

2023

# SNAP-ED NM TRIBAL REPORT



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# SNAP-Ed New Mexico

## Implementing Agencies and Programs



### COOKING WITH KIDS

Since its establishment in 1995, Cooking with Kids has gained local and national recognition as a prominent provider of hands-on nutrition education for children. With a focus on Northern New Mexico, they engage over 5,000 kids in school classrooms and cafeterias, offering a safe and welcoming environment for them to explore and develop a taste for new foods.



### KIDS COOK!

Kids Cook! is a program focused on nutrition and food education that promotes healthy lifestyle choices and community well-being. Through hands-on experiential learning, the program encourages elementary and middle school students and their families to cook, eat, and engage in physical activity together, fostering knowledge sharing within their communities.



### LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SNAP-Ed at Las Cruces Public Schools strives to expand opportunities for both exposure to and consumption of nutritious foods as well as to improve school nutrition and physical activity environments.

### NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Healthy Kids Healthy Communities: Healthy Kids New Mexico, a program led by the New Mexico Department of Health and various state and local partners, aims to create healthy environments and programs that support children in playing, eating, learning, and living well. The initiative seeks to prevent obesity and chronic diseases among children, offering valuable information, resources, and activities for teachers, parents, community leaders, and policymakers to support the health of New Mexico's children.



# SNAP-Ed New Mexico Implementing Agencies and Programs



## NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

ICAN is a program of the New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service (NMSU CES). It is funded to provide nutrition education to SNAP-eligible individuals in counties throughout New Mexico. ICAN works with people across the age-span. The ICAN mission is to inspire families in the state to make healthy food and lifestyle choices, and to create health-friendly communities.

## UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO PREVENTION RESEARCH CENTER

The UNM PRC CHILE Plus program provides evidence-based nutrition education and obesity prevention programming to American Indian and Hispanic children enrolled in NM Head Start programs. The goal of CHILE Plus is to promote healthy food choices and physically active lifestyles among preschool children and their families.



**CHILE PLUS**

**Eat Smart**



**Play Hard**

Funded by SNAP-Ed

The SNAP-Ed NM Social Marketing Project aims to develop culturally relevant nutrition education messages in Spanish and English. The main project, Eat Smart to Play Hard, uses social marketing strategies to encourage increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products among school children and their families.

## NEW MEXICO STATE AGENCY

The NM Human Services Department (HSD) oversees implementation of SNAP-Ed NM. Over the past two years, the NM HSD has taken actions to host tribal listening sessions as platforms for discussions on matters pertaining to SNAP-Ed NM. The department's proactive efforts aimed at partnership, training, and collaboration reflect its commitment to fostering strong and meaningful relationships with tribal communities in support of their health and SNAP-Ed initiatives.

# INTRODUCTION

SNAP-Ed NM works to empower individuals with the knowledge and skills to make healthy eating choices, with a focus on SNAP - eligible populations. Moreover, it drives the creation of policies, systems, and environmental changes that foster a culture of nutritious eating and increased physical activity.

In May 2023, the SNAP-Ed NM evaluation team from the University of New Mexico Prevention Research Center (UNM PRC) conducted a survey involving six implementing agencies (7 programs total). These organizations are responsible for implementing SNAP-Ed NM programs. These agencies included Cooking with Kids, Kids Cook!, Las Cruces Public Schools, the New Mexico Department of Health, New Mexico State University, and the UNM PRC which houses both CHILE Plus and the Social Marketing Project. The purpose of the survey was to assess engagement with Tribal communities in the conduct of their SNAP-Ed programs, and any changes in engagement since a prior assessment conducted in 2021. The UNM PRC also surveyed the New Mexico Human Services Department, the state agency overseeing SNAP-Ed NM.



