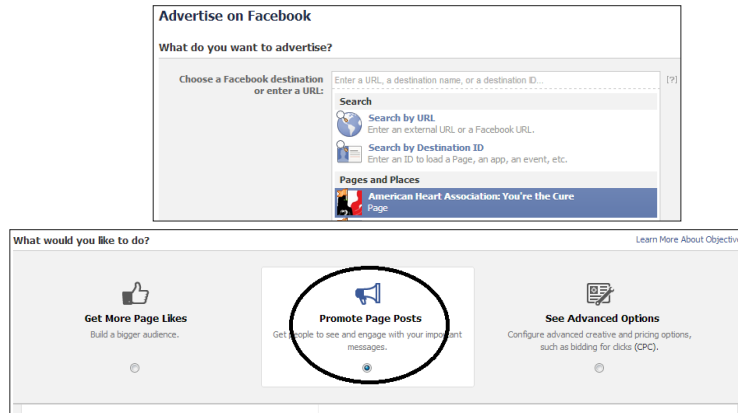
- **Promote your posts.** Promoted posts take highlighted posts one step further by elevating them in your fans’ feeds. Promoted posts have a nominal cost and their benefits are far-reaching. *In this toolkit, we have provided a suggested image for a promoted post. Use the image and then assign corresponding text to it, such as: “Schools across the country are selling healthier snacks and drinks. Act now to make sure your child’s school does too at [INSERT URL].”*
 - Promoted posts come with a range of pricing options, depending on how many fans your page has and how many people you would like to reach with your post. You will have the option to elevate your post in your fans’ newsfeeds, or in both their newsfeeds and their friends’ newsfeeds. On top of this, you can target promoted posts by age, gender and location.
 - You can promote posts right from your Facebook page; look in the lower right-hand corner of the post you want to elevate. Click on “Boost Post,” select your dollar amount and audience reach, and then enter credit card details for payment.



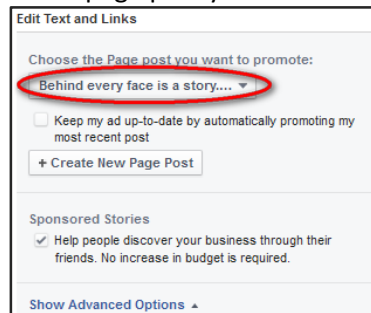
- **Create an ad campaign.** You can also turn promoted posts into a wider Facebook advertising campaign, which will allow you to target specific audiences in a way not feasible from your Facebook page.
 - Visit <https://www.facebook.com/ads/create>.
 - Select your destination page (this should be your organization’s Facebook page).

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- Select the Promoted Posts option.



- Select the page post you would like to promote.



- Now you are ready to choose your audience. First, select age and gender targeting and then type in interests. Remember to include broad interest topics to reach as wide an audience as possible.
 - For targeting based on location, workplace, behavior, school, relationship status or languages, click the appropriate button and add in targeting criteria. Consider groups of people who may have a natural interest in fighting childhood obesity—parents or teachers, for example—and target them based on related interests like local parenting groups or the PTA.
 - You can also target audiences based on whether they're already fans of your organization on Facebook.

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Create Your Audience

Age: [?] 13 [v] - No max [v]

Gender: [?] All
 Men
 Women

Precise Interests: [?]

Advanced Targeting ▲

+ Interests + Behavior + Location

+ Gender and Age + School + Workplace

+ Languages + Relationship Status

- Finally, select your budget. Even a small amount can help you get results.

Account and Campaign Help: Campaign

Account Settings

These settings cannot be changed once you create your ad.

Account Currency: [v]

Account Country: [v]

Account Time Zone: [v]

Campaign and Budget

Name: [?]

Budget: [?]

Schedule: [?] Run my campaign continuously starting today
 Set a start and end date

Engage: Using Social Media to Reach Journalists

With more than 6.9 million active users on Twitter every day and 552 million daily active users on Facebook, social media can serve as a powerful tool to amplify your message and reach highly targeted audiences.

Just as consumers are increasingly turning to social media for news, so are journalists. While they use social media to follow items of personal interest and to interact with their own networks, they also use it to research stories and follow trends.

Reach Media through Social Channels

- **Start with research.** Before you begin engaging with journalists, make sure to research their backgrounds. This will help you personalize your messages, reference relevant past articles and explain why you have contacted them.
- **Try email, too.** Most journalists prefer to be contacted through email, not on social media. If you do not have an existing relationship with a journalist, a well-written email may be more effective than a tweet. You can also post a comment on the news outlet’s webpage under the online version of the news story.
- **Don’t begin with a pitch.** Though it is generally not appropriate to pitch over Twitter, you can use it to get on a journalist’s radar. Start by following the reporter on Twitter and retweeting or commenting on content you find interesting.
- **Be respectful.** It is important to be mindful of journalists’ time and to remember that all interactions are public. Don’t mass tweet pitches to several reporters and outlets.
- **Be careful with direct messages (DMs).** Don’t ask a journalist you aren’t following to send you a direct message. Only people who follow one another can send each other direct messages.

Sample Tweets

Below are a few sample tweets designed to build relationships with journalists and get on their radar as a thought leader on snack and a la carte foods and beverages. Included below are references to specific policies to help you see how they could fit within a tweet. Note, however, that you can use all of these tweets for any of the policies by slightly tweaking the language. The Key Messages earlier in this toolkit can help with that.

- In response to a journalist tweeting about expansion of the nutrition standards into the out-of-school time hours: “.@[journalist] Really interesting take on #nutrition in schools. Love your point on applying these standards to time outside of school.”
- Sharing an article by a journalist: “[insert quote or paraphrased point from article] via @journalist [link to article] #SmartSnacks”
- Sharing an article by the journalist and generating discussion among your followers: “Read [article title] via @journalist [link to article]. How can we make school fundraisers healthier?”
- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on bringing USDA standards to schools in your state: “.@[journalist] Loved this piece - such an important topic! Would love to chat about how we can bring standards to our schools.”
- In response to a journalist tweeting an article on food rewards/reinforcement in the classroom: “.@[journalist] Really interesting points! Have you thought about how new standards could help make school food rewards healthier? #SmartSnacks”

Social Media Engagement Tips & Tricks

- Be transparent and disclose your job/purpose/association in your bio.
- Employ a conversational tone and avoid buzzwords.
- Always begin by listening to the existing conversation.
- Identify opportunities to be current and relevant.
- Be human.
- Be timely.
- Be prepared to carry on a conversation with your followers.
- Include hyperlinks for additional information.
- Use relevant hashtags when appropriate to help your comments show up in larger conversations.
- Use handles of people (policy maker, organization, reporter) whose attention you are trying to garner.
- Focus on facts and avoid entering in to editorial disagreements or arguments.

Mobilize: Action Alerts

Your existing database of supporters is perfectly positioned to become an army of grassroots activists. By joining your email list, these individuals have already indicated they want to learn more about who you are and the issues important to you. The next step is converting their interest into a deeper level of commitment to your mission—and to helping kids across America—by getting your supporters to complete an action, such as signing a petition, communicating directly with policy makers and other decision makers or attending events.

As you begin a conversation with your supporters through email, keep these goals in mind:

- **Educate them** through issue updates or updated Web content. Communications like this allow you to:
 - Provide advocates with information and cultivate their interest in an issue.
 - Identify message areas that resonate best with subsets of the audience, allowing you to better tailor outreach. Think of ways to engage your newly recruited diverse audiences.
 - Keep individuals involved and updated during periods where critical action is not required, making it easier to engage them when the time comes.
- **Engage them in opportunities** to deepen their activism through surveys, “share your story” opportunities or social media engagement. These activities give people actions to take that help you:
 - Learn more about what type of participation people want to have.
 - Train activists to be good stewards of issue messages.
 - Expand your reach by amplifying your message through individuals’ social networks.
 - Reach out to diverse communities by engaging trusted messengers from those communities.
 - Show activists the importance of their participation, so they are ready to respond in times where urgent action may be needed.
- **Activate them** with new and varied calls to action, based on the way their unique voices can make a difference. Your advocates can reach the public through:
 - Participation in public dialogue on key issues by commenting on news articles, blog posts or polls.
 - Recruitment of new individuals to join the cause.
 - Attendance at public meetings, town halls or hearings in support of your position.
 - Contacting lawmakers via email, phone, postal mail or in person to contribute their opinions.
 - If your request reflects a view on specific legislation, asking advocates to contact their legislators will be lobbying.



Email action alerts also allow you to communicate with supporters personally, measure their interest through open rates and track their support through clicks on the links in your email. Because email communications have the capacity to be uniquely microtargeted to recipients, sending alerts to your audience can be one of the most powerful ways to inspire mobilization around healthy beverages and smart snacks in schools.

Mobilize: The Value of Phone Outreach

Even in today’s digital era, person-to-person contact remains one of the most effective means of relationship building. Below is an overview of how to train volunteers, as well as two different types of phone outreach: phone banks and phone patch programs.

Phone Banking

Operating a phone bank connects your organization’s volunteers with new potential advocates—people you hope will want to learn more about your issues, get involved with your campaign and act to achieve your goals. In order to host a successful phone bank, make sure you address the steps below.

Recruit and Train Volunteers

- **Enlist your team.** Find people who would be willing to make calls on a regular or semi-regular basis. Current staff members at your organization or existing volunteers are the best resources.
- **Identify your manager.** Designate someone from your team to manage the call center. Train them to lead the volunteers and ensure program success.
- **Train your callers.** Be sure volunteers are briefed on the issues, can discuss these topics with callers, and exercise cultural sensitivity whenever appropriate. Conduct a training session where they can learn your talking points and practice making calls to familiarize themselves with the process.
- **Identify any unique language needs.** Does your community include non-native English speakers? Be sure to recruit bilingual volunteers or enlist the help of volunteer translators.

Find a Location and Supplies

- **Decide where people will call.** Before moving forward in this process, you must determine if you want callers to work from a centralized location or not. People can make calls from their homes but, without supervision, they might not stick to the script and could damage potential or existing relationships. Your offices could be a good location for local, targeted calls.
- **Equip yourself.** Make sure your call center has enough lines and telephones for volunteers.
- **Set time limits and provide refreshments.** Establish how long you want the call center to be open. If it is for a long period of time, make sure you provide food and drinks to volunteers.

Create a Call List

- **Develop your list.** A call list is essential to any successful phone bank but, like all communication, it must be targeted. You should target individuals based on a known or potential interest in school foods and beverages standards— past attendees at healthy living events, members of coalition partner organizations, health professionals, school leaders, local health department, etc. A number of resources are available to help discover target audiences, including U.S. Census data.
- **Start with existing advocates at your organization.** You already have their information, and it will make sense to them when they hear from you because they have expressed previous passion for related issues.
- **Consider buying lists.** It is also possible to buy lists with phone numbers and other advocate information. Prices vary based on the amount of targeting and number of people in a list, but InfoUSA (www.infousa.com), Caldwell List Company (www.caldwell-list.com) and Dataman Group (www.datamangroup.com) can be good resources if you wish to purchase a list.

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Develop a Script

- Prepare a script and some one-pagers to be sure volunteers have the materials they need for effective and informative conversations. Make sure your script includes the following information.
 - **Introduction:** Provide a brief introduction of who you are and the organization you represent. There’s no need to begin explaining the issue at this point. Ask the caller if they have time to talk about the issue.
 - **Outline of the Issue:** If the caller has the time, explain the issue and why it is important. This is the point where targeting is most important. The USDA snack and a la carte food and beverage standards will affect people differently. Be sure you know the person you’re talking to, and tailor the conversation to them.
 - **Request for Assistance:** Following the explanation of the issue, ask the advocates for another point of contact, e.g., their email or mailing address. Having this information will allow you to follow up later and provide further details about the issue.
 - **Closing:** If someone declines to hear about the issue, ask if there would be a better time to call back. And whether advocates want to speak or not, always thank them for their time.
- Below is a sample phone banking script. Feel free to customize it for your needs, to include any cultural variations for particular audiences of interest, and be sure to enlist your bilingual volunteers. You may need more than one script depending on your intended reach.
 - Hi **[ADVOCATE NAME]**. My name is **[YOUR NAME]**, and I’m calling on behalf of **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**.
 - We’re working to make school nutrition better in schools across the nation, including in **[ADVOCATE AREA]**. Do you have a few minutes to talk about how this initiative will help children in your area?
 - **IF YES**
 - Great! We need to make it easier for children and adolescents in **[ADVOCATE AREA]** to get healthy snacks at school. Right now, snacks and beverages distributed as a reward or reinforcement in the classroom tend to be unhealthy, and higher in fat, sugar and sodium. When we reinforce good behavior with food, we’re sending mixed messages about healthy living to our children. And since children consume up to half of their calories at school each day, these in-classroom snacks could greatly impact students’ diets and overall health. Plus, research shows that students who have access to healthy foods are more likely to perform better academically.
 - Would you be willing to help us out? If you join us, we will keep you up-to-date on all the issues and progress being made in your area and nationally.
 - **IF YES:** Wonderful. Let me get your **[EMAIL, MAILING ADDRESS, etc.]** so we can keep you updated.
 - **IF NO:** Well, thanks for your time, and if you want to learn more about the program, you can visit **[WEBSITE]**. Have a great **[DAY, EVENING, etc.]**
 - **IF NO**
 - Is there a more convenient time I can call you back? *(If yes, write when to call back and make a note. If no, then skip to...)* Thanks for your time, and if you

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want to learn more about the program, you can visit [WEBSITE]. Have a great [DAY, EVENING, etc.]

▪ IF ANSWERING MACHINE

- Hi [ADVOCATE NAME]. My name is [YOUR NAME], and I’m calling on behalf of [YOUR ORGANIZATION].
- We’re working to help improve food choices for children in schools across the country, including in [ADVOCATE AREA].
- *The Ask:* We’d like your help to improve the nutritional quality of food used as rewards or reinforcement for school children in the classroom. Not only are many of these items high in sugar, fat and sodium, but also when we reinforce good behavior with food, we’re sending mixed messages to our children who are looking to us to be the example. Please call us at [PHONE NUMBER] or visit our website at [WEBSITE] to learn more and to help ensure children can reach for healthier food options all day long.
- Thank you and have a great day!

Compile Data

- You’ll want to make sure you track the data garnered from these phone calls—who you’re calling, how many people are reached, how many volunteers sign up, how often people are called, etc.
 - Set standards and guidelines for recording data, and be sure volunteers are trained on the proper way to record information.
 - Consider creating a template in Excel for volunteers to record the data. Determine what you want to know about each person. You should at least have first name, last name, phone number (home or mobile) as well as whether they picked up or you left a message and whether they wanted to talk or not. If possible, try to record their email address and mailing address.

Maintain the Relationship

- Phone calls are the beginning of a relationship, not the end. In order to keep working with these advocates, you must follow up with them, either with another call or via email.

Phone Patches

A phone patch, as opposed to a phone bank, connects advocates with their elected officials. In order to host a phone-patching program, you’ll work with a third-party organization that calls advocates, explains the issue and asks if the advocates would like to be connected with his or her representative to voice support for a cause or issue. This is a supplemental method to the phone bank program and should target existing advocates, not new ones.

If you ask advocates to contact a legislator to support or oppose specific legislation, your phone patch calls will be considered grassroots lobbying. Make sure you budget lobbying funds to cover these costs. You can use non-lobbying funds for phone patches by avoiding references to any specific legislation, but that may dilute the calls’ impact.



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Select a Vendor

- Find a company that will call individuals on your behalf. Some companies that can assist in the program implementation include:
 - Mobile Commons
 - Winning Connections
 - Stones’ Phones
 - Strategic Consulting Group

Create a Call List

- As with phone banks, you will need to create a list of contacts to provide to the vendor. The vendor will use this list during the outreach process.

