

Policy, Systems, & Environmental Change Efforts

May 30, 2024

PSE interventions aim to transform communities by increasing access to healthy food and expanding opportunities for physical activity, creating conditions that enable SNAP-eligible populations to make healthy choices. In FFY 2023, LHDs partnered with **835 sites** in low-income communities across California to plan, implement, or maintain PSE activities. 768 (92%) of these sites progressed past the planning stage; a total of **3,552 PSE changes adopted** and **1,306,990 individuals reached** were reported at these sites.

The most common PSE approaches used were related to edible gardens, food quality, and behavioral economics strategies.

EDIBLE GARDENS

LHDs implemented **542 garden-related changes** at **207 sites**. Garden interventions were most commonly implemented at sites in the following settings:



K-12 schools
(53% of sites)



Early childhood programs
(38% of sites)

Key focus areas for garden interventions included:

- Initiating, improving, expanding, reinvigorating, or maintaining edible gardens
- Using the garden for nutrition education
- Providing opportunities for parents, students, or community members to work in the garden
- Incorporating produce from an onsite garden into meals or snacks provided on site



FOOD QUALITY

LHDs implemented **532 PSE changes** to improve food quality at **262 sites**. Food quality interventions were most commonly implemented at sites in the following settings:



K-12 schools
(40% of sites)



Food banks & pantries
(20% of sites)



Early childhood programs
(19% of sites)



Food stores
(16% of sites)

Key focus areas for interventions to improve food quality included:

- Free water (access, taste, quality, etc.)
- Menus or recipes (variety, quality, etc.)
- Salad bar
- Storage for perishable foods
- Healthy beverage options



MARKETING STRATEGIES USING BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS

LHDs implemented **432 PSE changes** related to behavioral economics at **235 sites**. Behavioral economics interventions were most commonly implemented at sites in the following settings:



Food stores
(38% of sites)



Food banks
& pantries
(23% of sites)



K-12 schools
(19% of sites)



Early childhood
programs
(10% of sites)

Key focus areas for behavioral economics related interventions included:

- Prompting healthy food or activity behaviors with point-of-decision activities or displays
- Encouraging healthy and discouraging unhealthy food & drink choices by improving appeal, layout, or display



PSE INTERVENTIONS AT ORGANIZATIONAL & COMMUNITY LEVELS

LHDs also implement organizational- and community-level PSE interventions. Organizational-level PSEs happen at a "parent" organization that provides direction for multiple sites. Community-level PSEs impact a jurisdiction or geographical area, such as a county, city, census tract, or neighborhood.

Organizational-level PSE Interventions

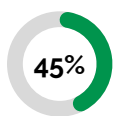
Seventeen LHDs reported a total of **33 organizational-level PSE changes**, mostly occurring at **school districts (58%)**. Organizations focused on PSE efforts related to:



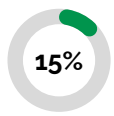
Trainings on how to implement PSE work throughout the organization



Food-related practices (e.g., food procurement, menu improvements)



Organizational wellness policies



Physical activity-related projects (e.g., Safe Routes to School, Parks Rx)

Community-level PSE Interventions

Nine LHDs reported community-level PSE efforts happening in **14 communities or jurisdictions**. Community-level PSE efforts targeted:

2
regional-level
projects

4
county-wide
projects

4
city-wide
projects

4
neighborhood or zip-
code level projects

Many community-level PSE efforts worked towards **policy change (50%)**. These efforts related to a wide range of policies, including:



Access to or safety of parks and open space



Physical activity policies and supports



Healthy food and beverage procurement or vending