## SURVEY METHODS

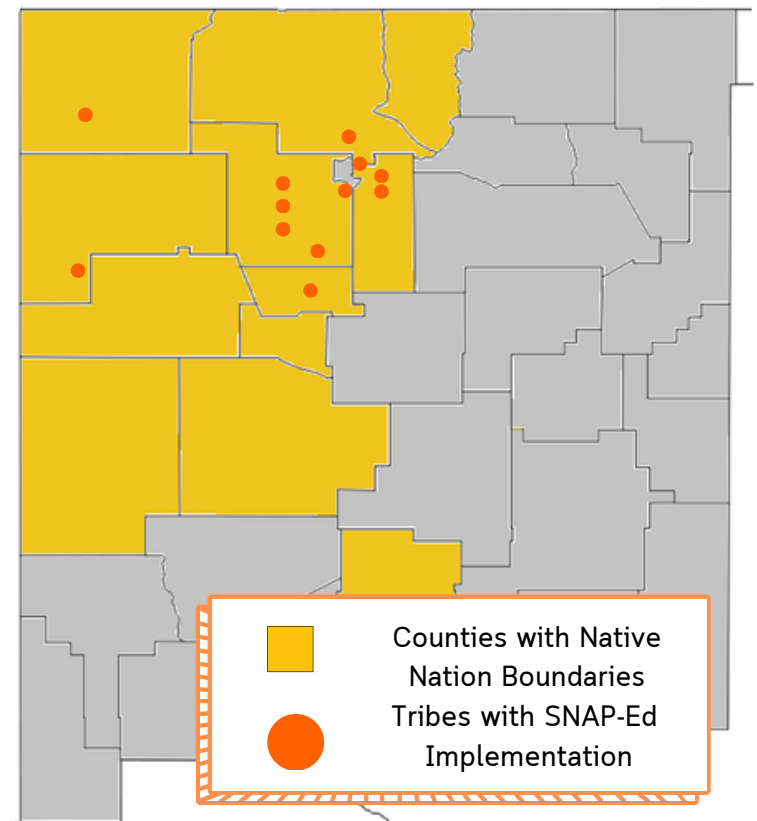
This quantitative study was conducted using an electronic survey in May and June of 2023. SNAP-Ed NM implementing agencies were contacted via email to complete the survey. Each agency submitted one survey response. Survey questions addressed SNAP-Ed staffing, programs, and engagement with Tribal communities in New Mexico.

# SURVEY RESULTS

## SNAP-Ed NM Program Engagement with Tribes

Among the six agencies surveyed, five of them reported actively engaging with Tribal communities in their work. The sixth implementing agency serves a county without any Native nation boundaries. Survey results showed that 83.3% of SNAP-Ed NM programs worked with Tribal communities during the 2022-2023 fiscal year, compared to the 71% reported in 2021. Additionally, the New Mexico state agency also reported working with Tribal communities during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. The SNAP-Ed NM programs have increased their reach to 12 out of the existing 23 Tribes located within the state of New Mexico, compared to the 9 Tribes reached in 2021. The Tribes served include the Pueblos of Cochiti, Isleta, Jemez, Nambe, Pojoaque, Ohkay Owingeh, San Ildefonso, Sandia, Santa Ana, Zia, and Zuni and the Navajo Nation. Seven Tribes, including the Pueblos of Cochiti, Nambe, San Ildefonso, Santa Ana, Zia, and Zuni, and the Navajo Nation partnered with two or more implementing agencies, providing different, complementary programming. In contrast, during the 2020-2021 fiscal year, a total of four Tribes were reported to be partnered with more than one implementing agency. In addition to partnering with Tribal communities, SNAP-Ed NM initiated discussions with the Native Health Initiative to collaborate on programming efforts.

Half of the programs reported that their staff members conducted programming in partnership with at least one Tribal community. Furthermore, 37% of the programs surveyed contracted directly with one or more Tribal communities for program implementation. Some agencies partnered with other organizations that worked directly with Tribes to implement programming within communities or conduct focus groups and surveys to improve programming.



# SURVEY RESULTS

Collectively, 20 professionals from the NM Human Services Department (HSD) and 6 implementing agencies worked towards the successful implementation of SNAP-ED programming with Tribal communities, a slight decrease from 2021. The HSD and at least two implementing agencies have Tribal members on staff. Other SNAP-Ed implementing agencies work closely with Tribal members to implement programming in partnership with Tribal communities.

## FOCUS POPULATIONS

Among the surveyed agencies, six reported primarily focusing on providing services to elementary age populations, indicating a strong emphasis on promoting health and well-being among children. Additionally, two of the surveyed agencies concentrate their efforts on serving preschool age children and their families, recognizing the importance of early childhood interventions for promoting healthy habits from a young age. Three implementing agencies also reported providing programming to adults and senior age groups. Notably, only one agency reported working specifically with middle school age youth .