Develop Scripts for Messages

- When individuals answer their phones, they will hear a prerecorded message and will be connected to a representative by pressing a designated number. A script that highlights the importance of the initiative should be written to serve as this recording. There should also be an option for non-English speakers to press a number to hear in their language. The below script is written for policies that bring outside the classroom snacks under the USDA standards. However, please note that you can craft your script to address the policy that is right for your area.
- An additional message could be written to record on an answering machine if the person misses the call.

- **Script for Initial Recording**

- Hi! I’m calling on behalf of **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**. Did you know that many children consume up to half of their daily calories at school? While our nation is in the midst of a childhood obesity epidemic, many schools still sell a variety of unhealthy snacks in vending machines, snack bars and a la carte lines; this includes the foods sold at after-school programs and sports events. We’re working to bring more healthy food and beverage choices to schools in your community by asking our local leaders to support the expansion of nutrition standards into the before school, afterschool, and summer hours. That way, schools can adhere to healthy food and beverage standards beyond lunchtime. If you’d like to learn more about this issue and how you can help this effort, please press one.

- **Script for Leaving a Message**

- Hi **[ADVOCATE NAME]**. My name is **[YOUR NAME]**, and I’m calling on behalf of **[YOUR ORGANIZATION]**. We’re working to help improve access to healthy snacks for children and adolescents at school, including in **[ADVOCATE CITY]**. Since many children and adolescents consume up to half of their daily calories at school, it’s essential that schools sell healthy snack foods and beverages in their vending machines and snack bars; this includes the foods sold at after-school programs and sports events. We’d like your help in making the healthy choice the easy choice in schools. Please call us at **[PHONE NUMBER]** or visit our website at **[WEBSITE]** to learn more and to help improve food options for students in **[ADVOCATE CITY OR STATE]**. Thank you and have a great day!

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

- **Script for Phone Operator**
 - Hi. How are you? Thanks so much for agreeing to take the next step to help bring healthy food to your neighborhood’s schools, especially during after-school programs.
 - To implement this change, we need advocates to speak with their representatives in support of improving food choices in schools. *(Note: Advocates will have varying degrees of knowledge about this issue, so at this point it’s good to let them ask questions.)* Before I connect you with your legislator, what questions can I answer for you about this effort or about the process?
- **Script for Connecting Advocates with Representatives**
 - Now that you have all the information, I can connect you with your representative. Just so you are aware of the process, I will transfer you to your legislator **[LEGISLATOR NAME]**, and someone on **[HIS/HER]** staff will talk with you. You will need to tell the person who answers the phone your name, that you’re a constituent and that you support the “Smart Snacks in School” for **[STATE]**.

Record the Results

- Typically, a phone patch operator will provide a daily report with the results of the program. Collect that data and keep it for your records to help you strengthen future outreach efforts.

Additional Things to Consider

Whether you’re phone banking or phone patching, there are some universal tips to keep in mind to help the process run smoothly.

- Avoid using computer or auto-dialing systems exclusively, as some states prohibit these. Instead, have people dial numbers by hand. Hand-dialed phone banks also have a higher completion rate (50 percent compared to 15 percent with automated dialing systems, according to The Voices of America).
- Hybrid systems also exist. These systems allow you to download to the phone so that you just hit “dial.” Volunteers can record the answers to the survey on the phone, which can then be downloaded to a computer. It also allows you to record a voicemail, so the volunteer can push a button that automatically plays your recorded message after the beep without having to stay on the line.
- Try to make your calls between the hours of 6 and 9 p.m. on weekdays and 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends, as these are the hours you will most likely find people at home.
- Make sure volunteers know how to react in different situations, e.g., leaving a message on a machine or speaking with a hostile individual. Keep in mind that if you are making calls in bilingual communities, you need to have bilingual volunteers placing calls.
- Be sure the efforts of the campaign aren’t limited by do-not-call lists.
 - Typically, these apply only to telemarketing sales calls. At the federal level, the do-not-call provisions do not cover calls from political organizations, charities, telephone surveyors or companies with which a consumer has an existing business relationship.
 - Most states follow the standard set by the federal government, but state laws can vary. Check state government websites to ensure compliance with these laws.

Mobilize: Hosting a Media Event

Working with local media is a key way to raise awareness about your campaign, priorities and goals. Media coverage can help you educate communities, create conversation and recruit new advocates. But before you can do any of these things, you must first thoughtfully develop and carefully plan how you want to present the issue to reporters. Building relationships with media and pursuing media advocacy well in advance of hosting a media event will help to ensure your message frame is understood and you are well-positioned by reporters.

Start by thinking about what you want to accomplish and who you want to reach. Do you have news to release, such as a report or study? If not, what is your media hook? Do you want the issue of healthier school snacks to appear on the nightly news? What about in your local paper? Would you be better served by engaging with community bloggers? Be sure to include ethnic media in this outreach. Be sure to consider other media outlets your target audiences turn to for trusted information. Once you decide what your goal is, you can start identifying opportunities that match up with your goals.

One way to engage members of the media is by inviting them to an event. A well-run media event—one with compelling speakers, stories, clear facts and easily explained goals—will give reporters the tools they need to amplify your story in newspapers, on-air and online.

Where and Who?

Hold your event in a community seeking better nutrition standards in schools or one where people are actively working to implement the new “Smart Snacks in School” guidelines. Choose a public location such as a school cafeteria, the local Chamber of Commerce or a recreational facility for children (e.g., YMCA playground or blacktop).

If you want media to take interest in the story, it is helpful to have a news hook. Some ready examples that fit nicely with the goal of making foods in schools healthier are achieving [US Healthier School Challenge](#) recognition status, recognition from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s Healthy Schools Program](#), or a similar award. You may want to look for schools in your area that have accomplished these goals or work with schools to apply for recognition such that you can attract more attention to your cause and demonstrate that making healthier changes is doable.

As you structure your event, consider speakers who can talk compellingly about the importance of providing nutritious foods in school and the role this plays in nurturing the health of our future generations. This can include executives from your organization, but don’t be afraid to think beyond the obvious. Consider bringing in a local mother who wants healthier choices for her child in school; a school principal who envisions better academic performance in the classrooms as a result of access and consumption of healthy foods in school¹; a young person who is passionate about the issue or a local

¹ Hollar D, Messiah SE, Lopez-Mitnik G, Hollar TL, Almon M, and Agatston AS. “Effect of a two-year obesity prevention intervention on percentile changes in body mass index and academic performance in low-income elementary school children.” *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(4):646–553, April 2011.

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doctor who can speak about the impact “Smart Snacks in School” will have on children’s health and how it can help reduce childhood obesity.

It is also helpful to include a school food service director or cafeteria manager who has implemented healthier changes and can speak to any concerns people may have about revenue impact. A diverse mix of speakers will provide your media attendees with a range of perspectives about the USDA snack and a la carte food and beverage standards and the importance of implementing nutrition guidelines for *all* foods provided and sold to children in school. Be sure to include spokespersons who are fluent in languages appropriate for your community and media outlets.

Event Tips

The following tips cover some of the basics of event hosting. However, the list below is not comprehensive—every event is different, and you’ll need to adapt your planning to each event’s unique requirements.

- **Establish a point of contact.** Your event point of contact should manage all logistics. This person could be a paid staff member or a trusted volunteer. Whoever you choose, make sure they have experience with event coordination and execution.
- **Send invitations.** For some media events, such as salon dinners or press conferences where you will focus on specific issues, make sure key influencers are in the room. Even if they aren’t speakers, their presence can lend an air of credibility to your efforts. Make sure to issue personal invitations to these influencers and follow up with them if necessary to secure their confirmation.
 - If someone on your staff has an existing relationship with these influencers, ask that person to try calling them on the phone or sending a personal email. People are more likely to respond to messages from names they recognize.
- **Create briefing books.** Prior to the event, you will want to share a briefing book with media and key influencers who will be in attendance. Consider sharing your organization’s policy position statement on the USDA snack and a la carte food and beverage standards, the fact sheets from this tool kit and relevant news articles.

Media Engagement

- Research recent media stories—newspaper articles, TV segments, radio shows, etc.—to determine which media figures or outlets might be most friendly to implementation of the new USDA “Smart Snacks in School” standards. Be sure to include ethnic media. Based on this research, you can intentionally reach out to the media you would like to cover the event.
- Once you have established your media list, you can immediately begin pitching editorial board meetings. As the editorial board makes significant decisions on media placement, meeting with them in advance of major stories can ensure your story is not only included, but is elevated for greater reach. This work should start at least one month prior to the event.
- Distribute a media advisory to all your selected media outlets and pitch print and radio two weeks out from the event. Make sure to follow up with reporters to confirm coverage and/or attendance.
- Distribute a press release in the days leading up to the event and include an embargo to ensure media adhere to your event date for releasing any new data.

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- If you are planning a TV spot, follow up with the producer two days prior to the event and the morning of the event. Also reach out to unconfirmed print reporters two to three days prior to and the morning of the event.
- Depending upon media interest, coordinate media availability on-site before or after the event to facilitate media questions and interviews.
- Prepare an op-ed to submit to a target newspaper about the event and the news you are releasing. Take a look at the op-eds provided in this toolkit for ideas on how to shape yours, but also make sure to include information that is relevant to your community.

Blogger Engagement

- If you have local bloggers in your town or city, consider inviting them to the event, especially if they write about topics relevant to the USDA snack and a la carte food and beverage standards like childhood obesity, healthy food access or education. Provide them with fact sheets and other appropriate background information.
- As with any other media, develop an outreach plan and engage bloggers accordingly. Make sure your outreach is personal and calls out direct reasons why that specific blogger should come to the event.
- Track confirmations/declines, and shape your outreach accordingly.
- Monitor for and report on any mentions of the event by targeted bloggers, both leading up to the event and after.

Database Growth

- On the day of your media event, set up a table where people can sign up to learn more about the USDA snack and a la carte food and beverage standards in schools. Because they are already attending the event, it's logical to assume they may want to join the campaign.
- Transcribe the sign-up forms and upload your new advocates to your organization's database. Send them a follow-up email welcoming them to your email list, thanking them for their attendance and asking how they want to be involved in the future.

Post-Event Activities

- Leverage the event by posting the speeches, photographs and videos to all relevant websites and social media platforms as appropriate.
- Follow up with local influencers and potential advocates as appropriate to gauge their interest in further involvement.
- If there are media, including bloggers, who could not attend the event, provide them with information and an event synopsis with photos so they can cover the event retroactively.

Mobilize: Media Training Tips

Speaking to the media can seem a bit daunting, but it presents a prime opportunity to tell a compelling story that brings home “Smart Snacks in School” to all audiences. Unlike any other tactic for your campaign, an interview with key media could allow you to access a wide audience in a personal manner.

In many cases, your media team will have pitched the USDA snack and a la carte food and beverage standards story to local media, offering your spokesperson as an expert who can weigh in on their story. Remember to reach out to media who have natural connections with the issue at hand (e.g., health, community development or food section reporters as well as statehouse reporters) so they’re more likely respond to your pitch, and you’re more likely to reach targeted mainstream and ethnic audiences.

With the appropriate preparation and practice, your speaker will become comfortable with your messaging and able to speak articulately and passionately about the issue. The guidelines below will help you prepare a speaker for success.

Choose Spokespeople

Develop a small cadre of spokespeople whose perspectives are especially important to the cause and who the media might be interested in interviewing. For all of these, strive for diversity that represents your community and be sure to include spokespeople who can speak on your behalf in other languages as it makes sense for your community.

- Advocates with a school nutrition story -- especially parents and youth -- can provide a personal appeal that no one else can.
- School foodservice directors or cafeteria managers who have implemented changes can speak to the viability of serving healthier foods and allay concerns about revenue implications.
- Pediatricians who see the impact of obesity on their patients will add credibility.
- Researchers who can share data on obesity’s impact on a specific city or state will add quantifiable evidence to your stories.
- Finally, top-level executives from your organization are always important faces to add to your campaign. They can speak specifically about your efforts to bring the USDA snack and a la carte food and beverage standards to schools in your state.

Reach out to these types of spokespeople, ask if they would be interested in speaking on behalf of your organization about the USDA snack and a la carte food and beverage standards, and begin preparing them for the task.

Develop Content

Begin preparing your speakers for interviews as soon as possible. The more your speakers prepare, the more comfortable they will be, the better their delivery will be and the more effectively your message will resonate with the right audience. But before you compose your responses, make sure you answer the following questions.

- **Who is your audience?** Before developing your messages, it’s important to consider the audience you’ll be reaching through the publication conducting the interview.
 - What media outlet will your speaker be presenting to?

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- What is the media outlet’s readership or viewership?
- What are the demographics of the readership or viewership?
- **What should you say?** Speakers will need to know your talking points about snack and a la carte foods and beverages, but these core messages are just a starting point. Make your content more relevant by considering the following questions:
 - Are there specific facts you want to highlight during the interview?
 - What’s the central theme you want to discuss—the core statement you return to over and over?
 - What would success look like? Provide numbers, statistics and milestones if “Smart Snacks in School” came to your state.
 - Can you make your interview more tangible? Consider adding comments about specific schools in the community.
 - Are there other groups or individuals taking part in the interview? What are their positions likely to be, and will you have to comment on them?
- **What matters most?** Spend some time thinking about how your speakers can best portray themselves and the issue.
 - How should the interview begin and end? The most important parts of an interview are the introduction and conclusion, because they’re what your audience is most likely to remember.
 - Are there more ways to restate the main goal of the campaign? People need to hear things at least three times to remember them, so make sure to keep bringing the messaging back to your core points.
 - Is this still relevant? Reread talking points the day before the interview to be sure the proof points are still relevant. Read local news of the day and reference anything that makes sense.
- **What questions do you expect?** Spend some time anticipating questions and developing direct responses or ways to turn the conversation back to your key message. Be sure to consider those opposition or “gotcha” questions since reporters often want both sides of the debate.

Rehearsal

No matter how familiar spokespeople are with your talking points, it’s important to have them rehearse multiple times before the interview. Ask your spokesperson to rehearse your talking points in the following ways, and work alongside them as they do.

- **Read the text alone silently.** Read the content with a critical eye. Do all proof points support the overall story? Is the central theme clear?
- **Read aloud alone.** Spokespeople might be surprised to hear themselves speaking aloud, especially if it is their first time participating in an interview. Watch your speakers talk and make note of places where they take natural pauses or get tripped up on words.
- **Stand and read in front of a mirror (if the interview is on television).** When spokespeople read the content aloud standing, they will begin to get a feel for their natural body movement and non-verbal cues that will help bring the content to life.
- **Stand and read in front of peers.** Gather your colleagues to listen to the spokespeople deliver their talking points. This can help increase speakers’ confidence and provides a safe place for them to receive feedback. At this point, they should be able to deliver their content without reading directly from papers.

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- **Record their delivery and learn from it.** One of the best ways to rehearse is to make a video recording of your spokespeople presenting. This allows them to see what the interviewer sees, and will make speakers aware of any distracting movements or phrases they may unknowingly use.
- **Rehearse in a comparable setting to where the interview will be held.** You may not be able to take your spokespeople to the actual interview location, but try to create a setting that feels similar. Spokespeople can practice their movement in this similar space, developing a sense of how to move and talk effectively when they’re in the interview room.

Interview Delivery

As your spokespeople arrive for the interview, they should be friendly and engaging, greeting reporters and producers confidently. This confidence is especially important when the spokesperson is a top-level executive from your organization.

