

Frequently Asked Questions

Michigan Nutrition Network and SNAP-Ed Funding

About the Michigan Nutrition Network

Where can I get more information about the Michigan Nutrition Network?

You can find more information about the Michigan Nutrition Network on their website located at <http://www.mnn.fcs.msue.msu.edu/>. The website holds a lot of great information including information about SNAP-Ed; nutrition education program resources; reporting guidelines and forms; and the technical assistance manual and the USDA FNS Guideline

How is the Michigan Nutrition Network funded?

The Michigan Nutrition Network is considered a USDA Collaborative Partner Program. Funding for the Collaborative Partner Program is provided by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

SNAP allows MNN to reimburse non-federal public agencies (and some private non-profit organizations) with \$0.75 of federal funds for every \$1.00 of state (State Match) funds spent on allowable SNAP-Ed activities.

How does the Michigan Nutrition Network relate to Building Healthy Communities?

Building Healthy Communities works by focusing on every level of the Social Ecological Model. The state award (through Healthy Michigan Funds) **only** provides funds for policy and environmental change projects, or projects that focus on the society and community levels of the model. The Michigan Nutrition Network, through USDA-SNAP-Ed funding (federal), is used to focus on the bottom levels of the Social Ecological Model: individual, interpersonal, and organizational. In other words, the Michigan Nutrition Network completes the Building Healthy Communities project, making the initiative more comprehensive.

SNAP-Ed funds should be used to complement the policy and environmental change projects that your organization is accomplishing through BHC (e.g. nutrition education series classes in a community garden).

Applying for SNAP-Ed Funds

Can my organization apply for SNAP-Ed funds directly through the Michigan Nutrition Network?

Yes, but applying directly to the Michigan Nutrition Network would not be to your agency's advantage. In general, an organization applying for SNAP-Ed funding must provide 25% match of the total funds requested; however, when applying for SNAP-Ed funds through BHC, local health departments are only required to provide 10% match to receive SNAP-Ed funding.

Local agencies are able to contribute a smaller percentage of match for a couple of reasons:

- MDCH pools together the 10% match received from every local health department that applies for SNAP-Ed funding; MDCH project contributions, such as staff salaries and training costs; and the state award amounts that each local health department receives for policy and environmental change projects. The combined amount of match often exceeds 25% of the total funds requested for SNAP-Ed project activities. With a larger amount of match, MDCH is able to request a greater amount of funds from the federal government. The additional funds are used to improve overall

- Building Healthy Communities programming and increase the probability of success for every project implemented by local public health agencies.
- The Michigan Nutrition Network considers the 15% match that local health departments provide for MDCH funding sufficient for the other part of the 25% match required.

Does my organization need to apply for SNAP-Ed funds as a grant requirement for receiving state funds through the Building Healthy Communities initiative?

Yes. Applying for SNAP-Ed funds is required to receive state funds through the Building Healthy Communities initiative. MDCH imposes this requirement because MNN is considered to be part of the overall Building Healthy Communities project. In other words, the Michigan Nutrition Network funding source is not seen as separate for the purposes of Building Healthy Communities.

Is the Michigan Nutrition Network a competitive grant?

No. The Michigan Nutrition Network is not a competitive grant. In other words, there is no limit to the amount of funds an agency can request. Additionally, every agency that applies to the Michigan Nutrition Network will receive SNAP-Ed funding – provided that an organization has a viable and allowable request for funding proposal and contributes the required amount of match. The amount of money distributed to each organization by the Michigan Nutrition Network depends on the amount of match the agency is able to generate and bring to the partnership.

What does the Michigan Department of Community Health mean when it refers to SNAP-Ed funding or the Michigan Nutrition Network as the “Local Advisory Group” project

When your agency submits an application for SNAP-Ed funding to the Michigan Department of Community Health, staff at the Department compile all local health department applications received for SNAP-Ed funding received into one application. The funding application is submitted to the Michigan Nutrition Network under the project title, “Local Advisory Groups”. The Michigan Nutrition Network considers all local health departments that receive SNAP-Ed funding as local advisory groups for the Michigan Department of Community Health: Local Advisory Group Project.

When can my agency expect to hear whether or not we will receive SNAP-Ed funding for the fiscal year?

