

New Jersey State Profile

State Partnerships Improving Nutrition & Equity

Overview

State Partnerships Improving Nutrition & Equity (SPINE) is a program of the [National Association of Chronic Disease Directors'](#) (NACDD) [Center for Advancing Healthy Communities](#). In collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO), NACDD is providing funding to nine DNPAO Ambassador states to address food and nutrition security through equitable and sustainable actions that tackle economic and social conditions limiting food and nutrition security across the lifespan. State Health Departments receiving funding are Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Oregon. Five states – Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, and Oklahoma – received additional funding to augment existing efforts in their states to improve initiation, exclusivity, and duration of breastfeeding/chestfeeding.

SPINE states are developing meaningful partnerships or enhancing existing partnerships to support the implementation of a SPINE State Action Plan (SAP) that serves as a strategic roadmap for carrying out equitable food and nutrition security activities throughout their state. The initial project period was January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022; an additional year of funding was awarded in 2022, expanding the project period to December 31, 2023.

Learn more about the [SPINE program](#).

Activities

Overarching

- Develop new cross-sector partnerships to address food access issues among tribal communities in New Jersey, including transportation issues that limit access to nutritious foods among tribal communities, and develop culturally and linguistically appropriate nutrition education.
- Work with The Food Trust (TFT), a key partner in the state's efforts to improve food access, to support improved healthy food access among communities that have historically been and continue to be marginalized in New Jersey.
- Create the infrastructure to utilize Electronic Health Records (EHR) to identify persons experiencing food and nutrition insecurity and connect them to the appropriate food and nutrition security referrals and resources such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), special supplemental nutrition program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and food pantries.

Food and Nutrition Security

- Conduct community food needs assessments with the Nanticoke Lenape and Ramapough Lenape Nation tribal communities to learn more about their nutrition needs, preferred foods, and food access barriers.
- Identify needed food policy changes to improve access to federal nutrition programs and expand nutrition incentives across the state.

- Provide tailored training and technical assistance to tribal leaders and communities to implement policy, systems, and environmental changes that address food and nutrition security (e.g., access to USDA Summer Meals, community gardens, developing an irrigation system, starting a community food pantry, and creating a food resource website).

Health Equity

- Develop successful relationships with tribal communities – Nanticoke Lenape, Ramapough Lenape Nation, and Powhatan Renape Nation – to address and support their food needs. These communities have been historically marginalized and experience food and nutrition insecurity as well as inequitable food distribution at a higher rate than the general population.
- Work towards a shared power to address inequitable food and nutrition insecurity by using the Ladder of Community Participation as a framework, giving space to Tribal Councils and tribal members to be involved in the project, develop recommendations, and identify/approve resources.
- Attend tribal meetings to learn more about the social determinants of health (SDOH) needs that most impact the communities of focus.
- Establish the EHR infrastructure that will support the identification of SDOH needs and make immediate referrals for services.

Health Equity Spotlight

Work collaboratively with food and nutrition programs throughout the state, utilizing a multi-sector approach to address the SDOH and built environment issues among the Nanticoke Lenape and Ramapough Lenape Nation tribal communities. Identify available resources for summer meals for children in the tribal community and funds for summer youth employment to assist with ongoing food relief and distribution programs.



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The “State Partnerships Improving Nutrition & Equity” program is supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of a financial assistance award totaling \$1,755,901 with 100 percent funded by CDC/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CDC/HHS or the U.S. Government.