- **Own the space.** When you are on-site in the room, remind your speakers of the movements they practiced. If it’s the right setting, encourage them to move around.
- **Engage the interviewer and the audience.** Remind spokespeople to maintain eye contact with the reporter as often as possible. They are the window to the viewers who are watching or listening. If there is an audience present, make sure spokespeople speak directly to them.
- **Relax and enjoy.** By this point, your spokespeople will have mastered their text and be comfortable with their delivery, so remind them to relax and enjoy their time on stage.
- **Say thank you.** Thank the reporter at the end and suggest meeting with them at a later date for a follow up interview.

Mobilize: Why Op-Eds Matter

Public commentary has long been one of the most powerful ways to broadly communicate ideas. By having an opinion editorial, commonly called an op-ed, published, you’ll be able to convey your campaign’s essential messages to legislators, journalists and the community.

In the past few years, competition from expanded news and information sources like blogs and social media has made publication easier, but competition for attention tougher. This means that you’ll have to offer your best thinking and most influential voices in order to maximize your chances of having a newspaper print your op-ed—and have people care who you are and what you have to say.

Op-Ed Tips and Tricks

- **Choose your signer carefully.** To ensure the best chance of earning placement on a news platform or gaining people’s attention, enlist a high-profile influencer to sign and submit your op-ed. Ideally, this influencer should be well-known within your community and the audience of the publication, such as a doctor, researcher, teacher, school principal or superintendent or politician.
- **Ask yourself: “Who cares?”** Make sure your piece will clearly resonate with or be meaningful to the public. Start by writing from the reader’s point of view.
- **Keep things tight.** News outlets have limited space, so keep your opinion editorial to 500 words or so. Some outlets have even shorter limits, while a few will accept up to 700+ words, so check your paper’s requirements before submitting.
- **Speak conversationally.** Avoid jargon, fancy words and slang. Your op-ed must be comprehensible to the general public, including people with no knowledge of snack and a la carte foods and beverages or “Smart Snacks in School.”
- **Get to the point.** Make your key points early and often, and back them up with facts and examples.
- **Offer a short, snappy headline.** A good headline gives readers a preview of what your op-ed has to say. (Keep in mind that some news outlets will write their own headlines, regardless of what you submit.)
- **Be prepared to be edited.** Op-ed submissions are subject to revisions, editing and fact-checking. Editors usually do NOT need your approval to make revisions or edits to accommodate space limitations, provided they do not change the context of your position. Sources for factual statements should be listed at the bottom of your op-ed to expedite review and placement processes.
- **Include your contact information.** Be sure to include your name, title, organization (as needed), email and phone number in case the editors want to contact you.

Two samples of op-eds are available in the appendix. A rational op-ed appeals to reason; an emotional version appeals to the heart. For example, if you choose to write an op-ed about implementing USDA standards in your local schools, you could ask a doctor or researcher to pen it so they can add their expertise about the health benefits associated with the standards; this would be considered a rational op-ed. On the other hand, if your policy goal is to impact foods given at after-school programs, you could ask a local working mother to write about how she wants to make sure that her child continues to eat healthy during extended-day programs for children whose parents cannot pick them up immediately after school; this would be considered an emotional op-ed.

Mobilize: Meeting with Legislators

Some advocates may be willing to visit elected officials. Whether you meet with representatives in local home offices or take a special trip to the state capitol, you can have a strong impact when you can look legislators in the eye and answer their questions about the problem of snack and a la carte foods and beverages in your community’s schools, as well as proposed solutions. Lawmakers want to know what’s important to their constituents, so when your representative is available, take advantage of that time by scheduling an in-person meeting.

Here are some helpful tips to make the most of your meetings.

Save the Date

Making an appointment is easy—simply call your legislators and talk to the office’s scheduler. Here are a few things to keep in mind.

- Be flexible with the date and time. Legislators have busy schedules and meetings usually last 15 to 45 minutes.
- You may end up meeting with a staffer, rather than a legislator, which is fine. Many legislators rely heavily on staff to keep them informed and make decisions about issues.
- Choose one to two issues to discuss so you can talk about them comprehensively in even a short amount of time.
- Feel free to bring a colleague or an advocate with you who can also offer his/her insight on the issues. Be cognizant that bringing an advocate to demonstrate diversity can come across as a token appearance. Be sure to have a strong role for each person engaged in the meeting.
- Research your legislator’s stance and voting history on the issues you plan to discuss, as well as opposing viewpoints, to help you frame your talking points.

Essentials for Success

Nervous about how the conversation will go or what to say? Bring these essentials to the meeting to help it run smoothly.

- A pen or pencil to take notes during your meeting.
- A business card to leave with your representative.
- Cameras so you can share photos from a local school’s vending machine or take a picture with your legislator while you’re visiting his or her office.
- A customized version of the decision maker fact sheet in this toolkit.
- A clear “ask” for the meeting—for instance, a school visit, newspaper column or op-ed to move the conversation forward.

Make the Most of Your One-on-One

- Dress professionally when visiting your representative.
- Introduce yourself and talk about your position on the issues you’ve prepared to discuss.
- Share personal stories and examples to illustrate how the issues affect you and your community.
- Listen to your legislator’s response and be prepared to answer questions. If you can’t answer his/her questions, jot it down and get back to him/her.
- Even if you don’t see eye to eye, always be respectful and polite.

Thank Your Legislator

- After taking time out of his or her very busy schedule, your member will definitely appreciate a brief thank-you note or email.
- It’s also a great opportunity to remind them of the stories you shared, your stance on the issues you discussed and how their actions affect people in your community.
- Based on the response to your request or “ask,” determine what appropriate steps are for following up with your legislator.

Mobilize: Days at the Capitol

Individual meetings can go a long way toward making a difference with your legislator—but sometimes, there’s strength in numbers. If you’re looking to combine a media event and a legislator meeting, you may consider hosting a day at the state capitol where advocates hold a rally and then attend scheduled meetings with legislators.

Here are some things to think about as you plan your own day at the capitol.

Choose the Right Day

Planning a day at the capitol takes a lot of time and work. It’s a large investment for one short day. Therefore, it’s important to make sure you schedule the rally for when it will be most effective.

- There are certain points in the rhythm of legislation when a day at the capitol could be particularly helpful. If you know when a vote is coming up or a particular committee is viewing the legislation, legislators may be more focused on your issue. By talking to them at this point, you can grab their attention and remind them why this issue matters to you. If you talk about the legislation with a legislator and reflect a view on the bill, it will be lobbying.
 - If you choose to refer to specific legislation in this type of meeting, make sure you have ample unrestricted dollars to cover both the costs of planning and hosting such an event. These activities will be lobbying expenses, since they involve communicating directly with legislators about specific legislation.
- The legislative calendar lends itself to slightly different opportunities for meetings. Try to attend at a time when things are slower at the capitol, not at the start of a new legislative session. That way, you may be able to secure more quality face-to-face time with your legislator.
 - If you focus your message more generally on the need for healthy snack and a la carte food and beverage options at schools—or on implementing the USDA “Smart Snacks in Schools” standards at your local schools—it may be possible to use non-lobbying funds for this activity, because you will not be communicating about specific legislation with the legislator.
 - When using non-lobbying funds, you must stick to educating legislators on the problem of healthy in-school snacks and a la carte options, securing their general backing for your issue or obtaining support for non-legislative projects like implementing the new USDA guidelines.
 - Alternatively, if you want to use your visit to influence legislators to introduce or support a specific bill to require healthy snack options in your state’s schools, you must use lobbying dollars to pay for these activities.
 - During your day at the capitol, consider planning an activity or event that would attract the attention of the media to your issue.



Invite the Right People

When you schedule these types of events, remember that legislators and their staff want to hear from constituents and people with direct experience with the issues at hand. It’s important to bring advocates who have children in school or those who are deeply educated about and invested in bringing healthier food options to schools in the area. And don’t forget to bring people who can talk about the positive fiscal impact, perhaps a representative from a school who has voluntarily made these changes without

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negative financial consequences. This can be a key issue when it comes to health, especially in under-resourced communities.

If you have existing relationships with your advocates, try to choose those with particularly engaging stories that include a diversity of perspectives and who can tell them well.

If you plan to include youth in your day at the capitol, be sure to have signed parental permission slips and chaperones. Consider consulting legal counsel if you need assistance developing this tool.

Help Advocates Attend

- If you have the resources, make plans to help your advocates get to the capitol, especially those with financial limitations. Consider offering gas money or assistance in paying for their plane ticket. An investment like this, to get the right people on the front end, can help ensure a successful visit. If the capitol is within reasonable driving distance, identify who can drive and who would like or need to carpool with others.
- Settle on a hotel and send out the booking information well in advance of the rally so people can get the cheapest rates (this may be another opportunity to help individuals out with the costs, if you're able). Always ask the hotel if it has group discount rates.
- Make sure your accommodations are pleasant and have sufficient space for group training meetings. They should also not be too far from the capitol so it doesn't take long to get there from the hotel. We recommend visiting the hotel in advance to make sure it's suitable for your advocates. Remember, you want people coming back next year, and comfort—even modest comfort—is important!
- Ask advocates if they have any barriers to participating, such as transportation or childcare, and brainstorm ways to help overcome these issues to ensure full participation.

Create a Schedule

Plan a clear itinerary that you distribute to advocates when they arrive; you can even place it in their hotel rooms with a gift bag to make them feel welcome. An itinerary will communicate that this trip is important and purposeful, and they are going to get something out of it. On the itinerary, note the key message for advocates and emphasize what the common ask and next steps will be for follow up. Be sure to schedule time at the end of the day to receive immediate feedback and debrief on key conversations.

Build Time for Fun

Beyond meeting with their decision makers, this is an excellent time for advocates to connect. Connected advocates are often more committed and inspired to support the issue at hand. Although your advocates are connecting online, they may have few opportunities to connect in person so they can learn from each other. Make sure to schedule intentional times for this to happen in the form of meetings as well as fun outings.

Create a Leave-Behind

Make sure your advocates are armed with tools that will help drive the point further home to lawmakers. That could be the decision-maker fact sheet in this toolkit or something more, like a petition

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from advocates in their community or some symbol of the need to implement “Smart Snacks in School” in their state. If your visit is a lobbying visit, the materials you create specifically for the visit are likely to be considered lobbying materials; developing and printing the materials must be paid for with lobbying dollars.



Follow up with Successes

After the day at the capitol is finished, make sure you follow up with advocates about the meetings, reporting any successful interactions or resulting legislative movement. The important thing here is to let advocates know their efforts were worth it so they’ll continue to be active for your cause.

Appendices

Please Note: *The materials provided in the appendices are meant to be general examples for you to learn from as you create your own pieces. Therefore, please refer to the key messages outlined on the next page and craft your messages according to the specific policies that best apply to your community. Remember to carefully plan the use of your lobbying funds. The lobbying checklist (pg. 48) that follows the key messages will help you determine what is lobbying and what is non-lobbying when writing your communications.*

Key Messages: Pursuing Solutions to Ending Childhood Obesity

As you begin to work on food and beverage standards in your community, remember that while it is easy to focus on the challenges and problems that face our children today, it is critical to remain solutions-oriented and put forward plans that will have a tangible, positive impact. That’s why the policy objectives and action items related to school food and beverage standards at the beginning of this toolkit are so valuable—they will help you pursue a concrete solution to ending childhood obesity that is right for your community.

Take some time before starting your campaign to map out the specific objective of your efforts, according the policies outlined.

After you have determined which specific policies and improvements make the most sense for your organization to pursue, these key messages will help you fold those solutions into all of the communications you produce so you can establish a congruent voice across all outreach.

Because you may advocate for different solutions at different times, we have bundled potential messaging for each policy lever together here. You can then use these messages in the various communications templates, including op-eds, action alerts and blog posts, that follow.

Overarching Message for School Food and Beverage Standards

This is the messaging thread that should connect all communications, no matter the policy objective.

We all know that children learn from consistency. That’s why it’s so important to make sure our children always see nutritious options at school: we’re helping them make all food choices an easy “A”.

Specific Policy Messaging

Recall that the focus of this toolkit is the first four items outlined at the beginning of this toolkit.

1. Align state and federal guidelines

The USDA put in place common-sense standards to ensure our children receive nutritious foods and drinks while at school. Our [SCHOOL/CITY/COUNTY/STATE] should follow these same guidelines, making sure that the right choice is easy for our kids. Our state agencies can make this happen right away, or in some states, legislation may be needed. If aligning state and federal guidelines best suits your community’s needs, then use your communications to encourage your regulators/legislators to see that the USDA food and beverage standards are established in your [CITY/COUNTY/STATE]’s schools.

2. Extend nutrition standards into out-of-school time

The school day may end when the final bell rings, but that doesn’t mean providing good healthy foods and drinks should end as well. By extending the standards to include any time kids are at school, we can make sure that the common sense food choices don’t leave when the school buses do. This change may require new state regulations or school district policy and may require coordination with other school policies and practices (such as shared use agreements). Therefore, if expansion of nutrition standards is the aim of your community, use your

communications to encourage your regulators/legislators to implement this change so our children have access to healthy foods and beverages whenever they're on school grounds.

3. Have a sound fundraiser policy

Children learn a lot by seeing and repeating. If school fundraisers are built around selling junk food, they will associate junk food with good behavior. Parents selling junk food items further confuse the signals we send to our kids. To help break the childhood obesity epidemic, we need to consistently show our children what good food looks like. If it's not good for them at lunchtime, it's not good for them at any time. If this objective fits the needs of your community, use your communications to help advocates engage with their child nutrition state agency, state lawmakers or local school districts to determine how often fundraisers should be exempt from the regulations, if at all.

4. Reinforce good behaviors with good foods

Our children learn a lot of important lessons in the classroom. Making smart food and beverage choices shouldn't be exempt from that list. By making sure that classrooms treats and rewards are healthy snacks, we can reinforce to our kids that junk food isn't a reward—it's a health risk. Since the USDA standards do not currently address classroom parties and rewards, it's up to states to see the standards implemented in this area. If this applies to your community, use your communications to help advocates tell their regulators or lawmakers to make sure that classroom treats are healthy treats.

Lobbying vs. Non-Lobbying Checklist

The following questions may help you determine whether your efforts might be considered lobbying under the IRS rules and therefore must be paid for with separate, lobbying-approved funding. Each organization’s lobbying requirements (and the registration rules that may apply to them) may be slightly different, so make sure you consult your lawyer to share your plans and address any questions. In general, the IRS lobbying rules apply to communications with members of Congress and their staff members, as well as state legislators and city council members and their staff members. In some cases, communication with the general public is considered lobbying too.

- ✓ Will you be communicating directly with a legislator—or to legislative branch staff, executive branch officials or any staff involved in formulating particular legislation or ballot measure?
Exception: Communicating with school boards and zoning boards is not lobbying.

- ✓ If so, will your communications reflect a point of view on specific legislation, such as the following?
 - Bills or ballot measures that have been introduced
 - Specific legislative proposals not yet introduced (e.g., “Missouri should adopt Kansas’ law banning unhealthy snacks and beverages in school vending machines”)
 - Budget bills
Think strategically: If you are not conveying a viewpoint on specific legislation, your communications with public officials or their staff are not lobbying. One example: telling a legislator that you want to promote healthy lifestyles in the community is not lobbying.

- ✓ Will you be communicating to the general public about a view on a particular ballot measure or piece of legislation—through email newsletters, op-eds, social media, email newsletters, advertisements, speeches, etc.?

- ✓ If so, will your communications to the general public include a call to action, such as the following?
 - Asking the public to contact a legislator
 - Identifying someone’s legislative representative
 - Providing contact information for a legislator
 - Providing a vehicle for contacting the legislator (e.g., form email, petition)
 - Identifying a legislator’s position on the legislation or identifying the legislator as sitting on the voting committee
Think strategically: If communications to the general public do not include a call to action, they are not lobbying. For example, you may simply want to educate the public about available resources in your community or about the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle.

