

ALL IN ALAMEDA COUNTY'S

HEALTHY FOOD CHAMPIONS TOOLKIT



December 2021



La Clínica
a californiah⁺center

ABOUT ALL IN ALAMEDA COUNTY

Since 2014, ALL IN Alameda County (ALL IN) has been a strong and innovative force addressing issues of poverty through collaboration across sectors and with the community. ALL IN's three areas of focus are:

- **Basic needs.** All families in Alameda County must be able to meet their basic needs for shelter, food, healthcare, and safety.
- **Economic development.** All families in Alameda County must be able to earn an income that allows for self-sufficiency and asset building.
- **Quality education.** All families in Alameda County must be able to obtain a quality education that positions the next generation for academic and economic success.

ALL IN Alameda County is a county-wide initiative that directs resources towards effective, equitable, and sustainable solutions that are grounded in the lived experience and well-being of people in Alameda County.





CONTRIBUTORS

This toolkit was created by representatives from
ALL IN Alameda County and La Clínica de la Raza.

It was co-authored by Victoria Angel; Larissa Estes-White, Dr PH;
Silvia Guzman; Denise Jones; Catalina Palacios; Gabriela Rueda; and
Emma Steinberg, MD, Chef.

Layout and design were provided by Melinda Kwok.

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- Catalina Palacios, La Clínica de La Raza
- Laura Zepeda Torres, La Clínica de La Raza
- Claudia Rodriguez-Briones, La Clínica de La Raza
- Lauren Forsell, MPH, La Clínica de La Raza
- Hannah Moore, ALL IN Alameda County
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- City of Oakland Parks and Recreation

HELLMAN FOUNDATION



OAKLAND UNIFIED
SCHOOL DISTRICT
Community Schools. Thriving Students.



CITY OF OAKLAND
PARKS, RECREATION &
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Wilma Chan

Alameda County (CA)
Supervisor, District 3

The ALL IN Alameda County Healthy Food Champion Toolkit is dedicated to Alameda County Supervisor and ALL IN Founder, the Honorable Wilma Chan (District 3). Supervisor Chan was a committed champion for healthcare, childcare, housing, immigrant rights, and ensuring basic needs were met. Supervisor Chan left behind an incomparable legacy of responsive policy and community initiatives that will impact generations to come.



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BACKGROUND

Food Equity

Food insecurity is not simply insufficient food for an individual. The more difficult challenge is food inequity, defined as a structural imbalance in not just the quantity, but the quality of food available in low-income versus high-income communities. In almost every area, families can find food, even free food, from safety net sources like food pantries or drive-through distributions. However, in Alameda County, California, we receive consistent feedback from community residents that they are unsatisfied with the healthfulness of their available options. The greatest demand is for fresh produce and equitable access to healthy foods. One community member commented: “We want healthy food in our community, just like in the white community.”

Scaling access to affordable, healthy food goes beyond what is provided by the current food system, and beyond small-scale improvements to the food system, such as community gardens in low-income neighborhoods. Many community elders today grew up in communities that, while low-income,

enjoyed food access and traditions that promoted health. Produce was available and affordable. They passed on culturally-relevant foodways that relied on fresh, local ingredients and that strengthened a sense of identity and belonging within the community.

Many efforts to improve food access and healthy eating currently exist, such as growing more fresh produce, teaching people how to cook, and increasing the healthy options at corner stores. Philanthropic foundations have funded efforts to increase food access and reshape food systems. Local food policy councils work with small farmers and community advocates to improve land-use policies. These efforts often happen in siloes. Each project is valuable in its own right, and yet, the lack of alignment and coordination among these efforts carries a significant opportunity cost. The Healthy Food Champion Model represents a powerful alliance between community residents, parents, community leaders, local growers, health care professionals, and elected officials.



BACKGROUND

Food Equity (Con't)

It harnesses the political will, institutional resources, and community power to make lasting change that supports the availability of healthy foods and promotes health in the longer term.

Healthy Food Champions are parent leaders from local community clinics who promote health and wellbeing to neighborhood schools and community-based organizations. Healthy Food Champions are trained to understand the role of nutrition in health, reinforce messages from healthcare providers, and provide tools and tips to increase access to healthy, culturally-relevant food and support healthy behavior change. They hold unique and important knowledge of their community and have the ability to influence long-term change by providing the link between schools, clinics, community, and resources. Healthy Food Champions have a finger on the pulse of the community and are able to respond in the moment to the current needs of the community.

The Healthy Food Champion Model invites community leaders, healthcare providers, local food growers, and other local partners to reclaim the food knowledge, traditions, and practices that have promoted individual, family, and community health for years, and to partner with each other to co-create new local structures, strategies, and agreements that combine the best of what we know about nutrition and health promotion with the best of what we know about nurturing community and building power.

By placing consumer demand for healthy food at the center of the food system in low-income communities, the quality and convenience of food accessible by our most vulnerable populations can dramatically improve. Healthcare systems that actively use dietary changes as a lever for improved health outcomes and cost-savings amplify these community benefits. When people eat healthier, they are in better health.



BACKGROUND

Who is this Toolkit For?

This toolkit was created for primary care clinics, other healthcare settings, and community-based organizations that want to incorporate community partnerships and food equity initiatives into their work practice and workflow. The most successful program will arise from a process tailored to your community, its organizations, and its residents' needs.

Since the authors of this toolkit are based in Alameda County, California, you will find examples specific to Alameda County and California throughout.

How to Use this Toolkit

This toolkit is organized into steps to help you and your organization start a Healthy Food Champion program. Each step sets the foundation for the next step to ensure a comprehensive, intentional, and sustainable program. These steps can also help establish other community champions for housing, transportation, environment, early care, and education. The possibilities are endless when you put the community at the center.

STEP 1: BE GROUNDED IN THE COMMUNITY AND DEVELOP CLEAR PROGRAM GOALS

Community Leadership is Essential

Food is deeply cultural, familial, and usually shared in communal settings. Understanding how people like to eat is as important as understanding what types of foods provide the highest nutritional benefit. Community and parent leaders hold unique and essential knowledge and have the greatest capacity to influence long-term changes in the food systems in their neighborhoods. Explicitly valuing the experiences and knowledge of these individuals promotes equity and allows for a new kind of community organizing with a health education lens. Additionally, they respond at the moment to meet community needs and provide mutual support. This is an opportunity for healthcare providers to follow community lead and provide their expertise in support of behavior change and systemic change to the surrounding food environment.



Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion

Develop Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Goals

While the Healthy Food Champion work is often mission and vision-driven on a high level, it is important to clarify and identify your program's vision, mission, and values, which will ultimately inform the program's goals. Clarity and alignment from the beginning provide an important foundation for the collaboration and work and facilitate buy-in from all partners and participants. Example of vision and mission statements as well as the list of core values are included on page 30 of the *Appendix*.

