Subsistence, SNAP, and Social Marketing Marylynne L. Kostick, MPH

ATTENTION CUSTOMERS

Food Stamps can buy some Subsistence Items!! If you qualify for this special program you can purchase items such as this dipnet, a hunting knife, fishing rod, or lines and hooks! Please Ask!

Quagciq: Sourdock

on Organic Green rom the Tundra!

OOD IS MEDICIN

or your famil

Get the facts to make healthy choice

Quagcig has tasty green leaves. Eating green om the tundra, such as quagciq, may protect you

and your family from cancer, heart disease, and

and eating sourdock together. Kids are never tog

liabetes. You and your family can enjoy gathering

tamin A an 5.5

Introduction

In rural Alaska, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funds can be used in many communities to support a household's ability to acquire subsistence hunting and fishing gear for the procurement of wild foods in addition to store-bought foods, baby formula, and water.

In 2015, the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Family Nutrition Program (DHSS), Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence (ADF&G). and University of Alaska Fairbanks Center for Alaska Native Health Research (UAF) joined together to develop a methodology to explore the relationships between the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and subsistence practices in rural Alaska.

This presentation summarizes the past three years of work to better understand the use and impact of SNAP-subsistence benefits in rural Alaska and the social marketing and outreach efforts that have been produced as a result.

Overview

Year 1

In 2016, household surveys administered by ADF&G to four communities of the Lower Yukon region included a module asking respondents participating in SNAP about their use of SNAP funds to purchase subsistence hunting and fishing gear and the importance of this aspect of the program to the household as this had not yet been systematically assessed.

Figure 1.

U							
ASSESSMENTS: GEAR PURCHASES							
SNAP funds (also known as 'food stamps') can be used to purchase materials related to catchin							
We'd like to learn about how people use SNAP funds to purchase these items to get the food the							
Last year, did your household receive SNAP funds? If YES, Did your househld use SNAP funds to purchase subsistence FISHING or HUNTING GEAR?							
If YE	S,						
W	What types of gear did your household purchase?			(circle all that apply)			
Net	s Lines	Hooks	Fishing rods	Harpoons	Knives		
(1) (2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)		

How important to your household's subsistence fishing and hunting is the availability of SNA

OTHER FISH & ASSESSMENTS: 06, 66

Year 2

In 2017, a full-page assessment was developed that asked respondents about the importance of various food sources, importance of SNAP to accessing food and types of food, and about the barriers, benefits, and who they recognize as food leaders in their community.

Six communities received the survey module as part of the household survey; field researchers provided feedback prompting modifications to the modules. In communities were modified versions of the module were administered respondents provided very specific and insightful information regarding how community members view and use elements of their food system. Such responses included: Fruits and vegetables and seafood were foods people would like to eat but are difficult to get due to store availability, lack of local production and location, regulations, and equipment barriers; major benefits of eating wild foods included health impacts, economics, and lifestyle preferences; and food leaders within communities were identified such as farmers, subsistence harvesters, and Tribal/Indian Associations.

Year 3

Based on researcher feedback, only the standard Gear Purchases assessment module was administered; as of the 2018 field season, a total of 13 communities across rural Alaska in all regions have been administered the module. Over 110 households responded to the module during the 2018 field season; 43 of these households were aware that SNAP benefits could be used for purchasing subsistence gear, yet only one household reported using SNAP benefits for this use (purchasing nets for fishing).





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ing or processing subsistence foods.							
hey need.							
	Y	N					
?	Y	N					
Ice augers Other _		_					
(7) (8)							
AP funds for purchasing gear?							
not important important very	/ important						
MOUNTAIN VILLAGE: 233							

Purchasing Subsistence Gear with SNAP Funds

Across all communities surveyed thus far, very few households receiving SNAP funds utilize them to purchase subsistence hunting and fishing gear. However, for the Lower Kuskokwim communities who were using SNAP funds there were several who reported the purchasing of fishing gear and that this option was important to their household's acquisition of food; in this region of the State subsistence fishing is widely known to contribute to the region's available food.

Based on the low response rate to using SNAP funds to purchase gear and the low rate (less than 50%) of respondents reporting knowledge that SNAP funds could be used to purchase subsistence hunting and fishing gear, DHSS developed an informational handout for distribution in eligible rural communities as a social marketing campaign to increase awareness of this aspect of SNAP (see Figure 2). As of December 2018, fliers have been distributed in nearly 30 communities, being placed within tribal and city offices as well as at public meetings that ADF&G conducts community review meetings for research projects.

Figure 2.



Next Steps – Year 4

In the 2019 field season, ADF&G plans to distribute the fliers to at least 15 rural communities during initial survey administration in late winter/early spring. DHSS and ADF&G are looking towards quantitative methods to assess the impact of the social marketing campaign; follow-up on the 2019-survyed communities will be likely in the fall of 2019 during data review meetings; a more widespread approach to monitoring SNAP funds use to purchase subsistence hunting and fishing gear is still being discussed.

The Gear Purchases assessment module will be administered in at least six additional rural communities during the 2019-field season. Households eligible for SNAP within they study communities will be provided the "Did You Know?" flier; in addition, community/tribal/city offices and any community stores will be offered fliers and/or posters to handout and/or present to the public.

An additional analysis of community food security scores, SNAP eligibility and participation, and harvest and use rates of wild foods will be carried out this year and a summary report of the four years of survey work will be complied into a report.

In addition to this work, DHSS and ADF&G will be partnering to create and distribute mini-magazines focusing on subsistence harvest and use practices and nutritional and preparation aspects of wild foods; the work will be region specific and utilize interview data with community members, quantitative harvest and use data, and nutritional information; the target audience will be broad, encompassing households, teachers and healthcare practitioners, as well as program administrators.

Topics will be based on available information and community input – your interest and ideas are welcome – please contact Marylynne Kostick (marylynne.kostick@alaska.gov), Kathleen Wayne (kathleen.wayne@alaska.gov), and/or Jennifer Johnson (jennifer.johnson@alaska.gov) to share your topics of interest!

Contributors to this work: Kathleen Wayne & Jennifer Johnson, DHSS

ADF&G, Division of Subsistence & DHSS, Family Nutrition Programs

Discussion