Sample Emotional Op-Ed

When it comes to improving children’s nutrition, we know there are many factors at play. For example, we know that while families play an instrumental role in shaping healthy eating habits, home isn’t the only place where kids eat. In fact, today many children consume up to half of their calories at school each day.² Right now, there are exciting changes underway in schools across the country—changes designed to support better health and brighter futures for children.

Last summer, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) updated nutrition standards for the snacks and drinks schools sell in vending machines, a la carte lines, stores and snack bars.

The USDA “Smart Snacks in Schools” standards were created to encourage the consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create a food environment that supports the development of healthy eating habits. They encourage healthier snacks—choices that include high-quality protein, dairy, fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and they limit calories, fats, sugars and sodium.

These new standards are welcome news for parents and for everyone else who works to provide children with healthier choices everywhere they live, learn and play. Today’s students have more options than ever before—**[INSERT AUTHOR’S EXPERIENCE, IF ANY, OF SCHOOL FOOD OPTIONS]**.

However, a solid national standard is just the first chapter, and there’s still homework to do in state and local advocacy to ensure that implementation reaches every school. State and local policies that limit the sale of unhealthy choices in schools are working, yet many jurisdictions have not yet adopted such policies.

A growing body of evidence suggests that offering healthy snack food choices could make a real difference for our children. Recent studies show that students who have access to healthy foods are less likely to gain weight, suffer from tooth decay or develop a chronic illness.³ Additional research shows that healthy eating habits, school snack foods and beverages are associated with better academic performance.⁴

What’s more, schools themselves stand to benefit from incorporating nutrition standards for snack foods and beverages. Research has illustrated that average foodservice revenue can increase or remain steady when healthier standards are implemented.⁵

² Story, Mary. “The Third School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study: Findings and Policy Implications for Improving the Health of US Children,” *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 109, no. 2 (2009): S7–S13.

³ *Out of Balance: A Look at Snack Foods in Secondary Schools across the States*. Rep. The Pew Charitable Trusts and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Kids Safe and Healthful Foods Project, Oct. 2012. Web. 11 Oct. 2013.

⁴ Hollar D, Messiah SE, Lopez-Mitnik G, Hollar TL, Almon M, and Agatston AS. “Effect of a two-year obesity prevention intervention on percentile changes in body mass index and academic performance in low-income elementary school children.” *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(4):646–553, April 2011.

⁵ *Snack Facts: Raising the Bar for Nutrition Standards in Schools*. The Pew Charitable Trusts and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s Kids Safe and Healthful Foods Project, 20 June 2013. Web. 11 Oct. 2013.

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

Healthy snack and a la carte foods and beverages in schools are a critical part of efforts to improve health and counter the nationwide obesity epidemic affecting students. Families work hard to instill healthy eating habits in children at home, and those efforts should be reinforced when students walk through their school doors.

Join me in taking action, and tell your local leaders to support the USDA “Smart Snacks in Schools” in your community **[INSERT LINK HERE]**. When it comes to keeping our children healthy, it’s just like we used to hear in school: we can’t afford to procrastinate.

Note: In the last paragraph, we chose language that made this a non-lobbying communication. By referring to “local leaders” instead of “legislators,” the request is not a “call to action” under the definition of lobbying (see pg. 48). Further, there is no mention of specific legislation. If a legislative vote related to the issue were imminent, and you had the unrestricted funds to do so, you could make a strategic decision to spend lobbying funds on an op-ed that explicitly urged readers to contact their legislators to ask them to vote for the bill. Alternatively, you could save lobbying dollars by writing an op-ed like the above: one that advocates for policy without including a call to action, or one that includes a call to action without mentioning any specific legislation.



Sample Rational Op-Ed

Kids don’t make a lot of choices during their school day. From the first bell in the morning until they leave in the afternoon, they spend their days listening to adults tell them where to sit, what to study and what homework to complete.

There’s one notable exception to all of this structure, though: meals and snacks. Whether they’re picking between entrees in the lunch line or choosing a drink from a vending machine, today’s students have more choices for food and beverages than ever before. Unfortunately, not all of these choices are healthy ones—and they’re having a real impact on our children’s health.

In addition to what’s sold in the main cafeteria line, many schools sell a la carte snacks, entrees and beverages. These “extras” tend to be lower in nutritional value and higher in calories, sugar, fat and sodium than foods served in school meal programs.⁶

Since many children consume up to 50 percent of their daily calories at school,⁷ and since nearly one in three American kids is overweight or obese, ensuring that school food choices are healthy choices is a major priority. Research has shown that eating better helps students perform better in school academically.⁸ And forming strong nutritional habits early will help lead to a lifetime of better eating habits.

Fortunately, in June 2013 the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) released updated nutrition standards for all snack foods and beverages sold in schools. The standards will provide schools with the guidance to make every food and drink sold during the school day a healthy choice, and that’s the kind of choice we should give our kids. The next step is creating state and local policies that will ensure these standards are implemented in order to make healthy snacks a reality in every school in the country. **[INCLUDE THE SPECIFIC POLICY GOALS YOUR COALITION IS WORKING TOWARD]**

Choice is a good thing. But when it comes to our kids, those choices should be healthy ones. Elevating nutritional standards for snack and a la carte foods and beverages will eliminate the least healthy food options for kids and replace them with food choices that compete without sacrificing nutrition. That’s the school food environment I want my kids to have. How about you?

Note: This is not lobbying because there is no call to action. In the second-to-last paragraph, if it said “It’s time for **[STATE]** to implement the USDA snack and a la carte food and beverage in school



⁶ Brener N, O’Toole T, Kann L, Lowry R, and Wechsler H. “Availability of Less Nutritious Snack Foods and Beverages in Secondary Schools – Selected States, 2002–2008.” *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 56(39): 1102–1104, October 9, 2009.

⁷ Story, Mary. “The Third School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study: Findings and Policy Implications for Improving the Health of US Children,” *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 109, no. 2 (2009): S7–S13.

⁸ Hollar D, Messiah SE, Lopez-Mitnik G, Hollar TL, Almon M, and Agatston AS. “Effect of a two-year obesity prevention intervention on percentile changes in body mass index and academic performance in low-income elementary school children.” *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(4):646–553, April 2011.

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

standards,” or a similar statement, that would be a reference to specific legislation or your coalition’s specific policy goal as a “specific legislative proposal.” But even if it referred to specific legislation, it would only become lobbying if a call to action (e.g., “Call your state senator”) were added to the op-ed.

Action Alerts

When reaching out to your advocates about a new issue area or campaign, your first message should be educational. Instead of asking people to get involved right away, spend some time sharing the facts. By laying this groundwork, you’ll ensure that people understand your campaign—and people who “get” your goals are more likely to take specific actions later, like signing petitions or meeting with decision-makers.

Issue Introduction Action Alert

Dear **[NAME]**,

Education isn’t easy. It takes a lot to master reading, writing, arithmetic and the skills that turn children into productive and successful adults. Add in the pressures of growing up, and there’s already plenty on a kid’s plate. The last thing they need is more junk food at school that will distract them from making healthy choices.

In 2013, the USDA released updated nutrition standards for snack and a la carte foods and beverages—the entrees, snacks and beverages sold in schools outside of the main National School Breakfast and School Lunch Programs. These snack and a la carte foods and beverages, often found in places like snack bars and vending machines, tend to be higher in calories and lower in nutritional value than what the main cafeteria line has to offer.

The updated standards, called “Smart Snacks in School,” are a great start toward giving our kids the healthy choices they need in school. We need your help to create state and local policies that will ensure these standards are implemented in order to make healthy snacks a reality in every school in the country. **[INCLUDE THE SPECIFIC POLICY GOALS YOUR COALITION IS WORKING TOWARD]** [Click here to learn more about bringing “Smart Snacks in School” to our state.](#)

Picking out nutritious snacks at school shouldn’t be hard. **Please join us in our effort to make food choices an “easy A.”**

Thank you,

[Insert your Organization Point of Contact or Organization Name here]

Contact Your Legislator Action Alert

As your state implements the USDA guidelines for snack and a la carte foods and beverages, your elected officials need to know the standards are important to their constituents. The following message asks supporters to send letters to their representatives championing the USDA “Smart Snacks in School” standards.

If the legislature is considering a bill related to healthy school food options, the following alert likely would be grassroots lobbying because it is a communication to the public that reflects a view on specific legislation and includes a call to action. If there is no pending bill and the email is simply asking legislators to support a sensible policy, or to support implementation of the USDA standards, then it would not be lobbying and you could use non-lobbying dollars to pay for all related costs.



{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

Dear [NAME],

We’re writing to you today because there's an opportunity to promote healthy school food options for students across [STATE]—and your support could be crucial.

The USDA recently published "Smart Snacks in School," a set of guidelines to make sure that all foods and beverages sold in schools are healthy. These guidelines could help decrease childhood obesity, increase academic performance and help students live long, healthy lives.

Stand with us to support healthy choices for kids. *[This should be a link to a webpage where activists can contact their legislators.]*

Let’s work together to help make sure schools in our community implement these new USDA snack and a la carte food and beverage standards. They’re a great start towards giving our kids the healthy choices they need in school every single day.

Click here to take action today! *[Include a second link to your action here]*

Thank you,

[Insert your Organization Point of Contact or Organization Name here]

Subject Lines

The subject line on your email is your first chance to catch your supporters’ attention and encourage them to open your email and take action. Here are some suggested subject lines to try with your audience:

- Make every school food choice an “easy A”
- You can help kids find smart snacks in school
- Hey – we need your help
- Take action: increase smart snacks at school
- Update on childhood obesity
- New ways to reverse childhood obesity

Social Media Sample Messaging

The following sample messaging can help you spread the word about your campaign on Facebook and Twitter. Some examples are considered non-lobbying messages; however, others may fall under the definition of lobbying and will need to be paid for out of your lobbying funds.

Twitter

Non-Lobbying Messages

- DYK children/adolescents often consume up to 50% of their daily calories at school? Help give them #healthy options: **[INSERT LINK]** #SmartSnacks
- How can #healthy food choices benefit schools in **[STATE]**? **[INSERT LINK]** #SmartSnacks
- Healthy kids are healthy students. Help us improve food choices in schools: **[INSERT LINK]** #SmartSnacks
- Be part of the solution! Help bring #healthy food choices to **[STATE]** schools today **[INSERT LINK]** #SmartSnacks
- #SmartSnacks guidelines can help reduce rates of obesity. Learn more: **[INSERT LINK]**
- How do school snacks impact children’s health? **[INSERT LINK]** #SmartSnacks
- #Healthy eating at school is one of the fundamentals of success in school. **[INSERT LINK]** #SmartSnacks
- Since 1980, rates of #childhood #obesity have tripled. How can #healthy food options at school help reverse the trend? **[INSERT LINK]** #SmartSnacks
- **.[@LEGISLATOR’S NAME]** Healthy school snacks help prevent #obesity AND improve kids’ learning.

Lobbying Messages

The following tweets may be considered lobbying messages if they’re sent while the legislature is considering a bill related to school snack foods and beverages, or if the communication refers to a specific law or program from another state:

- We need **@[LEGISLATOR’S NAME]** to vote for the bill to require healthy snack & drink options in **[STATE]** schools. Tweet a reminder today! #SmartSnacks4Kids



Facebook

Non-Lobbying Messages

- Childhood #obesity in the United States is a widespread epidemic putting our youth at risk for serious health problems. Part of the solution lies in our schools. Are you ready to stand up and help? **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TAKING ACTION]**
- Children and adolescents often consume as many as 50 percent of their calories at school. Ensuring they have more healthy options, and fewer unhealthy temptations, is a crucial step to combating childhood #obesity. Learn more about how you can help reverse the trend! **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TAKING ACTION]**
- 80% of parents support national nutrition standards that would limit fat, calories and sodium in snack foods sold in school. Where do you stand? **[LINK TO STUDY]**

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

- Evidence suggests that reducing the availability of unhealthy snack foods and beverages in schools benefits children’s health, academic performance and general wellbeing. Stand up with us to call for stricter standards for snacks sold in schools. **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TAKING ACTION]**
- USDA standards for foods sold at schools apply to snack and a la carte foods and beverages, but states, school boards, districts and schools can enact stricter standards. Learn how you can bring them to your school to make the food options healthier for students. **[LINK TO POSTER]**

Lobbying Messages

The following Facebook post is considered a lobbying message if sent while the legislature is considering a bill related to the USDA nutrition standards for school snack and a la carte foods and beverages, or if the communication refers to a specific law or program from another state:



- Kids will grab the snacks available to them. By ensuring schools provide only healthy options, we can combat childhood obesity and give students a boost to learn to the best of their abilities. The **[STATE]** legislature is poised to set the nation’s highest standards for delicious, nutritious school meals and snacks. Contact your legislator today to ask him or her to support this important effort. **[LINK TO ORGANIZATION WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON TAKING ACTION]**

Newsletter Blurbs

Newsletters can keep your advocates engaged and up to date about the issues that matter to your organization. If you currently send out a newsletter on a regular basis, use it as a platform to help promote your work.

Below are two sample newsletter blurbs to get you going. They should serve as teasers to longer, more detailed information about snack and a la carte foods and beverages located on your website.

How Smart Are Your School’s Snacks? (informational)

School food has changed a lot over the past few years—yesterday’s “mystery meat” has been replaced with whole-grain wraps and fresh veggies.

But while the main cafeteria line is healthier than ever, snack foods and beverages sold at snack bars, in vending machines or in the a la carte line are still largely unregulated. That means those foods tend to be of lower nutritional value and higher in calories, sugar, fat and sodium.

In 2013, the USDA updated standards that will make these foods as healthy as possible. But that’s not the end of the story. There’s still more work needed to make sure every school in America implements these new guidelines.

Learn more about “Smart Snacks in School” today. [INSERT LINK]

Join the Fight for Healthier School Snacks! (action)

Childhood obesity is an epidemic. Since 1980, obesity rates in American kids have tripled—and today, nearly one in three children is overweight or obese.

Parents can help instill healthy eating habits at home, but home’s only part of the picture. In fact, many students get up to half of their daily calories from an unexpected source: meals, snacks and beverages at school.

Let’s help make food choices an “easy A.” Support nutrition standards for snack foods and beverages! [INSERT LINK]

In 2013, the USDA updated standards for making these snack and a la carte foods and beverages as healthy as possible. But in order to make sure those rules make it to every school in America, we’ll need to advocate for them at the local and state level. Learn more about nutrition standards for school foods today and what you can do to help.

Join us in the fight. Take action today! [INSERT LINK]

Note: If the legislature does not have a specific bill introduced on in-school snack and a la carte foods and beverages, then this blurb would be non-lobbying – even if you told people to contact their legislators about the policy – because it talks about supporting programs generally without referring to any specific legislation or legislative proposals. However, if the legislature is considering a bill on the



{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

topic, it could be considered a communication to the public that reflects a view on specific legislation – so if it referred to specific legislation and also included a call to action, it would be grassroots lobbying.

Sample Blog Post: Letters to the Editor

Headline: **FEATURED ACTION: Support nutritious choices in schools by submitting a letter to the editor**

Education isn't easy. It takes a lot to master reading, writing, arithmetic and the skills that turn children into productive and successful adults. Add in the pressures of growing up, and there's already plenty on a kid's plate. The last thing they need is more junk food at school making it difficult for them to choose healthy foods at snack time.

In 2013, the USDA updated standards for the snacks and drinks schools sell in vending machines, school stores and a la carte lines. These foods tend to be higher in calories and lower in nutritional value than what the main cafeteria line has to offer.

These updated standards, called “Smart Snacks in School,” are a great start towards giving our kids the healthy choices they need in school. But we need your help to make sure these national standards are implemented correctly here in **[STATE]**.