While your specific goals may shift and evolve, at the core, the Healthy Food Champion Model aims to:

- Invest in community
- Amplify the voices of community experts, particularly around health and food
- Provide a platform for community members to advocate for their health
- Remove structural barriers that force many community members into poverty and poorer health
- Improve quality and accessibility of food in the community

STEP 2: IDENTIFY FUNDING SOURCES TO SUPPORT THE PROGRAM

One of the first questions your organization may ask is, “We love the idea, but how do we fund it?” Community programming is often funded by a combination of grants, community benefit funding, and foundation funding, as well as public dollars. Since a Healthy Food Champion Program involves interactions across sectors (e.g., health and education), it can be helpful to take advantage of all of these funding streams.

In our Alameda County model, we wrote grants to family foundations to support the program for its first three years.

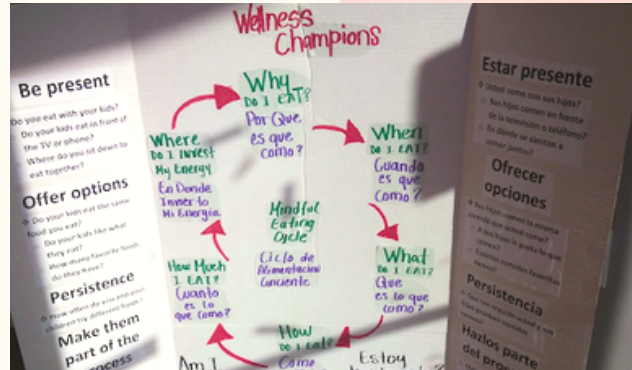


Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion

Consider these guiding principles:

- Prioritize grant or foundation funding sources that have a finger on the pulse of the work and community
- Explore existing federal and state funding streams:
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) education funds
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) employment and training funds
 - Sugar Sweetened Beverage Tax funds
 - Tobacco Tax funds
 - County Health Care Sales Tax funds
 - Health Insurance Plans (e.g., Medicare Advantage Plans)
 - Health Insurance Waiver Programs (e.g., Medicaid Waiver)

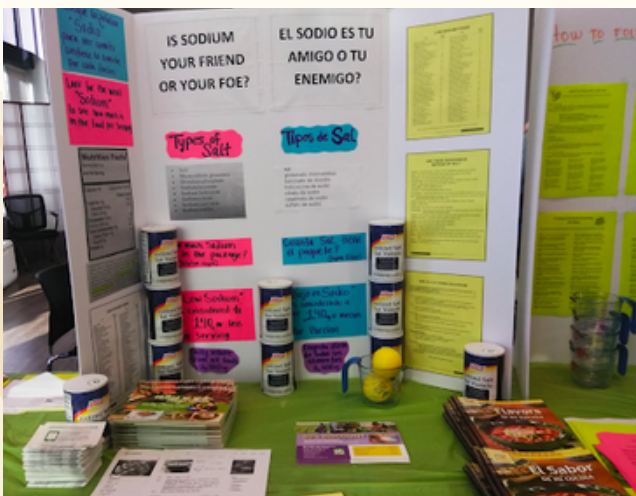


Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion

STEP 2: IDENTIFY FUNDING SOURCES TO SUPPORT THE PROGRAM

After our three-year partnership, ALL IN successfully introduced the Healthy Food Champion program to a funder who has committed one year of funding to continue the program as we explore how the model fits under the California Medicaid Waiver (CalAIM).



Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion



Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion

We are currently exploring how California's Medicaid Waiver may be able to cover the costs associated with the HFC model under the medically supportive foods and nutrition supports listed "in lieu of services."

<https://www.spur.org/featured-project/medically-supportive-food-and-nutrition>



STEP 3: RECRUIT YOUR HEALTHY FOOD CHAMPIONS AND SUPPORTIVE PERSONNEL

There are many ways to build a Healthy Food Champion program depending on the desired breadth and scope and the kind of support you have within your institution and community. When starting a Healthy Food Champion program, it is helpful to include the following personnel.



Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion

Healthy Food Champions

Healthy Food Champions are local residents who are interested in teaching others about healthy eating and advocating for community improvements that support healthy eating. Key attributes of successful Healthy Food Champions include:

- **Authentic connection to community** – successful Healthy Food Champions are active peers that maintain authentic connections with others and have strong and deep community ties.
- **Self-motivation** – oftentimes Healthy Food Champions will need to seek out training opportunities, resources, or partnerships. Healthy Food Champions are also often learning both for themselves and to teach others.
- **Willingness and openness to share and support other Healthy Food Champions** – beyond partnership on projects, successful Healthy Food Champions encourage and support each other and also share their knowledge and experiences with each other and with the community. Being open to new perspectives and approaches and willingness to try new things are critical.
- **Flexibility** – projects and life outside of work can present multiple challenges. Being flexible on how to do the work and meet community needs is important. Willingness to transition programming to different formats or platforms (e.g., in person to virtual) is also helpful.
- **Ability to speak language(s) that are common in the community.**

STEP 3: RECRUIT YOUR HEALTHY FOOD CHAMPIONS AND SUPPORTIVE PERSONNEL

Depending on the scope of your program, you will need to decide how many Healthy Food Champions you need and whether they are full-time or part-time. The time commitment should be decided with the Healthy Food Champions based on their other time commitments and community needs. *(Please see pages 31-33 of the appendix for an example job description, Healthy Food Champion job application, and compensation.)*

Healthy Food Champions Coordinator

The Healthy Food Champions Coordinator plays both a supportive and logistical role in the Program. Coordinators build the core team by bringing people and projects together, holding space for the Healthy Food Champions to debrief and support each other, and by helping to provide a balance between community and work. Having relationships with networks of people and community partners helps significantly. Logistically, Coordinators help with timesheets, answer questions, and make sure the Healthy Food Champions have what they need to execute their projects. While this role could lead to a hierarchy or uncomfortable power dynamic, it is important for the Coordinator to use a strengths-based approach and create a culture that values everyone's knowledge and experiences to ensure that everyone is treated equitably.

(Please see Step 5: Strategic Approach section for more on power dynamics.) This culture helps ensure the work environment is a safe space to learn, teach, make mistakes, and support each other. To help the Coordinator succeed, it is important to clarify their role and expectations with partners, including the Healthy Food Champions from the beginning.



Image courtesy of Catalina Palacios, Program Coordinator



STEP 3: RECRUIT YOUR HEALTHY FOOD CHAMPIONS AND SUPPORTIVE PERSONNEL

Content Experts

Medical and nutrition Content Experts are important resources for the Healthy Food Champions. The Content Expert acts as a bridge by providing evidence-based recommendations and resources to the Healthy Food Champions in a way that can then be shared with the community in more relevant and salient ways.