Once Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) submits the local advisory group project application to the Michigan Nutrition Network (MNN), staff at the MNN review the full application and amount of funding requested. MNN staff along with Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) determines whether or not all project activities and funding is reasonable and necessary for all applications received from MNN partners. Once applications are approved, the MNN compiles the *Local Advisory Group* project application into one document with all applications received from MNN partners. This compiled application is submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture, Agency of Food and Nutrition Services (USDA). The USDA generally makes the final decision about funding in **September**. Based on the funding received from USDA, the MNN allocates funds to network partners based on the amount requested in each partner application. Once MDCH receives the final word on the amount of funding, staff at MDCH puts together a budget and allocates funds to local health departments. In general, MDCH confirms MDCH-MNN funded projects by **late September or early October**.

Financial Information and Progress Reporting Procedures

How and when can my agency expect to be paid through the Michigan Nutrition Network partnership?

All expenses incurred for SNAP-Ed related activities are reimbursed by Michigan State University Extension with funds received from the United States Department of Agriculture: Food and Nutrition Services: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education. Reimbursements can take anywhere from a couple of weeks to a few months to process. To facilitate the reimbursement process, agencies should ensure that all required documents, contracts and progress reports are complete, accurate and submitted in a timely manner.

Before any reimbursements are made, the Network needs to have its USDA Collaborative Partners Program contract approved by the Department of Human Services (DHS). Once the Network's contract with the DHS is approved, local agencies will receive a professional service contract through Michigan State University Extension (MSUE). This contract must be signed by the local agency and submitted to MSUE. After the signed contract is received and approved by MSUE, the local agency will be assigned a professional service contract number. Local agencies can expect to receive reimbursements for SNAP-Ed related expenses after receiving this contract number. The length of time between the start date of Michigan Nutrition Network projects and when an agency receives its professional service contract varies and can last anywhere from a month to upwards of a year.

What is the Professional Service Contract?

The professional service contract (PSC) is an agreement between Michigan State University (MSU) and an independent contractor – not associated with the University – to conduct work requiring specialized knowledge and/or experience, where MSU has no control over how the work is performed, just the final product.

Local agencies that receive SNAP-Ed funds through the Michigan Nutrition Network are considered contractors for the purposes of the USDA Collaborative Partners program because:

- 1) Local agencies are not associated with MSU;
- 2) Funds received from MNN to carry out SNAP-Ed related project activities are greater than \$600 and;
- 3) MSUE does not have the capacity to deliver multiple and targeted nutrition education interventions across the State. Using local agencies to carry out SNAP-Ed related project activities is more efficient and effective.

MSU maintains – as acceptance of the professional service agreement between the University and the local agency – that all SNAP-Ed related project activities are necessary; the cost of the service is reasonable; and the work cannot be provided by current University employees.

Why does my agency need a Professional Services Contract?

As with any business transaction, the party disbursing funds wants to ensure that the agency receiving those funds provides the services promised and achieves the desired results as outlined in the contract. Additionally, this contract is set up to protect the funding agency from any liability that occurs as a result of any SNAP-Ed related project activities carried out by the contracted agency.

A professional service contract is required for an agency to be reimbursed by MSU Extension for SNAP-Ed project activities.

What is a Professional Service Contract Number?

A professional service contract number is a specific identification number assigned to each agency that has a contract with Michigan State University. The professional service contract number should be written on all financial paperwork submitted to the Michigan State University Extension. The professional service

contract is necessary for receiving reimbursement from the Michigan Nutrition Network for SNAP-Ed related project activities.

What information will my organization need to provide to Michigan State University to obtain a Professional Services Contract Number?

Once the Michigan Department of Community Health notifies local health departments of the amount of SNAP-Ed funds their agency can expect to receive for the fiscal year, a Professional Services Contract will be sent by a staff member from Michigan State University Extension. This contract must be reviewed and signed by a representative from the agency agreeing to carry out professional services for the Michigan Nutrition Network. The signed professional service contract must be submitted to Michigan State University for review. Once the contract has been approved, a formal notification letter with the professional service contract number will be sent to the contracting agency.

When can my organization expect to receive the Professional Services Contract number?

The time it will take for an agency to receive the professional services contract depends on when the contract between Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) and Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) is approved. This approval process varies from year to year. Michigan Nutrition Network hopes that in future years, USDA Collaborative Partner agencies will receive the professional services contract number shortly after the contract between the DHS and MSU is approved. Unfortunately, this fast turn around time has not been the case in years past. For the time being, an agency should be aware that receipt of a professional service contract number can take anywhere from a couple of months to ten months.

What are the reporting requirements for receiving SNAP-Ed funds through the Michigan Nutrition Network?

Agencies that receive SNAP-Ed funds are required to submit monthly financial reports and bi-annual project/programming progress reports.

When and to whom should my agency submit financial reports?