Please consider writing a letter to the editor (LTE) of our local newspaper. It has the chance to reach hundreds, if not thousands of people—and it'll help create new supporters for bringing healthy foods to schools in **[STATE]**.

To help, you could:

- Post information about healthy foods in schools on your blog, Facebook or Twitter, or email your friends and family and ask them to support this effort.
- Write to your key community leaders and public officials. **[LINK TO AN ACTION ALERT]**
- Write a letter to the editor (LTE) of our local newspaper. It has the chance to reach hundreds, if not thousands of people—and it'll help create new supporters for bringing healthy foods to schools in **[STATE]**.

If you'd like to draft an LTE, we've provided an outline below to help you get started. Before you start writing, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Visit our local newspaper's website to learn how to submit your LTE. If necessary, give your editor a call and ask how he/she prefers to receive letters.
- Make sure you leave your name and contact information (including phone number) when you submit. The newspaper will need to contact you before publication to verify you truly submitted the letter.
- LTEs should be short. Try to keep your message around 100 words. Some newspapers may have specific length guidelines.
- Share your story! If you have a story about healthy food availability in schools or why our students need these kinds of foods to perform better academically and maintain good health, consider sharing it here so you can make a personal connection from the start.

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

- Make sure you include the purpose of your letter: to get legislators, public officials and other community leaders to help enact policies so that schools fully implement the “Smart Snacks in School” guidelines established by the USDA in **[STATE]**.
- Back up your intent with facts about snack and a la carte foods and beverages in schools.
- Make sure to direct readers to **[YOUR WEBSITE URL]** so they can learn how they can get involved.

Case Studies

Hawaii Public Schools: A School Food Success Story

Project: [Kids' Safe and Healthful Foods Project](#)

December 19, 2012

The Challenge

Unlike other states, Hawaii operates as a single school district statewide across all islands. During the 2007-08 school year, the Hawaii Department of Education began revamping its school nutrition program in order to meet the State of Hawaii Wellness Guidelines, which were required to be implemented over a four-year period.

Some of the Solutions

Hawaii Public Schools implemented numerous changes—from eliminating sugar-sweetened beverages and less healthy snacks in vending machines, to removing deep-fried foods from menus, and serving a 50/50 blend of white and brown rice. A la carte items that were sold separately from school meals were made available only to secondary students, and included healthy options such as juice, water, and fruit. The district also integrated more local produce into the menu—including soybeans, papaya, melons, and corn—and prepared bread items in-house with at least 50 percent whole wheat ingredients. In addition, the district began serving only nonfat milk.



Measures of Success

Hawaii schools have made considerable progress moving away from menus that largely featured processed foods to ones with more made-from-scratch recipes prepared in-house. When the initiative began in 2007, very few school meal menu options were prepared in-house; today 20 percent of entrees are. According to school nutrition administrators, increasing the volume of fruits, vegetables and whole grains, and then using them in meals prepared from scratch has not resulted in significantly higher food costs. This is partly due to prudent menu planning and carefully negotiated vendor contracts. Labor costs are comparable to pre-implementation, and food costs have remained steady at about 30 percent of total meal cost.

Snacks and Beverages

One of the most significant challenges the district faced was the reduction of vending machine sales, which traditionally supported a variety of school activities. District officials report that a successful shift to healthier fundraisers, including Christmas tree sales and “farm-raiser” initiatives—in which students sell local farm produce—has allowed the district to maintain revenue.

The #1 Lesson Learned

Hawaii Public Schools have found success in tackling the issue in a comprehensive manner. They modified vending machine and fundraiser sales at the same time they updated school meal menus. To support the changes, the district found creative ways to engage students in learning about health and nutrition through cross-curricular lessons and activities.

Note: There are perceptions that changes are difficult in predominantly Latino communities. The following example shows an example of positive change in a low-income minority district.

El Monte City School District: A School Food Success Story

Project: [Kids' Safe and Healthful Foods Project](#)

August 28, 2013

The Challenge

East of Los Angeles, in a town known historically as the “End of the Santa Fe Trail,” 38 percent of the elementary school students are overweight or obese. By the time the children of El Monte enter high school, half of them fall into one of those categories. School district administrators decided they had to do something to promote the health of the city’s children. First, they improved meals in the district, which also prepares food for two private schools and an alternative high school. Then, in 2009, the district tackled snacks that could be purchased a la carte at lunch, food items sold to raise money for schools and clubs, and sweet treats passed out in classrooms. The children did not object to the changes, but many of their parents did. Some voiced concerns about the impact on fundraising, while others did not see the link between less-nutritious options at school and subsequent health consequences.

Solutions

The district has worked to ensure the healthfulness of the items sold in its schools. Vending machines sell only water, and the a la carte drink options at lunch are limited to water and low-fat or fat-free milk. Perhaps the most effective tactic the district used was its workshops for parents on how to conduct nonfood fundraisers. Now, instead of selling cookies and chocolate, the district raises money through jog-a-thons and dance-a-thons. These events, which are produced at no cost to the district, deliver two direct health benefits: Students steer clear of less-healthy desserts and they get exercise. And the pledge money adds up. “One of the schools raised more than \$20,000 in a jog-a-thon,” says Robert Lewis, the district’s director of nutrition services. “You really can’t beat it.”

The district got rid of a la carte snacks and increased the availability of healthy snacks in other venues. Three times a week, students get free fruit and vegetable snacks in their classrooms as part of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service. Recently, the district placed an even greater emphasis on having healthy snacks, such as fruits or veggie sticks, at classroom parties. Students competed to come up with a slogan for the endeavor. The winning entry—a poster featuring a giant cupcake with a line through it and the words “This is a No-Cupcake Zone”—hangs in every school.

Still, administrators wanted to do more than change the food served at school; they wanted students to learn about nutrition. El Monte has become a “Healthy School Zone” with the following activities: In the summer, the district offers a week-long cooking camp. Teachers and chefs work together to tie in healthy cooking (and sample foods) with classroom lessons in science, math, and social studies. The school superintendent sponsors an essay-writing contest about nutrition.

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

Seventh- and eighth-graders hold a nutrition expo in a city park to teach the community about the health consequences of too much sugar and sodium.

Most schools have nutrition advisory councils comprised of students and sponsor activities for parents, such as healthy breakfasts and instruction in how to make nutritious choices.

At A Glance

- District: El Monte City School District (K-8)
- Location: El Monte, CA
- Number of Schools: 14
- Enrollment: 9,300
- Free and reduced-price meals: 85 percent

Measures of Success

After the district eliminated a la carte food offerings at lunch, participation in the meal program increased 10 percent. Now, 85 percent to 88 percent of students eat full school lunches each day. As many as 35 percent eat breakfast, either in the cafeteria during morning recess or, if they are in middle school, from a “grab ’n’ go” cart. As of December 2012, the district also offers a free supper to any student enrolled in an after-school enrichment program. That program, which provides sandwiches, yogurt, wraps, fruit, vegetables, and milk, has nearly 100 percent participation at each of the 14 schools. The bottom line has improved, too. Because more students are eating meals that are reimbursed by the federal government as part of the National School Lunch Program, and because the school system participates in a food co-op in which 20 districts solicit bids as a group, bringing costs down—the food service no longer runs a deficit. The district has won awards for its program, including recognition of three of its schools as an Alliance for a Healthier Generation Gold school—an honor given nationally to showcase and acknowledge schools that have implemented healthy changes.

Lessons Learned

Do not underestimate students and be sure to include their parents in the effort to improve school meals. If young people are taught about obesity and nutrition, and if healthy eating is a team effort, then they will feel they have a stake in it. Give students ownership by asking their opinions, offering taste tests, and engaging them in activities such as art and essay contests. When students rejected fish sandwiches, they were asked what they would prefer. The answer: Baja tacos. Now students eat fish in whole grain tortillas, with radishes, cabbage, and healthy from-scratch salsa. The district also markets to the kids. Carrots are not simply carrots, but “X-ray Vision Carrots.” Broccoli is served as “trees.” A tuna and spinach dish that flopped when it was first introduced as the “Popeye” became a hit after it was renamed for Iron Man, a more contemporary superhero. And parents got on board when they were invited into the process to voice their concerns. Making schools healthier is truly a family affair.

Cincinnati Public Schools: A School Food Success Story

Project: Kids' Safe and Healthful Foods Project

September 3, 2013

The Challenge

The statistics were startling: One out of every three 8-year-olds in Ohio was overweight or obese. The state ranked fourth in the nation in percentage of overweight high school students, and half of its residents were expected to be obese by 2018. So in 2010, the state Legislature took aim at childhood obesity by passing the Healthy Choices for Healthy Children Act, which set stiff nutrition and physical education standards for elementary and secondary schools.

Cincinnati Public Schools had already eliminated most excess fat and salt in lunches, replacing high-calorie offerings with leaner options and adding salad bars and fruit. Now, the district targeted snack foods—the sweet and salty high-calorie options in vending machines, school stores, and the a la carte line that lured kids away from healthy meals. The problem? The snacks and sugary drinks contributing to the state’s obesity problem were also making money for the schools—and that profit provided the funds the district needed to pay for more expensive, healthy food.

Solutions

Months before the Healthy Choices for Healthy Children Act took effect, Cincinnati Public Schools adopted tough new rules for snacks and other less-healthy foods. From breakfast until the final school bell each day, portions were regulated, drinks were no longer supersized, calories and fat and salt contents were counted, and vending machines were filled with low-fat, low-salt foods such as baked potato chips. Schools eliminated a la carte lines—where previously students could select greasy foods such as cheesesteaks without eating even a forkful of anything healthy—and created complete, restaurant-style meals that included entrees, vegetables, and fruit.

High school students now enjoy a wide selection of as many as nine healthy entrees each day. “Instead of just having a slice of pizza, they’re having it with a whole-grain crust, a salad bar, and a fresh orange. Or a deli sandwich, steamed broccoli, and a pear,” says Jessica Shelly, the district’s food service director. “It’s the same price for all meals.”

Measures of Success

Far from costing the district money, the shift toward more healthful snacks and meals has turned a budget deficit into a sizable surplus. By making the a la carte lunch entrees and snack foods healthier, the district prompted many more students to eat school lunches, for which it receives reimbursement by the federal government as part of the National School Lunch Program. At the start of the 2009-10 school year, the food service program had to borrow \$500,000 from the school district to remain solvent. According to Shelly, after implementing the new nutrition policies, Cincinnati Public Schools’ food service program ended the year with a cash balance.

New, healthier offerings bring in millions that keep the food services program running in the black. The vending machine operator, who must comply with nutrition standards, pays the district a flat fee for its food service program that was initially used to set up salad bars for every school. Now the funds help offset costs and keep lunch prices stable.

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

How have the students reacted to healthier foods? They like the changes. In the 2009-10 school year, 74 percent of elementary school students and 51 percent of high school students ate school lunches. In 2012-13, those numbers have risen to 81 percent and 67 percent, respectively. Likewise, the number of students who eat school breakfasts increased from 46 percent of elementary school students and 8 percent of high school students in 2009-10 to 64 percent and 31 percent today.

At A Glance

- District: Cincinnati Public Schools
- Location: Cincinnati, OH
- Number of Schools: 56
- Enrollment: 33,748
- Free and reduced-price meals: 74.7 percent

Lessons Learned

“Partnerships are key, communications are key, marketing is key,” Shelly says. The district built partnerships in the community with a hospital and nutrition council.

Most importantly, the district worked directly with parents and students. Explaining the changes took time, and they needed to be partners in that conversation. Vendors brought samples of food and drinks to schools so that students could participate in taste tests. The district compromised with students by prohibiting, for instance, high-calorie sport drinks but permitting lower-calorie alternatives or allowing high schools to provide large bottles of water instead of the smaller bottles sold in middle schools.

Content Articles

The New York Times: Bans on School Junk Food Pay Off in California

By Anahad O’Connor

May 8, 2012

Five years after California started cracking down on junk food in school cafeterias, a new report shows that high school students there consume fewer calories and less fat and sugar at school than students in other states.

The findings suggest that state policies can be successful to some extent in influencing the eating habits of teenagers. The study found that California high school students consumed on average nearly 160 calories fewer per day than students in other states, the equivalent of cutting out a small bag of potato chips. That difference came largely from reduced calorie consumption at school, and there was no evidence that students were compensating for their limited access to junk food at school by eating more at home.

While a hundred calories here or there may not sound like much, childhood obesity rates have more than tripled in the United States in the last four decades, and many researchers say that most children and adolescents could avoid significant long-term weight gain by cutting out just 100 to 200 extra calories a day.

Read the full article here: http://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/05/08/bans-on-school-junk-food-pay-off-in-california/?_r=0

Let’s Move: Georgia Schools Involve Students and the Community in Meeting Meal Standards

Posted by Steve Watson, Southeast Regional Office Public Affairs, Food and Nutrition Service

March 26, 2013

Carrollton City Schools school meal service in Carrollton, Georgia are meeting the new meal standards through innovation, community involvement and farm-to-school products. The school has gotten a local chef involved in planning and preparing foods for students. Some of the recipes are so popular, kids are asking their parents to recreate the school lunch dishes at home!

All of the schools have successfully showcased an Asian Chicken Bowl of diced chicken with fresh red bell pepper, fresh broccoli and fresh carrots with an Asian sauce, served over steamed brown rice. A three bean bake is another popular dish they added this year, which is basically a homemade version of baked beans made with three different legumes.

Read the full article here: <http://www.letsmove.gov/blog/2013/03/26/georgia-schools-involve-students-and-community-meeting-meal-standards>

The Washington Post: In Montgomery County, snack machines to stay dark after school

By Lynh Bui

August 5, 2013

Vending machines in Montgomery County schools will remain dark after the last bell of the school day rings, keeping students from loading up on snacks and treats before they head home.

A group of Montgomery parents successfully worked with school system officials to keep vending machines turned off for 30 minutes after classes end for the day. Vending machines currently turn on when school ends.

“The students at [Montgomery County schools] will no longer have easy access to sugary sodas, candy and other unhealthy items immediately after school,” said Lindsey Parsons, co-founder of Real Food for Kids — Montgomery. “This will no doubt have a positive effect on many children.”

Read the full article here: http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/snack-machines-to-stay-dark-in-montgomery-county-schools-for-30-minutes-after-the-last-bell-rings/2013/08/05/a1fa37a4-fde6-11e2-96a8-d3b921c0924a_story.html?wpisrc=emailtoafriend

Index of Potential Allies

- [Pew Charitable Trusts](#)
- [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#)
- [American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- [American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network](#)
- [Berkeley Media Studies Group](#)
- [Bipartisan Policy Center](#)
- [Bridging the Gap](#)
- [The California Endowment](#)
- [The Center for Science in the Public Interest](#)
- [ChangeLab Solutions](#)
- [Clinton Foundation](#)
- [The Food Trust](#)
- [Funder’s Collaborative for Youth Organizing](#)
- [Healthy Eating Research](#)
- [Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities](#)
- [Leadership for Healthy Communities](#)
- [MomsRising](#)
- [National Association for the Advancement of Colored People](#)
- [National Council of La Raza](#)
- [National PTA](#)
- [NEA Health Information Network](#)
- [The Notah Begay III Foundation](#)
- [The Praxis Project](#)
- [Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity](#)
- [Salud America!](#)
- [YMCA of the USA](#)

Potential Allies



The Pew Charitable Trusts

The Pew Charitable Trusts helps states ensure that all foods served in U.S. schools are healthy. With a long history of informing policy, Pew supports states in improving the nutrition of meals, snacks and beverages available to students across the country. Pew applies a data-driven, analytical approach to developing strategies that make government more effective. The institution’s initiatives have delivered results at national, state and local levels.

Specifically, Pew’s efforts with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to promote better food and beverage standards in schools has taken the shape of a joint project called the Kids Safe and Healthful Foods project. See below for more on this project.