Content Expert(s) must:

- Share many of the key attributes recommended for the Healthy Food Champions and avoid the pitfalls of hierarchy and power imbalances, similar to the Coordinator.
- Be open to build a connection and relationship with Healthy Food Champions and to see themselves as part of the community too.
- Grow and learn along with the Healthy Food Champions -- be open to learning and listening.
- Share knowledge and recommendations in accessible ways using easy to understand language.

In ALL IN's case, this took the shape of monthly workshops designed and implemented by a physician chef. The workshop format allowed for an open dialogue of truths, myths, and how to distinguish between the two. Building a strong relationship on a foundation of trust gives confidence to the Healthy Food Champions in sharing recommendations with their families, loved ones, and the community. Example workshop outlines and handouts are available on page 35 of the *Appendix*.

Community

Without partnership and connection with the community, a Healthy Food Champion program does not function. Community engagement and feedback shape the Healthy Food Champion program. This includes Healthy Food Champions' family members too! Find organizations and collaborators with strong community partnership and engagement and identify opportunities to strengthen the work.



STEP 3: RECRUIT YOUR HEALTHY FOOD CHAMPIONS AND SUPPORTIVE PERSONNEL

While many, if not all, of the key personnel are from the local community, it is also important to recognize that these individuals represent a small part of the community, so cannot speak for the community as a whole.

Hiring and Interview Process

Once the scope of the Program and key attributes of the Healthy Food Champions are identified, the Healthy Food Champion Coordinator will work to develop the hiring and interview process. A flyer, job description, and application are recommended and examples can be found on pages 31-33 of the *Appendix*. Providing community residents with as much information as possible and numerous opportunities to apply will increase the Program's reach which can ease the recruitment of a strong and diverse team. As applications are submitted, the Coordinator will be responsible for accepting each application and contacting applicants confirming that the application was received and providing next steps.

When reviewing applications, the Coordinator can organize an interview committee of trusted members to help review applications and aid in the interview process. To facilitate the interview process, the Coordinator along with the committee can organize and review some key questions to ask the applicant beforehand. Some example questions can also be found on page 34 of the *Appendix*.

During the interview, it is recommended to allow the applicant time to ask questions; it is important for both parties to identify if they are mutually a good fit. After each interview, the Coordinator and the interview committee should debrief and discuss the applicant's answers, identify any strengths or limitations, and decide if they will move forward. Applicants selected as Healthy Food Champions will receive a congratulatory welcome email with further onboarding and orientation information.

STEP 4: PROVIDE TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR THE HEALTHY FOOD CHAMPIONS

In our experience, focusing on community building and training in the first year helps facilitate collaboration and success. At the start, a great deal of time should be spent on relationship building amongst the Healthy Food Champions, Coordinator, and Content Expert(s). This allows the group to get to know each other, build trust, and become comfortable sharing with each other. It fosters an open and collaborative culture that will be beneficial in the long term.

Early on, it is important to also spend time learning and discussing food as medicine, ancestral and cultural food traditions, and decolonizing diets through workshops, reading books, shopping at local farmers markets and grocery stores, and even visiting museums or art galleries. These conversations are more meaningful after building trust and creating a safe and collaborative culture within the group.

While Healthy Food Champions will have a great deal of knowledge and experience, they will likely benefit from additional training to build on that foundation, make it easier for them to work in healthcare settings, and help them navigate both in-person and virtual platforms. Certain trainings should be done before starting work with the community. While the majority of the trainings can be completed in the first year, we also recommend building in time after the first year for ongoing training. As a result, it is prudent to incorporate trainings into your deliverables, assessment of capacity, and timeline.



STEP 4: PROVIDE TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR THE HEALTHY FOOD CHAMPIONS

Suggested Training Before Starting Community Programming

- **HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act)** – helpful to have this training early on for anyone who will be working directly in a health care setting.
- **Food Handling Certification** – useful for food safety knowledge to share with families, but also to ensure compliance when teaching classes or working with food in public venues.
- **Community Action Model Training** - provides background on and common language for community engagement and how smaller community initiatives can grow and influence larger scale change within the community.
- **Cultural Humility and Values** – training on equity, diversity, and inclusion are helpful, especially to find common space, understanding, and language when discussing sensitive health topics and behavior change. Ideally the training also includes discussions about how there may be differences between one's ethical values, work values, and the current legal system, and tips for balancing and reconciling those differences, especially when interacting with the community.
- **Advocacy, Professional Development, and Leadership Training** – training on addressing inequities and engaging community members and leaders in local and systemic change. We recommend these training have a trauma-informed lens so that Healthy Food Champions learn how to respond to traumatic stories they hear as a part of this work balancing their role as both a community member and a professional.
- **Popular Education** – training on communication skills and child, family, and adult learning styles and methodologies.



STEP 4: PROVIDE TRAINING AND SUPPORT FOR THE HEALTHY FOOD CHAMPIONS

Suggested Training During the Course of Community Programming

- **Nutrition classes** – training on how nutrition affects health and practical tips for healthy cooking, meal planning, and facilitating sustainable lifestyle changes
- **Community and Family Health Class** – information about common health concerns, training to assist community members in behavior change, and information about emotional wellness for community and each other (e.g., how to take care of yourself while caring for the community)
- **Mental Health First Aid** – for youth and adults
- **Technology training** – how to use social media, best practices for teaching on a virtual platform, required tools (e.g., stands, lights) for teaching virtually

Optional Training to Consider

- Gardening classes
- Waste reduction
- Teaching in multiple languages

(See pages 36-37 of the Appendix for more examples of Training)



Image courtesy of Catalina Palacios, Program Coordinator

Once a Healthy Food Champion completes a training, it can be helpful for them to report back or teach the other Healthy Food Champions what they learned. Creating space and time for the Healthy Food Champions to share their knowledge and feedback from a training they have attended allows Healthy Food Champions to teach and learn from each other and incorporate it more widely into their programming. To make this easier, Coordinators should track trainings to know what is available or coming up, which training each Healthy Food Champion has attended, any feedback, and if a Healthy Food Champion shared their main takeaways with the larger Healthy Food Champion group. This running list can be useful to share with other partner organizations.

STEP 5: DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

Work in the community, especially around medicine, behavior change, and food, requires sensitivity. This section discusses strategies to incorporate a culturally humble and trauma-informed approach to this work. This section is left intentionally broad since our goal is to avoid being proscriptive and instead guide you to design your programming to meet specific community needs. Please see page 38 of the *Appendix* for example programs that the Alameda County Healthy Food Champions developed and led.

Acknowledging the Role of Power Dynamics

Our society involves a great deal of hierarchies and power imbalances. Successful Healthy Food Champion Programs should acknowledge these challenges and promote equity.

- Look within communities to find trusted and experienced community members to lift up and highlight their value.
- Examine the Healthy Food Champion leadership structure, recognizing that all of the team members have value and play different, supportive, roles.
- Share personal or family experiences to help build a culture of support and commitment over the long term since Healthy Food Champions often navigate roles as both educators and patients -- creating a strong foundation for this work.



Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion

STEP 5: DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

Co-Creating Safe Space and Setting Expectations

Once you have a strong foundation, it is easier to co-create a safe space with the Healthy Food Champions.

- Host training and team-building activities early on to provide opportunities for the Healthy Food Champions to come together and establish a culture of collaboration. This initial investment in building relationships and trust supports the development of both in-person and virtual programming.
- Be consistent and transparent about why the Healthy Food Champion program exists, what the goal of the program is, and what participants can expect.
- Address issues in the community in a timely fashion to help signal that no matter your agenda, the needs of the community come first.

- Set clear expectations including discussions and agreements on best practices for healthy eating and lifestyle changes. This makes it easier for the Healthy Food Champions to build on prior conversations and will make participants feel more listened to and open to learning, trying something new, and/or accepting resources.



Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion

STEP 5: DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

Content Development, Dissemination, and Platforms

Community engagement has shifted in the era of smartphones and social media and especially in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, it is important to design your Healthy Food Champion Program with some degree of flexibility. To determine your programming content, we encourage collective brainstorming, feedback, and collaboration on projects. For example, workshop topics were selected by Healthy Food Champions based on their interactions with community members and gaps identified during training. Examples of the programming and content developed by the Healthy Food Champions in Alameda County are included in pages 37-41 of the *Appendix*.



Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion

Develop content and programming for both in person and virtual platforms to expand the reach of the work and promote engagement outside of traditional working hours. The personal contact, one-on-one conversations, and relationships that come out of in-person programming, amongst the Healthy Food Champions as well as between Healthy Food Champions and participants, cannot be replaced.

- Be open to training Healthy Food Champions on how to utilize a virtual platform to disseminate content.
- Maintain open lines of communication with Healthy Food Champion Program staff to ensure they feel supportive and their needs are being met while operating in a virtual environment.

STEP 5: DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

Technology Support

Tech support is key to ensuring a successful Healthy Food Champion Program. Healthy Food Champions require training on using common cooking, online, and social media tools (e.g., how to use an induction burner, posting a video on YouTube), but also require ongoing support for troubleshooting, especially if they use multiple platforms for programming.

Building Partnerships

One of the most powerful parts of a Healthy Food Champion Program is partnering across sectors and community groups. Since Healthy Food Champions are entrenched in their community, it is easiest to start building partnerships with networks and at locations that Healthy Food Champions are already familiar with or connected to, for example, their own children's schools. This can lead to expansion into after-school programs and new connections with recreation centers and other community sites.



Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion

Before starting a new partnership, it is important to understand the partner organization's protocols, policies, and expectations for volunteers. Examples include:

- Emergency and safety protocols
- TB testing requirements
- Fingerprinting requirements
- Clarity on what materials and supplies can or cannot be brought into the building or used (e.g., kitchen knives)
- Protocols for how to handle situations with legal implications (e.g., stealing, property damage, etc.)
- Clarity on titles for the Healthy Food Champions and program participants (e.g., clients vs. participants vs. patients) which can be important in clinical settings.

STEP 5: DEVELOP YOUR STRATEGIC APPROACH

Key Partners and Considerations

- Health Care
 - Engage with all members of the clinic staff to discuss issues related to:
 - Space
 - Workflow
 - Advertising
- Neighborhood Collaborative - partnering with a Neighborhood Collaborative provides an opportunity for broad engagement since it acts as a hub for community members and groups to come together, share their work and gaps, and network with each other. It also takes advantage of Healthy Food Champion's community organizing skills to help community members understand the role of Healthy Food Champions and how their work overlaps with other community efforts and programming.



Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion

You may want to:

- Create or engage a Steering Committee
- Advertise and present at other community events to spread the word about community programs and offerings
- Take advantage of the Healthy Food Champion Program engagement and platform for more community advocacy and needed systems and environmental changes

Other Resources

There are often multiple organizations in your local community working on similar initiatives. It can be helpful to reach out to them directly or through a local collaborative to see what gaps and opportunities exist. We recommend keeping track of the work each community organization is doing by checking out their newsletters, videos, training, as well as attending community meetings. These organizations or community groups often link to other helpful resources (books, YouTube videos, etc.) and can share their volunteer protocols (see *Building Partnerships Section above*).

STEP 6: MEASURE YOUR IMPACT

Evaluating and assessing impact are key components of any program, but especially those that want to amplify the work through policy, systems, and environmental change. Evaluation helps measure impact and ensure the Healthy Food Champion Program is actually meeting community needs and to identify new opportunities for growth. An example progress report is included on pages 42-45 of the *Appendix*.

As a part of this evaluation process, it is important to engage with the community to hear their voices and experiences with Healthy Food Champion programming. Depending on your funding sources and ultimate goals, you can consider evaluating impact of a Healthy Food Champion program by assessing the following:

- **Engagement with Community** – as community members, Healthy Food Champions have pre-existing relationships with many of their neighbors; however, Healthy Food Champions will build many more relationships through their work and expand their networks. This can be measured by collecting community attendance at events. However, you may want to collect: anecdotal accounts of when Healthy Food Champions:
 - Are recognized in their neighborhood outside of events
 - See families learning and eating healthier
 - Hear stories from parents and kids (and what those stories are)
 - Incorporate community preferences into content and programming



Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion

STEP 6: MEASURE YOUR IMPACT

- **Relationships with other Organizations and Opportunities to Discuss the Work** – community work is often siloed and not always shared widely. However, Healthy Food Champions can take advantage of community meetings to share updates and developments in their work. Familiarity with other community efforts and opportunities to partner are important measures of improved communication, collaboration, and dissemination.
- **Meaningful Connection and Shared Values Across Cultures** – by cooking and eating together, Healthy Food Champions create a safe space for community members and Healthy Food Champions to bring their full selves and engage in cross-cultural experiences. Healthy Food Champions can highlight these shared experiences and connections within families and across cultures to strengthen relationships and break down barriers.
- **Culinary and Nutrition Knowledge**
 - Healthy Food Champion programming often includes different ways to prepare and eat the same ingredients. Evaluations can assess tips shared, new ways of preparing food (even if it is with familiar ingredients), willingness to try new foods or recipes, and frequency of preparing certain foods or recipes.