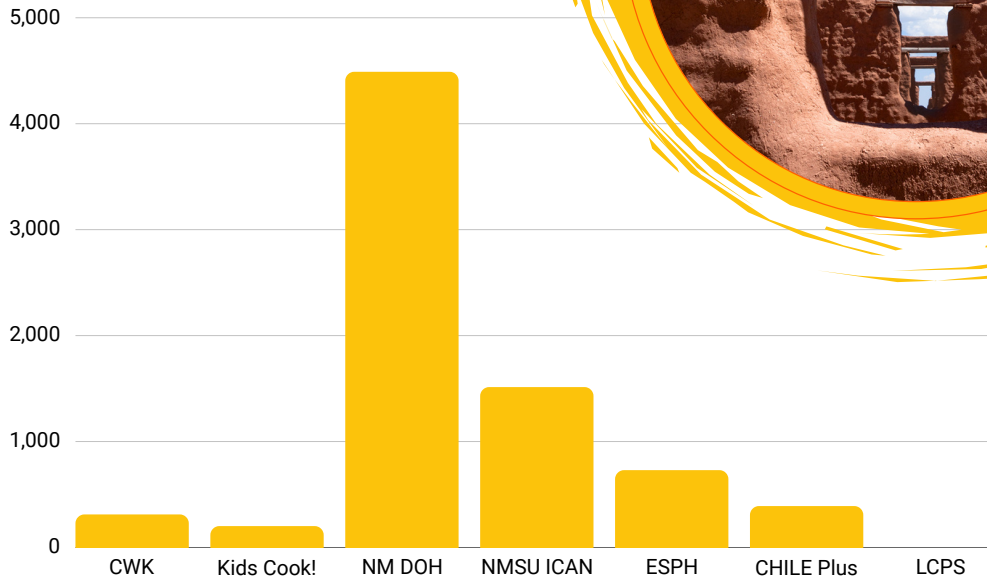
This photo was taken by the CHILE Plus SNAP-Ed program from the UNM HSC Implementing Agency.



# 2022-2023 TRIBAL REACH



Estimated Number of Native Americans  
reached during FFY 2022-2023



## SNAP-Ed 2022-2023 Programs

Data on the number of Native Americans reached were provided by each program. For Native Americans reached in the school setting, if exact numbers were not available, estimates were calculated based on the proportion of the school population identifying as American Indian/Alaska Native. Totals were computed using data from the New Mexico Public Education Department STARS website and the New Mexico Community Data Collaborative

- <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/bureaus/information-technology/stars/>
- <https://nmcddc.maps.arcgis.com/home/search.html?restrict=true&sortField=relevance&sortOrder=desc&searchTerm=school+demographics+2022#content>

The total Tribal student reach estimated for the 2022-2023 fiscal year was 7,639. In the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the total Tribal reach calculated was 2,902. The significant difference in reach over the past two years stems from the reach achieved by the NMDOH Healthy Kids - Healthy Communities program. In the past, the NMDOH had included only the Zuni and San Ildefonso Pueblos separately for Tribal reach. This year, Tribal reach was calculated based on all the communities that the HKHC program collaborates with.

# METHODS USED BY PROGRAMS TO ENGAGE WITH TRIBES

Agencies underscored the importance of collaborations and partnerships with Tribal community members in creating impactful program materials. Collaborating with community partners was described as essential for the successful co-development and implementation of SNAP-Ed NM programs with Tribal communities. When designing materials with partners, SNAP-Ed NM agencies consider the unique traditions, values, and dietary practices of each community. By involving Tribal leaders, elders, and community organizations, SNAP-Ed NM interventions currently incorporate traditional foods, cultural activities, and Native languages to enhance program effectiveness.

“  
**Seems like the greatest successes for different IA's come through connections with members of the community rather than a “top-down” approach.**  
”

Involving community partners allows for input from diverse perspectives and ensures SNAP-Ed program ownership and sustainability. Agencies highlighted their collaborative endeavors with Tribes to devise strategies focused on policy, system, and environmental changes to enhance program efforts.