One Commerce Square
2005 Market Street, Suite 2800
Philadelphia, PA 19103-7077
(215) 575-9050
www.pewtrusts.org
www.healthyschoolfoodsnow.org

Positioning

The Pew Charitable Trusts stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in Schools based on the following:

- High impact in food policy and public health
- Involved in activism aimed at removing unhealthy snack foods from schools nationwide and improving access to healthy foods
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress, the FDA and leading food manufacturers
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving standards for school lunch programs
 - Published a [Health Impact Assessment](#) on nutrition standards for a la carte food options in schools as part of a [partnership](#) with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation on the [Kids’ Safe and Healthful Foods Project](#), which provides nonpartisan analysis and evidence-based recommendations to make sure that all foods and beverages sold in U.S.

- schools are safe and healthful, and the [Health Impact Project](#), which promotes the use of health impact assessments as a decision-making tool for policymakers
- Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Small Number of Schools Drop Out of Lunch Program](#)

The Associated Press (via NPR)

September 30, 2013

Some school nutrition officials have said buying the healthier foods put a strain on their budgets. A study by the Pew Charitable Trusts' Kids' Safe and Healthful Foods Project, also released Monday, said that 91 percent of school food officials the group surveyed said they face challenges in putting the standards in place, including problems with food costs and availability, training employees to follow the new guidelines and a lack of the proper equipment to cook healthier meals.

[Schools switch back to 26-ingredient burger after kids complain](#)

By Laura Sesana

Washington Times

October 7, 2013

Schools are in a unique position to influence a child's eating and lifestyle choices, as 31 million students take part in the National School Lunch Program and many children and young people eat up to half their daily calories at school, according to the Pew Charitable Trusts.



Alliance for a Healthier Generation

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation, founded by the American Heart Association and the Clinton Foundation, empowers kids to develop lifelong, healthy habits. The Alliance works with schools, companies, community organizations, healthcare professionals and families to build healthier environments for millions of children.

The Alliance's Healthy Schools Program helps schools create environments that promote nutritious eating and physical activity.

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

The Alliance’s Healthy Out-of-School Time Initiative supports out-of-school time providers with a science-based framework designed to create environments where youth are encouraged to eat healthier and move more.

606, SE, 9th Avenue
Portland, OR 97214
(888) 543-4584

Host.healthiergeneration.org

Positioning

The Alliance stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in health education, wellness, physical activity and health policy for school children
- Involved in activism surrounding active lifestyles and healthy eating in schools
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, the media and academic institutions
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely national and state legislatures and food and beverage industry leaders
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the “Let’s Move!” campaign and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards
- Alignment of organizational mission with the AHA’s Voices for Healthy Kids position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly designed to promote the wellbeing of schoolchildren throughout the following focus areas:
 - [Wellness Councils and Policy](#): Effective school councils and policy makes physical activity and healthy eating practices sustainable while including students and families to make sure the diverse needs of the community are met
 - [Snacks and Beverages](#): Parents, districts, states and the federal government have decided that it is time to raise the standards for the foods and beverages sold to students in schools
 - [Breakfast Lunch](#): School foods that promote proper nutrition improve student behavior, performance and overall cognitive development
 - [Health Education](#): Health education programs use skill-based instruction to teach students about important health behaviors like healthy eating and physical activity
 - [Physical Education](#): Physical education is the only class designed to keep kids active and participation in these classes helps students score higher on standardized tests
 - [Physical Activity](#): Childhood obesity has increased as physical activity in schools has decreased. Physical activity should not be confused with physical education - one is an active class and one is an active lifestyle
 - [Employee Wellness](#): Employee wellness programs keep school staffs healthy, decrease sick days, lower insurance costs and increase employee retention.

Public Statements

Alliance Statement on USDA’s Smart Snacks in School

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

November 12, 2013

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is supportive of federal guidelines progressing in a manner that puts all food and beverages on school campuses on a level playing field – not just in the cafeteria, but in vending machines, school stores, snack carts, and after school snacks.

...Now that national guidelines are in place, we are transitioning to support implementation of USDA Smart Snacks and encourage schools and out-of-school time providers to tap into our support to make these healthy changes for young people across all settings.

Alliance Statement on the USDA’s New Nutrition Standards for “Smart Snacks” in Schools

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

June 26, 2013

Finally, the days of ‘anything goes’ when it comes to snacks in schools are ending. Two thumbs up to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for issuing the interim final rule on national nutrition standards for ‘smart snacks’ in school. Now when we teach kids about good nutrition in the classroom, our lessons will no longer be contradicted by easy access to vending machines peddling candy and empty calorie beverages in the hallways...We at the Alliance for a Healthier Generation look forward to working closely with our partners at the USDA, state and local education and health agencies, food and beverage companies, and other non-governmental organizations to help schools implement the rule and provide students a healthy school nutrition environment.

American Academy
of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

American Academy of Pediatrics

The mission of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is to attain optimal physical, mental and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults. To accomplish this, AAP supports the professional needs of its members. AAP works to advance child health and wellbeing with the understanding that pediatricians are the best qualified to provide child health care.

141 Northwest Point Blvd.
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
(847) 434-4284

www.aap.org

Positioning

AAP stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in healthcare, health education and health policy for children
- Involved in activism surrounding implementing optimal physical, mental and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely leaders in pediatrics and healthcare industry influencers
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA)
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly designed to promote the lives of families with infants, children, adolescents and young adults
 - [Food Access, Safety and Nutrition](#) initiative urges Congress and the current administration to support policies and programs that invest in food access, safety and nutrition for children and families in their homes and schools
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Public Statements

[Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act Implementation](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics

2013

Each day, more than 32 million children across the United States are served school lunch and more than 12 million children are served school breakfast through the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Children are also offered a wide variety of snack foods and beverages in vending machines, school stores, and cafeteria a la carte lines.

Children commonly consume up to half their daily calories during the school day, and two out of five students consume at least one snack food or beverage. A recent analysis estimated students consume nearly 400 billion snack food calories in schools annually.

The AAP played an instrumental role in advocating for the HHFKA by endorsing the legislation, testifying before Congress on childhood obesity, meeting with USDA officials, and providing expert commentary on the law’s provisions. Both the law and the administration’s guidelines include many recommendations from the Academy.



American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan sister organization to the American Cancer Society. ACS CAN works to make cancer a national priority. Specifically, it advocates for better access to care; cancer prevention and early detection programs; cancer research funding; regulation of tobacco; better quality of life for cancer patients; and attempts to raise awareness of and reduce cancer disparities. Members include cancer survivors, caregivers, patients, volunteers and students, including Colleges Against Cancer.

555 11th Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20004
(202) 661-5727
www.acscan.org

Positioning

ACS CAN stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid's stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in nutrition, children's health and food policy
- Involved in activism surrounding implementation of federal snack and drink standards for the 2014-2015 school year
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely the USDA, FDA and state Departments of Education
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving standards for school-supplied food and beverages
 - [Statewide Health Improvement Program \(SHIP\)](#) initiative provides local communities resources to combat obesity through policy changes to improve access to healthy food and increase spaces for physical activity
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Public Statements

[Strong Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods Will Help Combat Obesity, Prevent Cancer](#)

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

June 27, 2013

We commend the USDA for issuing strong nutritional requirements for all snacks and beverages sold in schools during the school day. For the first time in our country’s history, we now have national nutrition standards for all food sold to kids during the school day.

[Proposed Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods Will Help Combat Obesity, a Known Cause of Cancer](#)

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

February 1, 2013

“Evidence shows that approximately one-third of all cancer deaths are attributable to poor diet, physical inactivity and overweight and obesity,” said John R. Seffrin, CEO of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. “These new standards are essential to creating a school environment that supports good choices that are critical to reducing the risk of childhood obesity, and that sets the stage for lifelong, healthy eating.”



Berkeley Media Studies Group

Berkeley Media Studies Group (BMSG) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding advocates' ability to improve the systems and structures that determine health. BMSG is a project of the Public Health Institute. BMSG conducts research to learn how the media characterize health issues. Through media advocacy training and consultation, BMSG helps advocates harness lessons from that research and develop the skills they need to shape journalists' coverage of health issues so that it illuminates the need for policies that improve the places where people live, learn, work and play.

2130 Center Street, Suite 302

Berkeley, CA 94704

(202) 777-8354

www.bmsg.org

Positioning

BMSG stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in public health and food policy

- Involved in activism surrounding federal, state, local and institutional policies that promote the power of health and social issues in the media
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely journalists, public health professionals, the CDC and RWJF
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving the power of the media to advance healthy public policy
 - [Healthy Eating Active Communities](#) initiative is designed to prevent obesity through collaborative action that changes the local environment to make healthy living possible
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[When Good Celebrities Promote Bad Foods](#)

By Alexandra Sifferlin

TIME

October 7, 2013

“One reason any campaign wants a popular celebrity spokesperson is because kids are attracted to them no matter what they are doing. Kids look up to them, and they want to be like them. We can’t expect kids to turn off that admiration when the same person is selling sugar. At best, kids might be confused. At worst, they’ll think the messages about soda are the same as the messages about water, and those two beverages aren’t the same,” Andrew Cheyne, a researcher at the Berkeley Media Studies Group, told *TIME*.

[Forget the Food: Fast Food Ads Aimed at Kids Feature Lots of Giveaways](#)

By Alexandra Sifferlin

TIME

August 29, 2013

“Research shows that when companies are promoting brand-oriented messages to children, [kids] make very long-lasting and deeply held emotional connections to the brand,” says Andrew Cheyne, a researcher at the Berkeley Media Studies Group. “So this form of marketing allows for kids to make lifelong brand preferences at a very early age. Not only are the fast food companies making lifelong customers out of children, but they have the ability to go after the childrens’ children as well through intergenerational brand preferences. This form of marketing is a very serious concern.”



BIPARTISAN POLICY CENTER

Bipartisan Policy Center

The Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC) is a non-profit organization that drives principled solutions through rigorous analysis, reasoned negotiation and respectful dialogue. With projects in multiple issue areas, BPC combines politically-balanced policymaking with strong, proactive advocacy and outreach. The BPC Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative seeks to enhance physical activity and nutritional opportunities for all Americans. Led by a bipartisan group of former U.S. Cabinet Secretaries, the initiative brings together key experts, policymakers and stakeholders to identify opportunities for collaborative action in four priority areas: investing in children’s health, creating healthy schools, improving the health of communities and developing healthy institutions.

1225 Eye Street, NW, Suite 1000

Washington, D.C. 20005

(202) 204-2400

www.bipartisanpolicy.org

Positioning

BPC stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in nutrition, children’s health and food policy
- Involved in activism surrounding federal, state, tribal, local and institutional policies that promote physical and nutrition education programs in schools
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress, the FDA and leading food manufacturers
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving standards for school lunch programs
 - [Support Healthier School Lunches](#) initiative provides tips, fact sheets, infographics, policy statements and other communication materials to facilitate the implementation of updated nutrition standards for school lunches

Public Statements

[Making All School Food Healthier: New Guidelines for Competitive Foods](#)

By Sarah Mott

Bipartisan Policy Center Blog

July 8, 2013

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

The Bipartisan Policy Center’s (BPC) Nutrition and Physical Activity Initiative applauds the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for the release of the “Smart Snacks in School” nutrition standards, an important step toward ensuring that students have plenty of healthy food choices during school hours. These new national standards will improve the nutritional quality of competitive foods available in schools, such as snack foods sold in vending machines and school stores.

bridging the gap

Research Informing Policies and
Practices for Healthy Youth

Bridging the Gap – University of Illinois at Chicago

Bridging the Gap (BTG) was created in 1997 to assess the impact of policies, programs and other environmental influences on adolescent alcohol, tobacco and illicit drug use and related outcomes. BTG examines these factors at multiple levels of social organization, including schools, communities and states. In recognition of the high rates of obesity among children, adolescents and adults, BTG expanded its efforts in 2003 to include research on the policies, programs and other factors that contribute to physical activity/inactivity, dietary behaviors and obesity.

University of Illinois at Chicago
Institute for Health Research and Policy
1747 W. Roosevelt Road, Room 558 (M/C 275)
Chicago, IL 60608
(312) 996-7222
www.bridgingthegapresearch.org

Positioning

BTG stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in diet, school-related policies and obesity
- Involved in activism aimed at advancing research on competitive foods, healthy eating behaviors and food environments in schools
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences and thought leaders in academics, research and policy
- Past public support for the Institute of Medicine standards on competitive foods and beverages and 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to competitive food and beverage policies and improving standards for school lunch programs
 - Research on [Competitive Food and Beverage Policies](#) focuses on the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Latino kids consume “above average” amount of sugary drinks](#)

By Dr. Amelie Ramirez

NBC Latino

October 3, 2013

Raising the price of sugary drinks could reduce consumption among Latino kids, and potentially improve weight outcomes, according to Salud America! and Bridging the Gap, two national research programs funded by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

[Most public elementary schools don't regulate access to junk food](#)

By Mary MacVean I used

Los Angeles Times

June 11, 2013

“We found that states and districts can influence the types of snacks and drinks sold at school,” said Jamie Chriqui, the lead author and an investigator at Bridging the Gap, a research program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, which funded the study. The researchers look at food policies at 1,485 elementary schools in 957 districts and 45 states, and beverage policies at 1,497 schools in 962 districts and 45 states.

[At-school sales of soda drops, but other sugary drinks remain](#)

By Melissa Healy

Los Angeles Times Booster Shots Blog

August 6, 2012

In 2010-11, 25% of high school students had access to sugary sodas during school -- either at cafeteria concessions or from vending machines. That was down from 54% of high school students in 2006-07. Middle school students' access to sweetened soft drinks also dropped: in 2006-07, 27% had access to sodas and sugary soft drinks; by 2010-11, just 13% did.

The study was published Monday in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine, and was funded by Bridging the Gap, a research program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



The California Endowment

The California Endowment is a private, statewide health foundation with a mission to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved communities and to promote fundamental improvements in the health of all Californians. The Endowment supports the Health Happens Here

campaign, which is reframing the conversation around health care from medical settings and individual choices to the idea that health happens in neighborhoods, schools and through aggressive prevention measures. The Endowment supports strong nutrition standards for school meals and snacks. As a matter of principal, the Endowment believes that schools should never serve or sell junk foods or soft drinks.

1000 N. Alameda Street
Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 928-8800
www.calendow.org

Positioning

The California Endowment stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid's stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in children's health and school food policy in the state of California
- Involved in activism surrounding implementation of federal snack and drink standards for the 2014-2015 school year
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely the California state legislature
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the Let's Move Campaign
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to raising awareness of the harm of junk food and drinks to children's health
 - [Healthier School Food and Beverages](#) initiative supports school food service directors to make sure they have the training and equipment they need to provide healthy school meals; helps schools put into practice new federal snack and drink standards; promotes innovative ideas for making water available in schools; and educates students about the risks of soft drinks

Media Coverage

[California Teens Drinking More Sugary Drinks: Report](#)

By Mary Elizabeth Dallas

HealthDay News (via *The Philadelphia Inquirer*)

October 18, 2013

"Soda and other sugary drinks contribute half a billion empty calories a day to California's costly childhood obesity crisis," Dr. Robert Ross, president and CEO of the California Endowment, which funded the study, said in the news release. "We have to redouble our efforts to protect our children, especially adolescents and children of color, from the unbridled marketing of high-calorie drinks that is drowning our kids in sugar."

[California kids drinking less soda, but consumption among teens is up](#)

By Mary MacVean

Los Angeles Times

October 17, 2013

“Soda and other sugary drinks contribute half a billion empty calories a day to California’s costly childhood obesity crisis,” Robert Ross, president and chief executive of the California Endowment, which funded the study, said in a statement. Nearly 40% of California youth are overweight, and officials have predicted that a third of the babies born in 2000 will develop diabetes during their lives. Type 2 diabetes is strongly associated with diet.