Image courtesy of Silvia Guzman, Healthy Food Champion



STEP 6: MEASURE YOUR IMPACT

- **Language accommodation** – community programming can sometimes be limited by the availability of language services. Building a Healthy Food Champion Program that allows everyone to communicate in their preferred language is helpful. You can collect information on, and evaluate:
 - How many languages does your program function in?
 - To what degree does your Healthy Food Champion Program match the languages of your community?
 - Do community members feel they are in a safe space and feel comfortable asking for language assistance or speaking in their preferred language?
 - How often are translation and interpretation services provided?
 - Who provides the translation and interpretation services?
- **Food Security** - one of the main goals of the Healthy Food Champion Program is to increase access to healthy and affordable food for communities.
- **Consumer and Institutional Demand** – another main goal of the Healthy Food Champion Program is to make systems and environmental changes that improve food insecurity and allow healthy food to be the easy, affordable, and accessible option for communities. Therefore, it also can be helpful to include assessments of consumer and institutional demand and product purchasing and availability.



CONCLUSION

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, healthcare is focusing more and more on prevention strategies, improving health equity, and building partnerships across sectors. We acknowledge that there are many health education, health promotion, and community partnership models across the country. The Healthy Food Champion Model achieves all of these goals and more. We have found that the model successfully utilizes a culturally-inclusive, neighborhood-based approach to expand the availability and utilization of healthy food in Alameda County to reduce food insecurity and promote health equity.

We hope this toolkit has inspired you to build a Healthy Food Champion Program and has outlined the necessary steps and partnerships required. Please feel free to contact ALL IN Alameda County or La Clinica for more information about our version of the Health Food Champion Program.



APPENDIX

Example Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Goals - these statements were created collaboratively by the Alameda County Healthy Food Champions and Program Coordinator.

- Vision
 - We envision a day when community members seamlessly partner with schools, clinics, community centers, and local businesses. This partnership holds space for the community to connect with, invest in, and inspire each other. We envision a community with accessible, healthy, culturally-relevant food, opportunities to learn from each other to make healthy changes, and create new jobs.
- Mission
 - Through connection with community (virtually or in-person) to make healthy food, cooking, and nutrition more accessible and raise awareness that our food is our medicine.
- Core Values / Goals
 - Meeting people where they are emotionally and physically
 - Supporting the health of community
 - Accessibility
 - Affordability
 - Respect
 - Learning and growing together
 - Equally valuing each other's experiences and strengths
 - Economic empowerment

APPENDIX

Example Healthy Food Champion Recruitment Materials - ALL IN's partner organization, La Clínica de La Raza, led the Healthy Food Champion recruitment efforts. The most recent job application was distributed through Google Forms in English.



Healthy Food/Healthy Families Fruitvale-San Antonio Healthy Food Champions

Background

Healthy Food/Healthy Families (HF/HF) is a project of ALL IN Alameda County that seeks to improve the health of children and families in Alameda County by addressing food security, access to healthy food, and healthy eating. The goals of HF/HF are to increase availability of healthy food by ensuring that communities have at least one healthy corner store, one health clinic offering a food "Farmacy," and one school offering healthy food distributions on campus, along with educating and empowering community members to be involved with transforming their neighborhood. The project is based on the understanding that local community members must play a key role: they hold unique and important knowledge of their community and have the ability to influence long-term change.

Healthy Food Champions

La Clínica de La Raza and ALL IN seek 3 community members to serve as Healthy Food Champions to support the Healthy Food/Healthy Families Initiative in the Fruitvale and San Antonio neighborhoods in Oakland.

The range of activities and responsibilities includes:

- Organizing health fairs and other community activities (pre COVID)
- Conducting outreach and education at community events about healthy food and healthy eating
- Supporting neighborhood food distributions including at schools and health centers
- Participating in the creation of goals and a work plan to support the Healthy Food/Healthy Families project
- Participating in neighborhood steering committee meetings (tentatively scheduled for the 4th Wednesday of each month from 12:30-2pm)
- Participate in the creation of social media interactive post
- Organize online meetings and workshops (Social media lives)
- Participate in weekly team meetings (every Friday 10-12)
- One on one check-ins with program coordinator

Preferred criteria and qualities of Healthy Food Champions include:

- Community members familiar with the Fruitvale and/or San Antonio neighborhoods
- Interest in building healthy food resources in their community
- Experience working as a community leader in some capacity, or interest in becoming one.
- Knowledge of local community resources, organizations, leaders, etc.
- Able to work independently, as well as in groups
- Ability to work with diverse community members, which may require sufficient English-speaking ability and preferably bilingual in another language as well
- Comfortable and committed to the role of a community advocate, leader, educator, and organizer
- Able to commit at least 8 hours per week

Compensation and Training

- Stipend of \$20/hour for approximately 8 hours per week
- Training provided at the beginning of the project and throughout leadership development, healthy food and nutrition, community advocacy, and other topics as determined by Healthy Food Champions

**To learn more or apply, please contact Catalina Palacios
(510) 535-6419 or cpalacios@laclinica.org**

APPENDIX

Example Healthy Food Champion recruitment flyer distributed to partners and network

A recruitment flyer for 'Healthy Food Champions' set against a dark wood-grain background. At the top, the title 'Healthy Food Champions' is in large green letters, followed by 'WE ARE LOOKING FOR NEW CHAMPIONS!!!!!!' in smaller green letters. Below this, a central image shows a variety of fresh produce including corn, tomatoes, grapes, and apples. To the left of the produce, the word 'Who:' is followed by a bulleted list of requirements. To the right, the word 'Compensation:' is followed by another bulleted list. At the bottom, contact information is provided, including a logo for 'La Clinica' on the left and an 'ALL IN' logo on the right.

Healthy Food Champions

WE ARE LOOKING FOR NEW CHAMPIONS!!!!!!

Who:

- Are able to work independently, as well as in groups.
- Interest in building healthy food resources in your community.
- Able to work independently, as well as in groups
- Able to commit at least 8 hrs per week.

Compensation:

- Stipend of \$20/hour
- Training provided throughout the project on leadership development, healthy food and nutrition, community advocacy, and other topics as determined by Healthy Food Champions

For more information please call or email
Catalina Palacios 510-535-6404/ cpalacios@gmail.com



APPENDIX

Example Healthy Food Champion Application



Healthy Food/Healthy Families Fruitvale-San Antonio Healthy Food Champions

Name:	Date of Application:
Neighborhoods where you live or work (check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Fruitvale <input type="checkbox"/> San Antonio	Languages spoken (check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Arabic <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Others: _____ _____
Why are you interested in being a Healthy Food Champion in the Fruitvale or San Antonio neighborhoods? 	
Provide examples of your experience in working as part of a team 	
Have you worked or volunteered with any local community groups? 	
Are you available to work approximately 8 hours per week through at least March 2020? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you available to attend weekly trainings or meetings? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes

APPENDIX

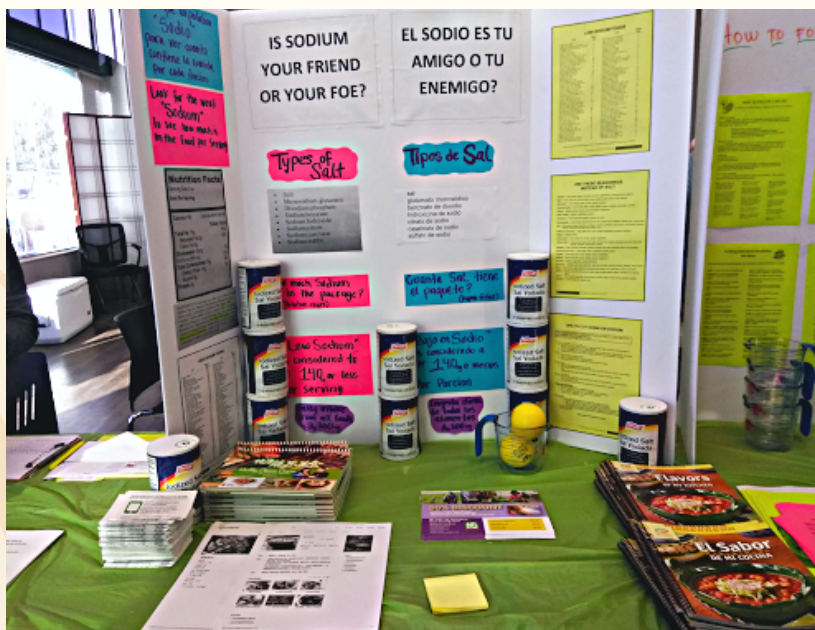
HEALTHY FOOD CHAMPION INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- What are some of the strengths that qualify you to be a Healthy Food Champion?
- Tell us about your experience in working with the following populations?
Parents,
Diverse/Multi-Ethnic Communities
Youth
Children
- What is your experience in organizing or being part of organizing a community event?
- Do you have experience in working with social media?
- Tell me what are some innovative ways that you would use to provide nutrition information to the community.
- What is your experience working in a team setting?
- What is your availability?

APPENDIX

Example Content Expert Workshops

- Topics - Example workshop topics were selected based on Healthy Food Champions' interactions within the community, including both frequently asked questions and questions they were asked that they did not know the answer to. Workshops were held in person prior to the Covid-19 pandemic and virtually during the pandemic. Workshops were attended by Healthy Food Champions and the Coordinator. Examples topics include:
 - Pro-inflammatory and anti-inflammatory foods
 - Foods that benefit women's health across life stages
 - Impact of poor sleep and sleep disorders on cardiovascular and metabolic health
 - Understanding Pre-diabetes, Gestational Diabetes, Type 1 Diabetes, and Type 2 Diabetes
- Handouts - While Healthy Food Champions and the Coordinator took notes during workshops, after the workshops, the Content Expert would create a summary handout for the Healthy Food Champions and Coordinators, which would be shared electronically.



APPENDIX

Example training classes for Healthy Food Champions

- Gardening classes through Lake Merritt Garden and Merritt College
(<https://gardensatlakemerritt.org/edible-gardens/>)
- Fresh Approach Nutrition Class
(<https://www.freshapproach.org/veggierx/>)
- Cooking Matters
(<https://18reasons.org/cooking-matters>)
(<http://cookingmatters.org/what-we-do>)
- Visión Latino's Desarrollo de promotoras
(<https://visionycompromiso.org/what-we-do/training/>)



APPENDIX

Example Healthy Food Champion Community Programming in Alameda County

Here you will find pictures of educational programming and content the Healthy Food Champions developed for their work in Alameda County. These examples are intended to provide inspiration for the type of programming that Healthy Food Champions can develop and implement.

Providing nutrition education at a local Food Farmacy



APPENDIX

Community Garden



Holding cooking classes



In schools



In community centers



Set up for virtual classes



Modifications to programming during COVID-19

APPENDIX

Example Recipes

RECIPE BY SILVA GUZMAN

CACTUS IN ITS JUICE

Makes 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

2 Fresh cactus leaves

1 Tomato

1 Onion

1 Garlic clove

Salt and pepper

METHOD

1. Cut all vegetables into cubes.
2. Heat your skillet well before adding the cactus. No oil is necessary.
3. Cook for 7-10 min and cook past the slime. Do not drain or wash.
4. Add the tomatoes, garlic & onion.
5. Add a bit of cooking oil at this point to gently fry the veggies together.
6. Add salt and pepper to taste, serve with a side of beans for protein or in a taco.

APPENDIX

Example Recipes



RECIPE BY SILVA GUZMAN

GRILLED CACTUS

Makes 8 servings

INGREDIENTS

1 bag of chopped nopales (cactus)
2 avocados
1 medium onion
½ a bunch of cilantro
3 tomatoes
Salt & black pepper

METHOD

1. Place cactus into a heated pan (no oil needed) using medium heat
2. Stir constantly until the cactus runs out of slime. I like my cactus to turn slightly brown for a better texture.
3. Once done, place in a bowl and allow to cool down.
4. While the cactus is cooking, chop into small cubes tomatoes, onion, cilantro, and avocado. Wait for the cactus to cool before mixing together otherwise your salad will not last long.
5. Season well with salt & black pepper.

APPENDIX

Example Social Media Posts

Healthy Food Champions used a combination of Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to share content and host virtual sessions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some example content from Healthy Food Champions Denise Jones, Victoria Angel, and Silvia Guzman, is shared below as well as the links to the official Healthy Food Champion social media pages.

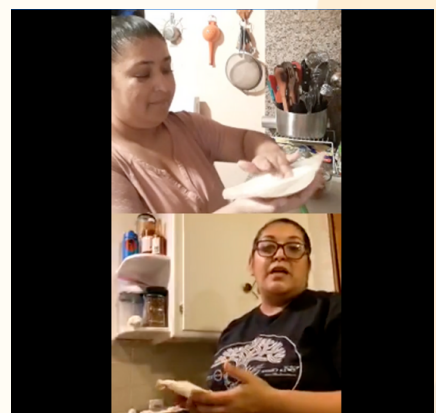
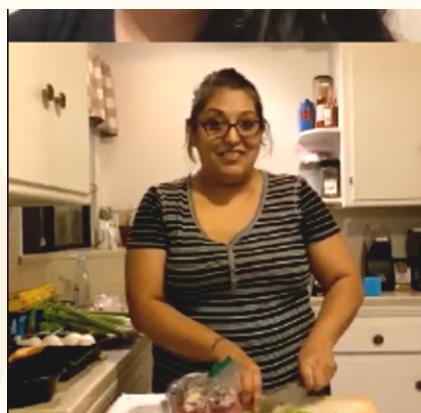
Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/Healthy-Food-Champions-La-Clinica-de-La-Raza-103958834602398/>



Instagram:

https://www.instagram.com/la_clinica_h_f_c/



APPENDIX

Example Healthy Food Champion Progress Report

Every quarter, the Healthy Food Champion Coordinator would submit a progress report to their program partner, in this case ALL IN Alameda County. Their program partner would then review and debrief the report with the Healthy Food Champion Coordinator. Once the final review was complete a copy of the report was shared with the foundation funding the program. Each progress report had the following sections:

- **Successes**
- **Challenges**
- **Lessons Learned**
- **Recommendations and Sustainability**

La Clínica de La Raza, Inc.