The financial reports are due the 10th of each month, or the Monday following if the 10th falls over a weekend. All reports should be submitted in hard copy form to **Jill Scott-Gregus** at the following address:

*Washington Square Building, 6th Floor
109 W. Michigan Ave.
PO Box 30195
Lansing, MI 48909*

What documents must I submit along with the financial report?

The documents submitted along with the monthly financial report may vary from month to month depending on your agency's spending. If necessary the following items should be submitted:

- MSU Professional Services Contract (PSC) Invoice
- Dated, itemized, and totaled receipts supporting the expenses listed on the Michigan State University PSC Invoice. The receipts should be attached to the PSC Invoice in the order listed on the form.
- Time cards for non-Michigan State University employees working **less than 100%** on SNAP-Ed related project
- Car mileage log
- The 3rd Party Match Summary Report for any expenses being used as match to the project (i.e. staff salary or volunteer hours)

Does my organization have to submit a financial report each month?

No. An agency is **not required** to submit a financial report each month. If an agency does not carry out any SNAP-Ed related project activities, and therefore, does not have any SNAP-Ed related expenses to report, an organization is not required to submit any forms.

An agency is also allowed to submit financial reports retroactively. Before deciding to submit a financial report retroactively, a couple items should be considered:

- 1) Late submissions may lengthen the reimbursement process; and
- 2) All financial reports must be submitted by **October 4th**. No reimbursements will be made after that time.

On the Professional Services Contract Invoice form (used for submitting monthly financial reports), one line asks for the “individual name or primary partner”; another line asks for the contact name. What is the difference between each of these lines and what should I write in this space?

On the line that asks for Individual Name or Primary Partner, write the individual's name that is on the contract agreement with Michigan State University. On the line that asks for a contact person, write the name of the person that should be contacted about the form being submitted; in other words, the individual who is most knowledgeable about whatever one attaches or writes on the Professional Service Contract Invoice form (generally this is the person who prepared the form).

On the Professional Services Contract Invoice Form for subcontractors, a space asking for the sub-account is present in the heading. What is my agency's sub-account name?

MDCHADVISO is the sub-account name and should be written on the following spreadsheets: Contributing Agency (3rd Party) Match Detail; Monthly Car Mileage Log; and the Time Card. All grantees that receive SNAP-Ed funds as part of the Local Advisory Group project should use this name. The sub-account name is the name that the accounting system for the Michigan Nutrition Network uses to track subcontracts and expenditures.

When and to whom should my agency submit bi-annual progress reports?

The first progress report (mid-year report) is due **April 15th**. This progress report should provide details of SNAP-Ed related project activities carried out from October 1st to March 30th.

The second progress report (year-end program report) is due **September 15th**. The year-end report should provide details of SNAP-Ed related project activities carried out for the entire fiscal year, October 1st to September 30th.

Both progress reports should be submitted electronically to **Lisa Goldenhar** at goldenhar@michigan.gov.

My organization already completes quarterly reports as a requirement for Building Healthy Communities. Does my organization still need to complete the mid-year and year-end reports for the Michigan Nutrition Network?

Yes. Although SNAP-Ed projects are considered part of the overall Building Healthy Communities initiative, due to a separate funding source through the United States Department of Agriculture - Food Nutrition Services (USDA-FNS), reporting requirements for Building Healthy Communities and the Michigan Nutrition Network are different.

MDCH is required by the Michigan Nutrition Network, which is required by Department of Health and Human Services, which is required by the USDA-FNS to submit specific information on a specific template for SNAP-Ed related activities.

What information should and should not be included in the body of the mid-year and year-end progress reports, and what items should be submitted along with the report?

The Michigan Nutrition Network uses a specific template for reporting progress and reach of SNAP-Ed project related activities. All agencies must report progress in the Michigan Nutrition Network created template. The use of any other document to report progress is unallowable and will not be accepted.

Please submit any ***new*** nutrition education materials created by your agency (e.g. curricula, flyers, logos, etc.) and pictures (if possible) of SNAP-Ed projects being carried out.

In the body of the Michigan Nutrition Network mid-year and year-end reports, agencies should report ***only*** on SNAP-Ed project activities using the reporting templates provided. When preparing quarterly reports for Building Healthy Communities, local agencies are asked to describe the SNAP-Ed supported projects that connect to each policy and environmental change (MDCH supported) project. MNN, DHHS and the USDA do not want to hear about policies that were changed; environments that were enhanced or built; and/or interventions that only focused on promoting or educating about physical activity. These entities do not fund MDCH-Policy and Environmental Change Initiatives, and therefore, do not care about the progress or reach of these projects.