Center for Science in the Public Interest

The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) is a consumer advocacy organization whose mission is to conduct innovative research and advocacy programs in health and nutrition, and to provide consumers with current, useful information about their health and well-being. CSPI’s primary goals are: to provide useful, objective information to the public and policymakers and to conduct research on food, alcohol, health, the environment and other issues related to science and technology; and to represent citizens’ interests before regulatory, judicial and legislative bodies on food, alcohol, health, the environment and other issues.

1220 L Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 332-9110
www.cspinet.org

Positioning

CSPI stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in nutrition, food safety and public health
- Involved in activism aimed at removing unhealthy snack foods from schools nationwide
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress, the FDA and leading food manufacturers
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving standards for school lunch programs
 - [Support Healthier School Lunches](#) initiative provides tips, fact sheets, infographics, policy statements and other communication materials to facilitate the implementation of updated nutrition standards for school lunches

Media Coverage

[U.S. Standards for School Snacks Move Beyond Cafeteria to Fight Obesity](#)

By Stephanie Strom

The New York Times

June 27, 2013

“By teaching and modeling healthy eating habits to children in school, these rules will encourage better eating habits over a lifetime,” said Margo Wootan, director of nutrition policy at the Center for Science in the Public Interest, which worked on the legislation. “They mean we aren’t teaching nutrition in the classroom and then undercutting what we’re teaching when kids eat in the cafeteria or buy food from the school vending machines.”

[Goodbye, high-fat chips: New rules for school snacks](#)

By Nanci Hellmich

USA TODAY

February 1, 2013

The rules for competitive foods "are very sensible," says Margo Wootan, director of nutrition policy for the Center for Science in the Public Interest. "They look very similar to what many school districts, some states and even the food industry have agreed to, but these rules will address virtually all schools in the country." The changes along with improvements that have already been made in school meals "means that at long last all school foods will need to meet healthy nutrition standards," Wootan says.



ChangeLab Solutions

ChangeLab Solutions (formerly Public Health Law & Policy) believes that, to achieve the common good, everyone must have nourishing food; safe places to live and play; opportunities to bike, walk or take transit; fresh water and clean air. Throughout the nation, ChangeLab Solutions works with neighborhoods, cities and states to transform communities with laws and policies that create lasting change. ChangeLab’s unique approach, backed by decades of research and proven results, helps the public and private sectors make communities more livable, especially for those who are at highest risk because they have the fewest resources.

2201 Broadway, Suite 502

Oakland CA 94612

(510) 302-3380

www.changelabsolutions.org

Positioning

ChangeLab stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in food access, community development and health policy
- Involved in activism aimed at increasing food access and safe activity spaces at national and local levels
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely local community leaders and health officials and local and federal policymakers
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the USDA’s guidelines on competitive foods
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to community efforts to combat obesity
 - [National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity \(NPLAN\)](#) provides model policies, how-to guides, fact sheets and other policy tools to community leaders to increase access to healthier foods
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Why NYC’s Soda Portion Control Is Still Worth Pursuing](#)

Manel Kappagoda

MomsRising.org

March 13, 2013

Earlier this week, New York Justice Milton Tingling handed down a judgment invalidating New York City’s portion control regulations on sugar-sweetened beverages. At ChangeLab Solutions, we were disappointed Judge Tingling blocked the restrictions, but we’re hopeful New York City will successfully appeal the decision.

[Letter to the Editor: False Choices on Children’s Health](#)

By Marice Ashe

The New York Times

July 21, 2010

Re “[Whether a Child Lights Up, or Chows Down](#)” (Week in Review, July 11):

Setting up a false dichotomy between protecting children from obesity or tobacco addiction is the wrong way to discuss two pernicious public health problems. We need the same policy solutions for both: taxes on unhealthy products to internalize the cost of the harm to society, restrictions on advertising to children, and other policies to make the healthy choice the easy choice for consumers.

We need smoke-free air as well as access to fresh fruits and vegetables in every community. There is no need to choose between policy priorities — our children deserve both.

Marice Ashe
Executive Director
Public Health Law & Policy
Oakland, Calif., July 12, 2010



Clinton Foundation

The Clinton Foundation builds partnerships between businesses, NGOs, governments and individuals everywhere to improve global health and wellness, increase opportunity for women and girls, create economic opportunity and growth, and help communities address the effects of climate change. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation, founded by the American Heart Association and the Clinton Foundation, works to reduce the prevalence of childhood obesity and to empower kids to develop lifelong, healthy habits. The Alliance works with schools, companies, community organizations, healthcare professionals and families to transform the conditions and systems that lead to healthier children.

1271 Avenue of the Americas, 42nd Floor
New York, NY 10020
(212) 348-8882
www.clintonfoundation.org

Positioning

The Clinton Foundation through the Alliance for a Healthier Generation stands to support Smart Snacks in Schools based on the following:

- High impact in global health and wellness and childhood obesity
- Involved in activism aimed at reducing the prevalence of obesity and diabetes among young people between the ages of 2 and 19
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely food and beverage industry leaders
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to removing unhealthy snacks and drinks from schools
 - [School Beverage Agreement](#) initiative brokers voluntary agreements with leading beverage manufacturers to replace full-calorie soft drinks in schools with more nutritious, smaller-portioned beverages

- Ongoing partnership with the American Heart Association and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation

Media Coverage

[U.S. Releases New Rules for School Snack Foods](#)

By Ron Nixon

The New York Times

February 1, 2013

Several states and schools systems have tried to limit access to unhealthy snack foods by offering items like fruit or yogurt and limiting sugary drinks. About 24 states have laws addressing snack foods. But the laws vary from state to state. The snack-food industry, working with the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation, has started its own effort to provide healthier alternatives in school vending machines. The foods include baked potato chips, dry-roasted nuts and low-sodium pretzels. The initiative, called the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, was started in 2005 and establishes voluntary guidelines for healthier foods in schools.



The Food Trust

The Food Trust was founded 20 years ago with a simple idea: healthy change. This non-profit's mission is to ensure that everyone – especially underprivileged individuals – has access to affordable, nutritious food and information to make healthy decisions. Working with neighborhoods, schools, grocers, farmers and policymakers, the Food Trust has developed a comprehensive approach to improved food access that combines nutrition, education and greater availability of affordable, healthy food.

One Penn Center, Suite 900
1617 John F. Kennedy Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 575-0444 ext. 124
thefoodtrust.org

Positioning

The Food Trust stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid's stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in food and nutrition education and community development
- Involved in activism surrounding research and evaluation of healthy foods in schools, corner stores, community centers, supermarkets and farmers' markets
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress and the Philadelphia Department of Health
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for Let’s Move! Campaign
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly designed to develop healthier food choices for low-income individuals
 - [School Nutrition Education](#) initiative provides more than 50,000 children annually with education on healthy eating and related fun learning activities, as well as monthly nutrition educational materials and lesson plans for teachers to incorporate nutrition into their curriculum
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Public Statements

[Healthy School Toolkit](#)

The Food Trust

2013

Schools are an excellent place to begin reversing the obesity epidemic. Children spend the majority of their time away from home at school. Also, children get at least one third of their daily calories at school (during lunch and snacks) and more than half if they eat breakfast at school.

Providing more education and making environmental changes to promote healthy eating and physical activity benefits students and schools. Good nutrition is crucial for ensuring that children succeed in school. Conversely, studies show that overweight or obese children have poorer academic outcomes and a higher rate of school absenteeism. Increased absenteeism among overweight students also can cost school districts thousands or millions of dollars, especially in states where school attendance helps determine district funding.



Funder’s Collaborative for Youth Organizing

The Funders’ Collaborative on Youth Organizing (FCYO) is a collection of national, regional and local grant makers and youth organizing practitioners dedicated to advancing youth organizing as a strategy for youth development and social transformation. FCYO’s mission is to cultivate resources for young people taking action to build healthy and equitable communities. The organization bridges funders and organizers to support youth organizing and its commitment to systemic change and social justice. Since

its inception, FCYO has been focused on increasing philanthropic, intellectual and social capital necessary to strengthen and grow youth organizing.

20 Jay Street, Suite 210B
Brooklyn, NY 11201
(212) 725-3386
www.fcyo.org

FCYO stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in childhood obesity, community development and school nutrition
- Involved in activism aimed at improving access to healthy, affordable and culturally relevant food in schools and communities
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and community health and youth organizations
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely community health advocates
- Past public support for the “Let’s Move!” campaign and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Allergies Guidelines
- Alignment of organizational mission with the AHA’s Voices for Healthy Kids position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly designed to promote healthy and safe lifestyles of children in school
 - [ReGenerations Healthy Communities](#) initiative supports youth organizing groups to address the root causes of childhood obesity with a specific focus on improving access to healthy, affordable, and culturally relevant food in schools and communities

Public Statements

[ReGenerations: Health Communities Goals:](#) **Funders Collaborative for Youth Organizing**

Childhood obesity is reaching epidemic proportions and is having a particularly devastating impact on communities of color and low-income communities where many families do not have access to healthy options, like stores that sell affordable healthy foods and safe places to be physically active. Therefore, community organizing that addresses the root causes of childhood obesity and moves towards a just food system is a crucial part in the effort to create an equitable and healthy society. Youth organizing, in particular, has shown itself to be highly effective at achieving policy victories, connecting local and national issues, and creating a sustainable base of social justice leaders.

Healthy Eating Research

Building Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity

Healthy Eating Research – University of Minnesota

Healthy Eating Research is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The program supports research on environmental and policy strategies with strong potential to promote healthy eating among children to prevent childhood obesity, especially among low-income and racial and ethnic populations at highest risk for obesity. Findings will advance RWJF's efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015. Technical assistance and direction are provided by the University of Minnesota. Healthy Eating Research is housed in the School of Public Health and is directed by Mary Story PhD, RD and key program staff with input from senior program advisers.

University of Minnesota School of Public Health
1300 South Second Street, Suite 300
Minneapolis, MN 55454-1015
(800) 578-8636

www.healthyeatingresearch.org

Positioning

Healthy Eating Research stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid's stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in food access and healthy eating behaviors
- Involved in activism aimed at promoting healthy eating among lower-income and racial and ethnic populations
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders in academics, research and policy
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely researchers, advocates and policymakers
- Strength of communication channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to research to promote healthy eating among children to prevent childhood obesity through grant support
 - [Evaluating the Effectiveness of New Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods and Beverages in Massachusetts Schools](#) aims to assess successes and challenges with compliance of the state's nutrition standards
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Public Statements

[Influence of Competitive Food and Beverage Policies on Children’s Diets and Childhood Obesity \(July 2012\)](#)

[Healthy Eating Research](#)

July 2012

Given that the foods and beverages available in schools have a significant impact on children’s diets and their weight, it is important to understand how competitive foods and beverages are sold and consumed by students in school, as well as to identify effective strategies for improving the nutritional quality of those products. This research review, developed jointly by RWJF’s Healthy Eating Research and Bridging the Gap programs, examines the emerging evidence about the influence of competitive food and beverage policies on children’s diets and childhood obesity. It also discusses the policy implications of the published studies and identifies areas for future research.

[School Foods Sold Outside of Meals \(Competitive Foods\) \(May 2007\)](#)

[Healthy Eating Research](#)

May 2007

Schools that provide federally reimbursed meal programs must meet federal nutrition standards. But snacks and drinks sold outside of these programs—so-called "competitive foods"—do not have to meet these requirements. This brief examines the availability of competitive foods, their nutritional content, their impact on students' food consumption and policies for improving the school food environment.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities

Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities (HKHC) is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) whose goal is to implement healthy eating and active living policies, and environmental-change initiatives that support healthier communities for children and families across the United States. HKHC places special emphasis on reaching children who are at highest risk for obesity on the basis of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status and geographic location. Through the program, RWJF seeks to catalyze and support community efforts to address the causes of childhood obesity through integrated changes in policies, norms, practices, social supports and the physical environment. HKHC maintains 49 community partnerships across the country.

Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities
C/o Active Living by Design
Gillings School of Global Public Health
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
400 Market Street, Suite 205
Chapel Hill, NC 27516
(919) 843-2523
www.healthykidshealthycommunities.org

Positioning

Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in nutrition, eating behaviors and community awareness
- Involved in activism aimed at implementing healthy eating and active living policy
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences and thought leaders
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely communities, community leaders and policymakers
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to promoting healthy eating behaviors in communities
 - [New HKHC Communications Toolkit](#) provides tips, resources and links for communities to promote their initiatives to partners, media and funders
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Students to play key role in Buffalo Food Policy Summit](#)

By Scott Scanlon

The Buffalo News

October 22, 2013

“They make the food in a centralized location,” and most of it is processed, he said. Cafeterias across the district where food once was made have become little more than “warming stations.”

That’s why Rice and dozens of other students in the district have joined Healthy Kids, Healthy Communities – Youth Advisors Council, which is pushing for more farm-to-school ties, local foods, efficient cafeterias and healthier food options.

Leadership for Healthy Communities

Leadership for Healthy Communities (LHC) is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation designed to support local and state government leaders nationwide in their efforts to reduce childhood obesity through public policies that promote active living, healthy eating and access to healthy foods. LHC places special emphasis on promoting policies with the greatest potential for increasing sustainable opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating among children at highest risk for obesity. Efforts funded under this program are expected to contribute to RWJF’s goal of reversing the epidemic of childhood obesity by 2015.

1300 L Street NW
Suite 975
Washington, DC 20005
(202) 265-5112

<http://www.leadershipforhealthycommunities.org/>

Positioning

LHC stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid's stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- Strength of communication channels
- Existing relationships with advocacy groups, policy makers and key opinion leaders
- Past public support for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association's position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives focusing on implementing better policies around junk food in schools at the local and national level
 - [Action Strategies Toolkit](#): The Action Strategies Toolkit contains policy and program strategies in 10 action areas related to active living and healthy eating, including quality nutrition in schools
 - [2013 Leadership for Healthy Communities Childhood Obesity Prevention Summit](#): Under the theme: "*The Future of Childhood Obesity: State and Local Success to National Progress*," the summit focused on how childhood obesity prevention policies at the local and state level are influencing national efforts to promote healthy eating and active living.
 - A national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Public Statements

[What's for Lunch? When's Recess?](#)

By Amy Winterfeld

Leadership for Healthy Communities

May 23, 2008

This article discusses comprehensive approaches taken by state legislatures to alter the social, cultural, environmental and behavioral factors that contribute to the growing number of obese children. Strategies focus on encouraging physical activity and reducing excess caloric intake. The article also reviews innovative approaches to recognize schools for doing a good job of addressing childhood obesity by supporting healthy lifestyles.

MomsRising.org

MomsRising

MomsRising is a transformative online and on-the-ground multicultural organization of one million members and more than one hundred aligned organizations working to increase family economic security, to end discrimination against women and mothers, and to build a nation where both businesses and families can thrive. MomsRising addresses critical issues facing women, mothers and families, by mobilizing massive grassroots actions. The group strives to bring the voices and real world experiences of women and mothers straight to the nation's leaders, and to amplify women's issues in

the national dialogue and in the media. MomsRising also accelerates grassroots initiatives on Capitol Hill and at state capitols across the country and is committed to holding corporations accountable for fair treatment of women and mothers, and for ensuring the safety of their products.