Healthy Food Healthy Families Final Report

I. Successes (August 2019-March 2020)

During FY19-20 La Clínica's Community Health Education (CHE) department (CASA CHE) recruited and trained 5 Healthy Food Champions (HFCs) to participate in the following activities in order to increase access to healthy food for local community health center patients and increase consumption of healthy foods through community engagement:

- **Community Gardening.** La Clínica's HFCs collaborated with East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC) to teach 24 after-school gardening classes to a total of 12 2nd-5th grade students (2x/week and 2 hrs/day) at Manzanita Community School. Lessons included how to plant healthy food like kale; a gardening journal; nutrition games; and how to make a healthy meal via cooking demonstrations.
- **Food Demonstrations.** HFCs provided cooking demos and recipes at La Clínica's San Antonio Neighborhood Health Center (1x/month) and Native American Health Center (2x/month) Food Pharmacies. HFCs focused on preparing hands-on-activities and interactive displays that engaged the community in learning about nutrition, preparing foods, and staying healthy. The HFCs reached a total of 558 community members at the SANHC Food Pharmacies and a total of 500 community members at the NAHC Food Pharmacies.
- **Family Fridays.** Trybe held neighborhood family nights (Family Fridays) at Franklin Recreation Center, where HFCs provided recipes and samples to a total of 589 community members at two Family Friday events. Family Fridays provided a safe and healthy environment for families to gather, socialize, and share a healthy meal.
- **Neighborhood Steering Committee.** The Neighborhood Steering Committee has given La Clínica an opportunity to create innovative programming and identify and coordinate community resources. At least two HFCs were able to attend each monthly meeting.
- **Cooking Workshops.** HFCs offered three cooking classes to 12 parents at Manzanita Community School, 4 cooking classes to 25 students at Garfield Elementary School, and one cooking class to 23 students at Urban Montessori. Participants received a certificate of participation, a cookbook, food items to replicate the recipes at home, and cooking utensils, such as measuring cups.
- **Handwashing Workshops.** HFCs taught proper handwashing techniques to a total of 206 K-2nd graders at Manzanita Community School.

Overall, the above activities were well received by program participants. One of the most successful activities was the Food Pharmacies, where community members often voiced to the HFCs how excited they were to try new recipes and often shared their experience cooking at home.

1

Evaluation Findings

HFHF Success

The majority of the interviewees felt that these HFHF projects and activities have been successful. Respondents shared the reasons and contributing factors for the success of HFHF, which fell in the categories of:

- Community and ALL IN leadership;
- Focus, content and consistency of activities;
- Collaborations and partnerships; and
- Responsiveness by community and participants.

“The program was extremely successful. It was an amazing offering of services and products to a community that's clearly underserved. We have some opportunities for growth and being able to expand and leverage Healthy Food Champions.”

– Key Informant

Leadership is a contributing factor to the success of HFHF. ALL IN's leadership and their lean team of six staff continue to make impact. Previous ALL IN staff, consultants, and early collaborators set the tone and stage for the current work. Having Dr. Steven Chen on board as ALL IN Chief Medical Officer has been instrumental in continuing to build and strengthen the Food as Medicine model. Community leadership is also very important in the success of HFHF. Having the “super team” of Healthy Food Champions come from the same community the clinics serve and where schools and organizations were located was crucial. HFCs are also parent leaders who link between schools, clinics, community, and resources. HFCs are trained and empowered to lead the HFHF projects and activities at the schools, clinics, and in the community. HFCs have a pulse of the community and display their agility and ability to respond in the moment to what the current needs of the community are. The ALL IN team and HFC team, housed at La Clínica, work well together, too.

Focus, content, and consistency of activities also contributed to the success of HFHF. Community partners recognize that ALL IN invested in families and neighborhoods. All respondents confirmed the importance of continuing all HFHF program activities and continuing partnerships with clinics, schools, organizations, and food distributors. Consistently connecting families to food access sources at clinics and schools and nutrition education via cooking classes and demos, recipes, and Family Fridays benefited communities. One informant working at the food pharmacies witnessed how many families could be reached in a matter of a few hours. It was really effective having the HFCs there at the health center.

“I've done cooking demos at the open houses or parent meetings and stuff or the teacher meetings. The kids come back and they're like, 'Oh my goodness. I need to take this recipe home and have my mom make it.' And then later on, I'll run into certain parents, and they say, 'Oh, you're the one that I made that recipe.'”

– Healthy Food Champion

APPENDIX

Example Excerpts of Report(s) Based on each section:

- **Successes**

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As a result of the COVID-19 health crisis, HFCs were not able to conduct community engagement face-to-face after March. To accommodate shelter-in-place and local safety regulations, HFCs pivoted their efforts to social media engagement via a La Clínica Healthy Food Champions Facebook and Instagram page. Their social media posts have received over 3, 800 views. On Friday, July 24th, one of the HFCs launched a Facebook live video to provide a workshop about how to efficiently utilize fridge space. The HFCs also continued to aid the SANHC Food Farmacy in its food distribution, which transitioned to a food pick-up model, where patients lined up outside the clinic to receive pre-packaged food bags. CASA CHE also began a collaboration with the Alameda County Food Bank to set up a food distribution every Wednesday from 9:30am to 5:30pm at the CASA CHE site in order to reach 45-50 of its most vulnerable program participants, including elders, LGBTQ folks, and disabled folks. After 3:30pm, a Health Educator from CASA CHE delivers food bags to community members who cannot come to the distribution due to transportation barriers or quarantine.

- **Challenges**

III. Challenges

COVID-19 greatly influenced the program's outreach and community engagement methods, as majority of the activities the HFCs planned for the year were suspended as a result of the pandemic. The HFCs had to think creatively to establish a new communication method to reach community members. They adapted by sharing content on Facebook and Instagram, which required acquiring the right equipment, such as phones or tripods, and having access to various platforms to showcase their videos. The CHE Supervisor and Health Educator are currently working on purchasing a tripod for each of the HFCs so they can improve their video set-ups. The HFCs are also exploring free platforms to allow them to video tape their cooking demonstrations.

Additionally, many of the HFCs have young children at home so they have needed extra support to accomplish their tasks. The Health Educator worked closely with each of the HFCs to identify appropriate meeting times and to accommodate everyone's competing priorities. The HFCs also identified members within the group who would be "on-call" to offer extra support when a HFC needed to create a video or prepare for a workshop or class.