My organization has special forms that it uses to report financial expenditures and program progress. Can I submit these forms for financial and progress reporting instead of the forms supplied by Michigan Nutrition Network?

No. Because the Michigan Nutrition Network draws down federal dollars, specific paperwork must be submitted to clearly document state match and expenditures. Completing the required paperwork is of utmost importance. If documentation is not completed accurately and submitted in a timely manner, federal dollars will not be available to pay for SNAP-Ed related project activities (*Source: USDA Collaborative Partners Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education Operations Manual*).

Compliance with USDA SNAP-Ed Guidelines

Where can I find more information about allowable and unallowable expenditures for SNAP-Ed related project activities?

Agencies that received SNAP-Ed funding through the Local Advisory Group project receive an USDA SNAP-Ed Operations manual during the initial Building Healthy Communities training for the current fiscal year. Allowable and unallowable activities using SNAP-Ed funding can be found under the "Allowable/Unallowable Activities" tab in the operations manual. You can also refer to the *2009 USDA Food Stamp Nutrition Education Plan Guidance* for more specific details on allowable and unallowable activities for SNAP-Ed related project activities. This document is included in the SNAP-Ed operations manual, but can be accessed online at:

http://www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/guidance/Final_2009_Guidance.pdf. If your agency is still unsure of whether or not an activity is allowable under the SNAP-Ed guidelines, please contact Michigan Nutrition Network staff lead at the Michigan Department of Community Health.

My agency used SNAP-Ed funds to purchase a piece of equipment for use in a Local Advisory Group project. Can that piece of equipment be taken away at any point?

Although the occurrence is unlikely, all agencies that purchase pieces of equipment and appliances with SNAP-Ed funds should be prepared to surrender all items at the end of the fiscal year ***if*** these items are requested by the Michigan Nutrition Network, Department of Human Services, or the United States Department of Agriculture. Records for real property and equipment acquired with SNAP-Ed funds shall be retained for 3 years by the agency making the purchase. Additionally, an appliance and equipment inventory report must be submitted on annual basis to the Michigan Nutrition Network staff lead at the Michigan Department of Community Health. An equipment and appliance inventory report template can

be found under the “Reporting and Compliance Documents” heading on the MDCH: Local Advisory Group Project page. (Include website)

Is my agency required to conduct background checks for SNAP-Ed related project activities?

Yes. All USDA Collaborative Partners, including Local Advisory Group agencies, are required to have a system in place for documenting that background checks have been conducted for all persons working on the SNAP-Ed project. All groups that receive SNAP-Ed dollars must perform background checks on any employee (new and old), volunteer, subcontractor, or subcontractor employee that is either **paid** using SNAP-Ed dollars or **used as match** to draw down federal funds. Employees, volunteers, subcontractors, or subcontractor employees include anyone at the agency who has unsupervised direct contact with client populations; access to confidential information; access to confidential information regardless of supervision status; and/or contact with client populations under the agreement as a SNAP-Ed partner. An agency is required to perform the following two background checks:

The FBI federal & state sex offender registry checks, which is free and can be accessed at <http://www.fbi.gov/hq/cid/cac/registry.htm>

A Michigan criminal history check through ICHAT. An agency may be able to use this service free of charge if they call the State Police. ICHAT can be accessed at <http://apps.michigan.gov/ichat/home.aspx>

An Agency is also required to perform a background check through the Michigan Central Registry managed by the Department of Human Services. Michigan's Central Registry is mandated by the Child Protection Law and is a list of perpetrators of child abuse and neglect. The Michigan Central Registry is confidential and a check can only be requested by the individual on whom the background check will be performed. **Performing this background check is only necessary if an SNAP-Ed employee, volunteer, subcontractor or employee subcontractor has direct contact with children.** The Michigan Central Registry can be accessed at: http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5452_7119_48330-180331--,00.htm

Local Advisory Group agencies are required to have a written procedure for how background checks are performed at the agency as well as at partner agencies. If your agency and partner agencies already have a system in place for performing background checks, the procedure document should be submitted to the Michigan Nutrition Network staff lead at the Michigan Department of Community Health.

If your agency, and the agencies with which you work, do not have procedures in place for performing these background checks, a system will need to be created. An example background check procedure can be found under the “Reporting and Compliance Documents” heading on the MDCH: Local Advisory Group Project page. (Include website)

The Michigan Department of Community Health will take your agency's word that the background check procedure is followed for any employee, new employee, subcontractor, subcontractor employee, and/or volunteer that works on SNAP-Ed projects; however, agencies are subject to an audit.

Can my agency invoice expenses incurred from performing background checks?

Yes.