1010 Grayson Street, Second Floor
Berkeley, CA 94010
(917) 407-3018
www.momsrising.org

Positioning

MomsRising stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- Strength of communication channels
- Existing relationships with advocacy groups, policy makers and key opinion leaders
- Past public support for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives focusing on implementing better policies around junk food in schools at the local and national level
 - [Good Food Force!](#) coordinates volunteers to take action in schools, communities and online networks to educate others on healthy school foods, junk food marketing to kids and strategies to reduce childhood obesity
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Public Statements

[What’s All This Talk About Competitive Foods?](#)

By Yoli Ouiya
MomsRising Blog
March 15, 2013

Many children get their most significant meals and snacks of the day during school hours. We then have an opportunity to set them up to really win by providing healthy, nutritious options that don’t have to compete with minimally “nutritious” foods. By doing so, we also set teachers up to have healthier students with better attention spans without sugar crashes.



National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization. The NAACP brings its voice to assist in the eradication of racial and ethnic disparities, with a focus not only on disease prevention, but on the social and environmental

factors that affect health and wellness. In addition, the NAACP is engaged in the workforce development movement to increase the number of minorities represented in the medical and public health profession, and a leading presence on governmental advisory workgroups and national coalitions developed to provide counsel on cultural competency in the health care system.

4805 Mt. Hope Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215
(410) 580-5777

www.naacp.org

Positioning

NAACP stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in community development and combatting racial and ethnic health disparities
- Involved in activism aimed at improving healthy food options in schools and promoting healthy eating lifestyles and physical activity, specifically in communities of color
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress, the FDA and leading food manufacturers
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving healthy food options in schools and combatting childhood obesity
 - Public [support](#) of the USDA’s nutrition standards for foods in public schools as part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
 - [Vocal](#) that regulations on competitive foods are not being implemented in communities of color
 - National health agenda addresses [childhood obesity](#) and [health disparities](#) in communities of color
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Fighting Childhood Obesity, One Community at a Time](#)

By Shavon Arline-Bradley, NAACP

Op-Ed

Ebony

October 9, 2013

The NAACP is currently focusing its efforts on ensuring that healthy foods are served in inner-city school districts. We know that when sugary foods and beverages are sold in school stores and vending machines, students eat more unhealthy snacks and take in more calories.

Public Statements

NAACP Childhood Obesity Advocacy Manual

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

For the first time in U.S. history, the current generation of young people could be the first to live sicker and die younger than their parents’ generation. Childhood obesity is plaguing African-American populations at a rate that is disproportionately higher than the rest of the country. The NAACP is focusing on three policy areas to address the root causes of childhood obesity.

- Built environment: The need to improve community walkability and public transportation, enhance recreational spaces and allow for better access to school playgrounds outside of school hours.
- Food environments: Communities need better access to healthy, affordable foods in corner stores and local grocery stores.
- School-based policies: Schools must emphasize increased physical activity during the school day and provide more nutritious school foods and drinks, including what is available at meals, in vending machines and at concessions.



National Council of La Raza

The National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States, works to improve opportunities for Hispanic Americans. Through its network of 300 affiliated community-based organizations, NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. NCLR develops and implements health education and prevention programs and conducts health advocacy activities in partnership with its affiliate network to protect the health and well-being of the Latino community. NCLR works to improve nutrition in the Latino community by increasing access to federal food assistance programs, resources and education to ensure families can meet at the dinner table for a healthy meal.

1126 16th Street, NW, Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20036-4845
(202) 785-1670
www.nclr.org

Positioning

NCLR stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in education, health and nutrition in the Latino community

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

- Involved in activism aimed at removing unhealthy snack foods and improving health and well-being of the Latino community
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress, the FDA and leading food manufacturers
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving access to healthy foods and combatting obesity in the Latino community
 - [Healthy Kids, Healthy Schools](#) program works to combat childhood obesity in the Latino community
 - [Healthy Foods, Healthy Families](#) program works to improve nutrition in the Latino community by increasing access to federal food assistance programs, resources and education
 - [Public Policy Agenda](#) addresses the importance of the USDA’s Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act and the need to continue funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids



National PTA

National PTA comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, businesses and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities and a strong advocate for public education. The goal of PTA’s health and safety programming is to be a resource for PTA leaders in partnering with schools to create safe environments that encourage healthy, safe choices and social and emotional support for all students.

1250 N. Pitt Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314
(703) 518-1200
www.pta.org

Positioning

National PTA stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

- High impact in childhood health, safety and education
- Involved in activism aimed at establishing nutrition standards for foods sold in public schools
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress and the U.S. Public Health Service
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the National School Lunch Act, Child Nutrition Act and Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving student health and hygiene in the classroom and at home
 - [Healthy Habits Program](#), in collaboration with the National Education Association and the CDC, provides teachers and parents with resources to help support student health and well-being

Public Statements

[National PTA 2013 Public Policy Agenda](#)

National PTA

January 2013

PTA Recommendations

- Maintenance of the improved nutritional standards for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs that went into effect in 2012.
- Release of the USDA rule on setting minimum nutrition standards for competitive foods.
- Release of the USDA rule on LWPs, providing guidelines for implementing policies, and technical assistance for LEAs, school food authorities and state agencies.



NEA Health Information Network

The NEA Health Information Network (NEA HIN) is a non-profit health and safety organization closely aligned with the National Education Association (NEA). NEA HIN advances information, programs, services and policies that improve the health and safety of NEA members and the students they serve. Within NEA, NEA HIN serves as the “go to” place on issues of health and safety. NEA HIN works with NEA and NEA affiliates to provide school communities with vital and timely information that supports successful learning environments and student achievement.

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

1201 16th Street, NW, Suite 216
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 822-7570
www.neahin.org

Positioning

NEA HIN stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in health education, nutrition and health policy for school children
- Involved in activism surrounding school safety, healthy eating behaviors and food environments in schools through educational and policy implementations
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders, the media and academic institutions
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely state and local departments of education
- Past public support for the “Let’s Move!” campaign and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food Allergies Guidelines
- Alignment of organizational mission with the AHA’s Voices for Healthy Kids position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly designed to promote healthy and safe lifestyles of children in school
 - [Start School with Breakfast](#) is a publication from NEA HIN and Share Our Strength that seeks to promote alternative breakfast service models—breakfast in the classroom, grab n’ go and 2nd chance breakfast, among others—to educators, school professionals and those associated with the school community
 - The [Healthy Steps for Healthy Lives](#) kit provides a guide featuring 14 instructional activities, a MyPlate poster offering visual examples of healthy living and food cards identifying the five food groups. Lessons feature a “modifications” section to enable educators to tailor the activities for their classrooms and are aligned to federal nutrition guidelines

Public Statements

[Groups Weigh in on Proposed School Snack, Vending Rules](#)

NEA Health Information Network
April 15, 2013

For one thing, there should never be sales of foods and drinks for fundraising activities anywhere on campus during the meal service, with meal service for the purpose of this section being defined as 30 minutes before breakfast service begins through 30 minutes after the last lunch service ends, NEA-HIN said.

"Fundraisers like donut sales in the morning, pizza sold outside the cafeteria at lunch time, and candy bars sales in the afternoon not only impact student health, but also compete with federally reimbursed meals," the group wrote. "As schools continue to provide healthier choices in the lunch and breakfast

lines, unhealthy fundraisers weaken the ability of schools to promote and provide healthy options throughout the school day and over the whole campus."



The Notah Begay III Foundation

Created by Notah Begay, III, in 2005, the Notah Begay III Foundation (NB3 Foundation) was established as an answer to the overwhelming statistic—one in two Native American children born since 2000 will develop Type 2 diabetes in their lifetime. The Foundation’s mission is to prevent Type 2 diabetes and its leading cause, childhood obesity, through sports and health and wellness programs that are based on proven best practices. This holistic approach to programming and evaluation addresses Native Americans’ nutrition, physical fitness and community-building needs, with the goal of producing measurable, long-term change in the health of tribal communities.

290 Prairie Star Road
Santa Ana Pueblo, NM 87004
(505) 867-0775
www.nb3foundation.org

Positioning

The NB3 Foundation stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in nutrition and wellness for Native American children
- Involved in activism surrounding access to healthy foods, physical activity and childhood obesity
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress
- Strength of communication channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving access to healthy foods and by combatting the prevalence of childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes among Native American children
 - National childhood obesity and Type 2 diabetes [initiative](#) with a grant from Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF)
 - [Turning the Tide for Native American Children](#) report addresses the challenge of access to healthy foods in the Native American community
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Health-Food Business Taps Into its Native American Roots](#)

By Christopher Hann

Entrepreneur.com

December 1, 2012

For Begay, sustaining tribal culture is just as important as helping kids make healthy choices. "Most of these tribes have been integrated with buffalo for more than 500 years," he says. "Our mission has always been to be reflective of the communities that we work with, and this is a way for us to do that."

[Notah Begay III targets diabetes](#)

The Associated Press (via ESPN)

April 29, 2011

A four-time PGA Tour winner, Begay is issuing a challenge to Indian youth to follow his example by exercising every day and eating healthy.

The challenge is part of the work being done by the golfer's charity, the NB3 Foundation, which has a goal of fighting obesity and diabetes among Native American youth. The foundation is developing programs aimed specifically at helping native youth and at encouraging more tribal leaders to set an example.



The Praxis Project

The Praxis Project is a nonprofit movement support intermediary and an institution of color that supports organizing efforts and change work at local, regional and national levels. Focused on movement building for fundamental change, the Project's mission is to build healthy communities by changing the power relationships between people of color and the institutional structures that affect their lives.

7731 Alaska Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20012

(202) 234-5921

www.thepraxisproject.org

Positioning

The Praxis Project stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- Involved in activism aimed at removing unhealthy snack foods from schools nationwide and galvanizing public involvement in [engaging policymakers](#) to improve nutrition standards for all foods sold in schools
- Past public support for the National School Lunch Program, Smart Snacks in Schools and the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving standards for school lunch programs
 - Released a [statement](#) outlining support and key considerations to optimize the final rules for the USDA’s nutrition guidelines on school snacks, as part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
 - Serves as the National Program Office for [Communities Creating Healthy Environments](#) (CCHE), a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) that sets out to prevent childhood obesity by increasing access to healthy foods and safe places to play in communities of color
 - Partnered with National Alliance on Nutrition and Activity to promote [a letter writing campaign](#) to support the USDA school nutrition standards
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Public Statements

[Statement on The USDA Nutrition Guidelines for School Snacks](#)

The Praxis Project

March 22, 2013

The April 9th, 2013 deadline for public comment on the new regulations that the US Department of Agriculture is proposing for snacks available to kids in schools is fast approaching. While we support regulating the manufactured food industry’s control over what is sold to our children, especially efforts to reduce overconcentration and predatory marketing often targeting low income communities and communities of color, we think that there are some additional issues the USDA should consider when it makes its final ruling. The Praxis Project offers the following analysis and recommendations.



YALE RUDD CENTER
FOR FOOD POLICY & OBESITY

Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity

The Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity seeks to improve the world’s diet, prevent obesity and reduce weight stigma by establishing creative connections between science and public policy, developing targeted research, encouraging dialogue among key constituents and expressing a dedicated commitment to real change. The Rudd Center assesses critiques and strives to improve practices and policies related to nutrition and obesity so as to inform and empower the public; to promote objective, science-based approaches to policy; and to maximize the impact on public health.

Yale University
P.O. Box 208369
New Haven, CT 06529-8369
(203) 432-0662
www.yaleruddcenter.org

Positioning

The Rudd Center stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid’s stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in research, education and public health
- Involved in activism dedicated to assessing and disseminating information about effective community and school interventions that address nutrition and obesity
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, academia (Yale affiliate) thought leaders and the media
- Strength of communication channels
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving nutrition standards for schools
 - [Nutrition Minutes](#) are short, informational handouts that cover topics from healthy beverage choices to healthy snacks that are designed to educate parents and their children about healthy eating
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Media Coverage

[Here's Why Your Favorite Foods Are So Hard To Resist](#)

By Renee Jacques

The Huffington Post

October 15, 2013

Kelly Brownell, director of Yale's Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, claims that sodas and sports drinks are the “single greatest source of added sugar in the American diet, and the research linking sugar-sweetened beverage intake with obesity and diabetes is stronger than for any other food or beverage category. The average American consumes 50 gallons of sugar-sweetened beverages per year.” The Nutrition Source revealed in a guide titled “How Sweet Is It?” that cranberry juice cocktail, orange soda and cola all have much more than 12 grams of sugar in a 12 ounce serving, with some packing upwards of 40 grams of sugar, which is the same as about 10 teaspoons of sugar. That's a lot of sugar. As with many of the items above, high sugar content plays a key part in making popular foods and drinks so hard to put down.

Salud America!

The RWJF Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children

Salud America! – UT Health Science Center San Antonio

Salud America! is a national online network of researchers, community group leaders, decision makers and members of the public working together to support healthy policy and environmental changes that can help reverse the Latino childhood obesity epidemic. Salud America! serves as a clearinghouse—with news, research, maps, videos, resources and successful stories of change—on making healthy changes in Latino communities across the nation.

The Institute for Health Promotion Research
The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
7411 John Smith, Suite 1000
San Antonio, TX 78229
(210) 562-6500
www.salud-america.org

Positioning

Salud America! stands to support Voices for Healthy Kid's stance on Smart Snacks in School based on the following:

- High impact in health education and nutrition for Latino children and communities
- Involved in activism surrounding implementing stronger nutritional standards of healthy food choices, especially through multimedia
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, academia (University of Texas affiliate), thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Latino communities and organizations, and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation partners

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for Administration’s Let’s Move! Initiative.
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly designed to develop healthier and more active communities for Latino children and families
 - [Healthier School Snacks & Latino Kids](#) initiative prioritizes helping schools in Latino communities effectively implement finalized federal nutrition standards
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids

Public Statements

[Healthier School Snacks & Latino Kids](#)

Salud America!

May 2013

Children and adolescents consume a high proportion of their daily calories at school, which means it is important to consider the types of foods and drinks available in schools, along with the impact those items can have on students’ diets and weight. Latino students are widely exposed to snacks and drinks sold in school a la carte lines, vending machines, stores, snack bars and other venues. These items are sometimes called competitive foods because they are sold in competition with the reimbursable school meal. These snacks and drinks are often are high in fat, calories, sugar and/or salt and offer little nutritional value.



The Y is one of the nation’s leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Across the U.S., 2,700 Ys engage 21 million men, women and children – regardless of age, income or background – to nurture the potential of children and teens, improve the nation’s health and well-being, and provide opportunities to give back and support neighbors. Anchored in more than 10,000 communities, the Y has the long-standing relationships and physical presence not just to promise, but to deliver, lasting personal and social change.

101 N. Wacker Drive
Chicago, IL 60606sss
(800) 872-9622
www.ymca.net

Positioning

The Y supports Smart Snacks in Schools based on the following:

- High impact in childhood wellness, nutrition and public health

{ MAKE FOOD CHOICES AN EASY “A” }

- Involved in activism aimed at ensuring healthy snack foods and environments rich in healthy food options in schools, in afterschool programming, and in the community
- High visibility and credibility with its target audiences, including 21 million members, thought leaders and the media
- Ability to impact critical target audiences, namely Congress, the FDA and food industry leaders
- Strength of communication channels
- Past public support for the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act
- Alignment of organizational mission with the American Heart Association’s position statement on National Standards for Competitive Foods in Schools
- Relevant programming and educational initiatives, particularly pertaining to improving healthy food options in schools and during out of school time
 - Healthy Eating Strategies initiative created two guides ([here](#) and [here](#)) about how reducing unhealthy food options in schools would result in long-term improved health
 - Partnered with the Walmart Foundation on the [YMCA’s Summer Food Program](#) to bring healthy meals and snacks to 4 million children across the country
 - Partnered with the [MEND Foundation](#) to offer fitness and nutrition education to families in communities across the country
 - Ongoing participation with Voices for Healthy Kids