Furthermore, many of the HFCs have been directly impacted by systemic and structural issues, including both the pandemic and actions of police brutality. As a result, the HFCs' morale shifted throughout the program in response to both household and neighborhood challenges. HFCs have been affected by food insecurity, evictions, lack of work, health issues, and violence. To provide socio-emotional support, the Health Educator offered a healing circle and a safe and trusting space for the HFCs to discuss their personal hardships and develop ways to support one another. The HFCs expressed having this space offered a support system they previously lacked.



APPENDIX

- **Lessons Learned**

IV. Lessons Learned

Throughout the program, it became evident outreach materials needed to be produced well in advance in multiple languages in order to serve all community members. A way to improve upon this is to conduct a registration process for outreach activities, such as cooking classes, where community members can identify their language preference. Another lesson learned is to clearly establish the role of the HFC and effectively communicate this to community partners so there are not misunderstandings regarding the HFCs' responsibilities.

- **Recommendations and Sustainability**

V. Recommendations & Sustainability

In order to effectively sustain the project, La Clínica aims to continue its social media engagement and work towards efficiently and effectively distributing its virtual activities through the end of the year. The CHE Supervisor and Health Educator hope to provide the HFCs with the proper equipment to do so, as community outreach and engagement are top priorities. The Health Educator will also aim to provide the HFCs with opportunities to continue learning how to use media platforms to conduct trainings and meetings. In the long-term, La Clínica envisions a Train-the-Trainer model for its HFC program, where the current cohort can go on to train other community members across the county to be HFCs in their own communities, with an understanding that this may now look different in light of COVID-19 and the HFCs will need additional support in order to adapt to a virtual program.

APPENDIX

Example of Success and Outcomes from a Healthy Food Healthy Families (HFHF) Evaluation Report of the Healthy Food Champions:

Evaluation Findings

HFHF Success

The majority of the interviewees felt that these HFHF projects and activities have been successful. Respondents shared the reasons and contributing factors for the success of HFHF, which fell in the categories of:

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“I’ve done cooking demos at the open houses or parent meetings and stuff or the teacher meetings. The kids come back and they’re like, ‘Oh my goodness. I need to take this recipe home and have my mom make it.’ And then later on, I’ll run into certain parents, and they say, ‘Oh, you’re the one that I made that recipe.’”

– Healthy Food Champion

APPENDIX

Example of Success and Outcomes from a Healthy Food Healthy Families (HFHF) Evaluation Report of the Healthy Food Champions:

HFHF Impact and Outcomes

The original outcomes of ALL IN's HFHF Initiative were: (1) Increased the amount of healthy food in our local food system, (2) Increased the access to and affordability of healthy food for low-income communities, and (3) Increased the access to and affordability of healthy food for low-income communities.

The majority of the key informants replied yes to this first outcome. HFCs have seen increase in the amount of healthy food in local food system and access to healthy food at some corner stores, schools, gardens, produce stands, and food pharmacies at health clinics. There definitely has been an increased need for healthy foods, especially since the COVID-19 shelter in place. There are increased food distribution points beyond the typical food banks, food pantries, and food pharmacies.

With the second outcome, the majority of the respondents said yes to the part about increased access to healthy food for low-income communities. Most were unsure if HFHF increased the affordability of healthy food for low-income communities. A majority of the foods that were accessed by families were free. ALL IN communicated that if communities had Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT), they could get fresh produce at a discount at certain produce stands and farmer's markets. It is unknown if data was collected on families who paid for discounted produce after utilizing their free food resources.

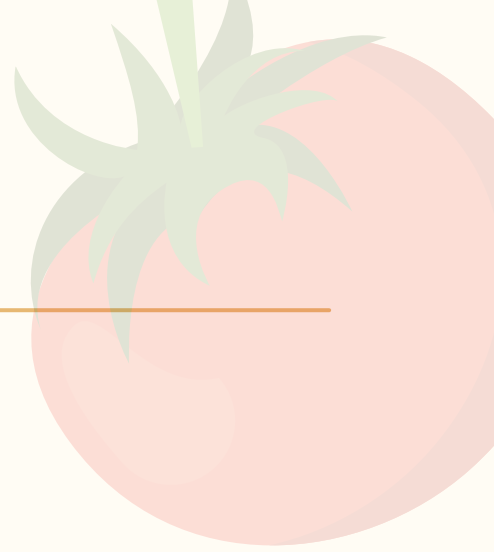
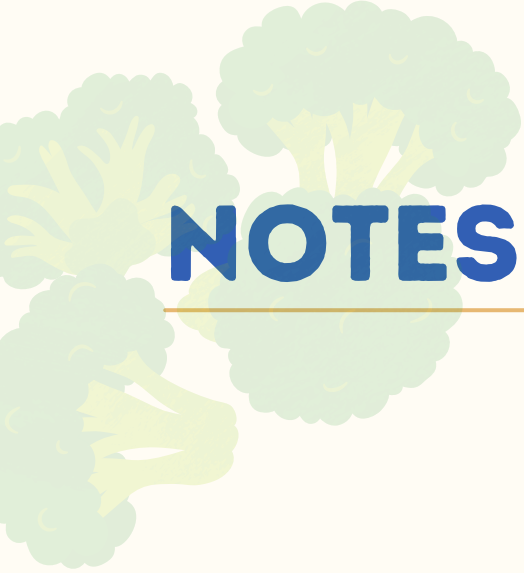


With the third outcome, most respondents said that they had seen an increased consumption of healthy foods by populations at risk of obesity and diabetes. HFCs witnessed this through families asking for recipes, children asking for "seconds" of the healthy foods cooked at classes/demos, from food pharmacy clients, and engagement at Family Fridays. Parents told the HFCs that they cooked the new and healthy recipes and that their children liked it. Several parents said they wanted more cooking classes. Children were seen bringing recipes and half of the foods from cooking classes home to their parents to share with them. There are water-refilling machines at schools and many of the students and teachers were drinking spa water (fruit-infused water). At an ALL IN community partner's event, it was shared that they rarely cook hotdogs and nachos anymore and now make fresh tacos with fresh ingredients. They also shared that their families are posting on Facebook their healthier recipes and meals they cooked with the foods given to them. Food pharmacy clients have let HFCs know when they observed healthy changes in their bodies. HFCs noticed that clients with obesity had lost weight due to their participation in the food pharmacy.

“I’ve actually seen a couple of patients go from being obese to dropping weight. It’s been a year and a half for them. I can visually see the impact in people’s faces. I can see their body being slimmer. I can see that acne has gone away. Another patient who’s now pregnant and they’re in love with who they are and their body. They’re sharing about the cravings that they have, that it was fresh fruit. To me, it’s really amazing how receptive the community has been to the recipes and education that I’ve provided.”

– Healthy Food Champion

NOTES





1221 Oak Street, Basement Room 18
Oakland, CA 94612
allincommunity@acgov.org
allin.acgov.org



1537 Fruitvale Avenue
Oakland, CA, 94601
(510) 535-6404
laclinica.org

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