Some implementing agencies initiated partnerships with organizations serving Tribal communities such as the Native Health Initiative. Other implementing agencies described providing in-person and/or virtual professional training and direct education for teachers and staff in Tribal communities aimed at equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills to successfully implement SNAP-Ed programming. Partnering with local organizations opened avenues for resource-sharing and leveraging, enabling access to funding and in-kind support, and maximizing the impact of available SNAP-Ed NM resources.

# Success Stories: Tribal Community Partners in SNAP-Ed Programming:

## EAT SMART TO PLAY HARD

The Eat Smart to Play Hard (ESPH) team adapted their materials to be more culturally relevant for the Pueblo of Zuni and Navajo Nation, thanks to the collaborative efforts of community partners. These adaptations involved various modifications such as the replacement of photographs, inclusion of Tribal language, and adjustments to recipes and activities. To ensure the appropriateness and effectiveness of these modifications, valuable input was gathered through focus groups held with teachers and students from each respective community.

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## COOKING WITH KIDS

The Cooking with Kids (CWK) program established an alliance with the principal of the Ohkay Owingeh (Pueblo Tribe) Community School, facilitating the seamless implementation of CWK program activities. CWK also engaged in a partnership with a local Native American chef to integrate traditional Native American cuisine into its program offerings.

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## NM DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

The NM DOH Obesity, Nutrition, and Physical Activity program partnered with the NM Aging and Long-Term Services Department and the Office of Indian Elder Affairs to provide professional culinary arts training to senior center food service staff. This training focuses on healthy meal preparation techniques utilizing traditional, indigenous, and locally sourced ingredients from New Mexico. Senior center staff members now apply their newfound knowledge to enhance the quality of meals served to Tribal seniors.

# METHODS USED BY THE STATE TO ENGAGE WITH TRIBES

In Fiscal Year 2023, the NM HSD undertook a series of actions aimed at bolstering engagement with Tribal communities in the context of SNAP-Ed NM initiatives. The department orchestrated a series of Tribal listening sessions, serving as platforms for discussions on SNAP-Ed NM and nutrition education in Tribal communities. These sessions provided a conducive environment for sharing perspectives and insights between the department and Tribal representatives. Additionally, during the 2022 fiscal year, a Native American professional was appointed to the position of statewide SNAP-Ed Program Manager. She has been engaging with Tribal communities and attending Tribal conferences, inviting other implementing agencies to attend as well.



The HSD also actively participated in meetings with potential Tribal partners, enabling a comprehensive understanding of their endeavors pertaining to promoting healthy eating and active living. These interactions facilitated the identification of potential areas for collaboration. In preparation for federal fiscal year 2024, the HSD also initiated plans to conduct a training session focused on working with Tribal communities and nurturing collaborations between SNAP-Ed NM and Tribal communities.



# BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION



**“ I think this is a marathon, not a sprint. We should celebrate even small strides in this area and expect slow and steady progress. ”**

## The Impact of COVID-19 on SNAP-Ed Programming:

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the delivery of SNAP-Ed programming in Tribal communities was substantial. Implementing agencies reported that many Tribal communities enforced lockdown measures, resulting in restricted access and the inability to engage with outside visitors, which posed challenges in engagement, collaborating, and implementing programming. Additionally, changes in school and Tribal leadership led to the non-renewal of program contracts in some cases.

Despite these hurdles, during the 2022-2023 academic year, agencies leveraged social media, social marketing strategies, and virtual communication tools such as Zoom and Teams to provide programming, expanding their reach beyond student-centric initiatives to include more family-focused programming. Implementing agencies also collaborated with Tribal communities to adapt and offer wellness kits, comprising a range of activities focused on promoting healthy eating, meal preparation, gardening, mindfulness, and outdoor physical activity for children and families in their homes. Agencies demonstrated resilience and adaptability by implementing alternative strategies to maintain program continuity and extend their outreach.



## CONCLUSION

SNAP-Ed NM made some positive strides between 2021 and 2023 despite the continued limitations that arose due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Implementing agencies increased the number of Tribal communities they were working with by one-third, and the number of Tribal communities that were working with more than one agency from four to seven. Tribal communities provided guidance in materials development and implementation through partnerships, surveys, and focus groups adding cultural relevancy. Areas for continued growth include hiring more Tribal members to conduct SNAP-Ed NM programming and partnering with more organizations serving Native populations.