

ASPHN Call To Action:

Change How We Work to Improve Access and Encourage Eating of Vegetables and Fruits



To stop further decline in fruit and vegetable consumption and potentially reverse the trend, the Association of State Public Health Nutritionists (ASPHN) is responding with intention and urgency to this public health crisis.

We recognize we cannot continue to implement the same strategies in the same ways in the hope of achieving a different outcome. We must engage in **divergent thinking**, examining this crisis from all angles, and open our minds to all ideas and possible solutions.

Checklist For Change

The following **Checklist For Change** will help our Association and members undertake this call to action.

RECOGNIZE. Human behavior is complex and often unpredictable. Motivation can come from many sources and incremental increases in fruit and vegetable intake should be encouraged, recognized, and celebrated.

- Lean into the reality that fruits and vegetables can be consumed in countless combinations, forms (fresh, frozen, canned), and preparations. There is no right or wrong way to consume them.
- Acknowledge the professional judgments and biases that can interfere with our mission.
- Recognize that other disciplines and sciences may offer solutions that can be incorporated into our programs and approaches.

PRIORITIZE. We must make equity, practicality, and sustainability the most important actions of our work.

- Support programs that center around equity.
- Seek interventions that encourage people to add fruits and vegetables to what they are already eating.
- Encourage eating of seasonal produce, when available.
- Intentionally learn about cultural foods and the ways different cultures consume fruits and vegetables.

INNOVATE. We need to think creatively about our programs and partners, improving and expanding upon our processes and approaches to advance fruit and vegetable consumption.

- Continually ask “what if” and challenge conventional thinking.
- Seek ideas and inspiration from everyday interactions and observations, no matter how great or small.
- Build teams of individuals who offer different perspectives, approaches, competencies, and cultural influences.

COMBINE. We must challenge ourselves to bring together two or more effective strategies that address consumers’ access, desire, knowledge, and skills when purchasing, preparing, and enjoying fruits and vegetables.

- Combine two public health strategies which have never been used together.
- Combine an effective public health strategy with one from a different discipline.

COLLABORATE. This endeavor cannot be done alone. Our field has always relied on collaboration for successful outcomes. We can expand on this strategy in the following ways:

- Work with a partner you have never worked with before.
- Work with a partner outside the fields of health and nutrition.
- Work with a partner that challenges longstanding beliefs and assumptions.
- Tap into the power of your community partners to impact changes in access to and consumption of fruits and vegetables.



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