

# Nutrition educators support nutrition incentives for programs to promote increased intake of fruit and vegetables

March 9 2023

---



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

The Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), run by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, includes Nutrition Incentive (NI) and

Produce Prescription (PPR) programs. These programs provide financial incentives for healthy eating by increasing individuals' purchase and consumption of fruits and vegetables and reducing food insecurity in order to prevent and treat nutrition-related diseases.

A study in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* explores how nutrition educators work with NI and PPR programs to support participating individuals.

"Nutrition education is provided in different ways through the GusNIP program," says lead author Sarah A. Stotz, Ph.D., MS, RDN, CDCES, an adjunct research scientist consultant at the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition, Omaha, NE, USA. "Some programs provide lower touch nutrition education such as recipe cards or newsletters, while others are more robust and include cooking or nutrition education classes. Little is known about the rationale for applying various approaches when implementing NI or PPR programs and how these approaches facilitate a positive participant experience."

Forty-one nutrition educators were recruited via email invitation by their assigned national program advisor through the USDA's Nutrition Incentive Program Training, Technical Assistance, Evaluation, and Information Center (NTAE). Nutrition educators completed a survey and participated in either an individual interview or a focus group. Participants reported an average of eight years working in the area of nutrition education and nearly a quarter identified as registered dietitian nutritionists.

Key themes emerging from the study include:

- Exploring the many roles played by nutrition educators in providing participant-centered education
- Value of cross-sector partnerships with healthcare centers and

community organizations

- Solutions to challenges in providing quality [nutrition](#) education while also engaging in meaningful program evaluation

"Nutrition educators play a unique role by providing participant-centered education, navigating food environments that can make healthful eating hard to do, and culturally adapting their programming to meet the needs of diverse audiences," explains Amy Yaroch, Ph.D., Executive Director at the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition and Project Director for the GusNIP NTAE.

Dr. Stotz adds, "If resources were available, educators said they would like to expand the peer educator and community health worker models by providing competitive salaries to these key [nutrition education](#) and program implementation team members."

**More information:** Sarah Stotz et al, A Qualitative Exploration of Approaches Applied by Nutrition Educators Within Nutrition Incentive Programs, *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jneb.2022.11.007](#)

Provided by Elsevier

Citation: Nutrition educators support nutrition incentives for programs to promote increased intake of fruit and vegetables (2023, March 9) retrieved 3 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-03-nutrition-incentives-intake-fruit-vegetables.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.