



## Using a Message Wheel to Keep Your Messaging on Track

A message wheel is a simple visual format for organizing the messages that are key to your issue. Your most important message—that one thing you always want to share—is placed in the middle of the wheel. Supporting statements—which would likely include the problem, solution, and one or two other key statements—are placed around the wheel like spokes. Points that explain or expound on your supporting statements are added under each heading.

You will want to use the central message every time you communicate about your issue, whether you are writing a letter to the editor or Op-Ed, speaking to a neighborhood group about your issue, answering questions about your cause, or being interviewed in the media. Sounds simple, right? When you are the one in control of the message, like writing a letter to the editor or preparing a presentation, it should be. You don't have to use every point every time. Just select the supporting messages that are most likely to resonate with your audience, add examples, stories, and descriptive language to paint the picture for the audience. Make it your own!

However, in situations where you are responding to questions, such as during an interview, following a presentation, or when meeting with a decision maker about your issue, making sure you are coming back to your central message can become a little more tricky. This is when the visual layout of the message wheel can be an especially helpful tool for you and your spokespeople. The

message wheel helps show the connections between your supporting messages and your central message. When you are asked a question, find that thread that can take you back to a point under a supporting statement and bridge to that. Once you have made it to your supporting statement, you can link back to your central message.

To use this tool most effectively, spend some time digging into it and thinking about examples from your work, your neighborhood, or your family that you could share to personalize your messages. When you are writing, use those examples to make your cause more relatable to others. When you are preparing for an interview, think about the arguments that those who disagree with your position might bring up and plan a response that can bring you back to your central message—and then practice your response.

By bringing the most important points for your issue into one place and using it, you'll be sure to keep your messaging on track.

# SNAP Nutrition Incentives

**SNAP is a critical resource for children, older adults, people with disabilities, and families experiencing a job loss.**

- Most people who rely on SNAP are children, older adults, and people with disabilities.
- Almost half of all SNAP participants are children, including more than 4 million infants and toddlers who have an opportunity to thrive because of the SNAP benefits their families receive.
- SNAP is an essential safety net to help families and their children after a job loss.
- However, many families who are eligible do not receive benefits.

**Nutrition incentive programs help children and families eat healthier, more nutritious foods.**

- When incentives make it easier to afford healthy options like fruits and vegetables, SNAP participants buy more nutritious foods, and their diet quality improves.
- When incentives make fruits and vegetables more affordable, SNAP participants eat more of them than the average U.S. adult.

**Nutrition incentive programs reduce food insecurity, improve diet quality, and increase access to healthy foods among SNAP participants. Investing in these programs and expanding access to SNAP are essential for improving the health of children and families and boosting our economy.**

**We need to invest in policies that will improve access to healthy food, the nutritional quality of food, diet quality, and ultimately the health of all.**

- Nutrition is about four-fifths the cost of the farm bill and includes SNAP and other critical feeding programs. Nutrition incentives in previous farm bills have helped ensure that families can access healthy foods through SNAP—we should prioritize incentives in the next farm bill, too.
- States and localities can and should fund their own incentive programs and other policies that encourage fruit and vegetable consumption, such as produce prescriptions.
- States should also ensure that SNAP participation is maximized for eligible households and help those who qualify get their benefits.

**Nutrition incentive programs benefit farmers and local economies.**

- Nutrition incentive programs can partner with farmers markets, farm stands, community-supported agriculture, and mobile markets to increase the availability of fresh, locally grown produce available for purchase using SNAP benefits.
- Stores that accept SNAP benefits are often small grocers or convenience stores. Making fresh produce more affordable to families receiving SNAP benefits helps these local retailers.
- SNAP incentives lead participants to spend more of their benefits at SNAP-participating retailers.
- Helping families afford nutritious foods to lead healthier lives helps lower the health care costs associated with food insecurity.