

# Husky Nutrition Programs

## SNAP4CT.org Online Platform: Formative Evaluation Report

### SNAP-Ed Annual Report, FY 2018

**Name: SNAP4CT.org Online Platform**

**Type: Formative Evaluation**

#### **Questions**

Population: Adults from households participating in food assistance within the past 12 months

- What is the prevalence of internet use?
- What is the frequency of internet use (by demographics)?
- What devices do internet users use to access the internet (smartphone, computer, tablet)?
- Where are internet users when they usually access the internet (anywhere, library, home, work, other)?
- How common and frequent is use of the following communication platforms among internet users: email, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, blogs, texting?
- What nutrition-related information, specifically healthy eating, recipes, cooking tips, and budget shopping, is of interest to the SNAP-eligible population?
- What are the preferred platform(s) for receiving information on healthy eating, recipes, cooking tips, and budget shopping?

**Approach:** The SNAP4CT Online Platform delivers nutrition and physical fitness education to the SNAP eligible population through the internet (e.g., SNAP4CT.org website, email, social media platforms). This formative research project was designed to help ensure that SNAP4CT better reaches our target population through relevant, easy to use, quality programming delivered through the SNAP4CT.org website and social media. Results will inform the type of content and the platforms used to deliver SNAP4CT's messages in a manner that best reaches the target audience. The survey collects information on the internet use, device use, preferred modes of contact, and nutrition-related interests among persons living in households with food assistance.

The pilot testing of the survey was conducted in spring 2017 at locations in five towns: Hartford, Norwich, Windham, Bristol, and Middletown. The paper survey was administered at local WIC offices (n=3), Federally Qualified Health Centers (n=2), early care and education programs (n=1) and grocery stores (n=1) in low-income communities to a convenience sample of SNAP-eligible adults (18 and older) who could speak and read English. Survey responses were entered into an ACCESS database. Ninety-one people completed the survey; 67 of whom met the SNAP-eligible definition of living in a household that received food assistance in the past 12 months. Descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses were conducted with SPSS using the 68 eligible survey responses.

*Planned use:* Results for the pilot testing of the survey instrument will be used to:

- identify any necessary survey revisions

- prioritize which social media platforms will be used to disseminate SNAP4CT messages to specific SNAP-Ed target populations
- inform future administration of the survey to population subgroups (for example, we may elect to focus on increasing responses for a given age demographic, 35-44 or a population such as parents/caregivers of children at early care and education programs.)

**Prior Evaluation:** none.

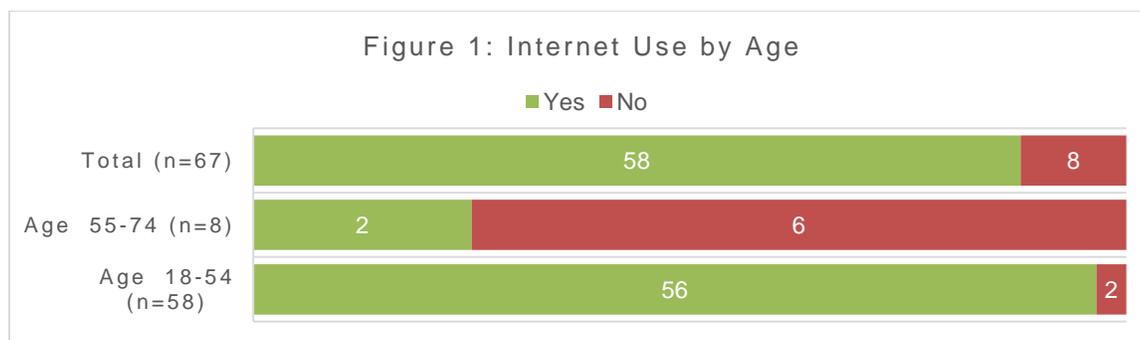
**Use of SNAP-Ed Priority Indicators:** not applicable.

**Results:**

**Demographics of eligible respondents (n=67).** Shown in Figure 1, almost two-thirds of the survey respondents who reported living in a household with food assistance were ages 18-34. Forty-four percent of respondents were ages 25-34, whereas adults age 55 and older account for 12% of the completed surveys. Thirty-seven percent of respondents reported being Hispanic or Latino, 27% Black / African American, 12% American Indian / Alaskan Native, and 6% were Asian.

Table 1: Demographics of Survey Respondents from Households with Food Assistance		
<b>Age range (n=66)</b>	%	n
18-24	20	13
25-34	44	29
35-44	15	10
45-54	9	6
55-64	11	7
65-74	1	1
<b>Ethnicity (n=67)</b>		
Hispanic or Latino	37	25
Not Hispanic or Latino	55	37
No response	8	5
<b>Race (circle all that apply)</b>		
Black or African American (n=67)	37	18
American Indian / Alaskan Native (n=67)	12	8
Asian (n=67)	6	4

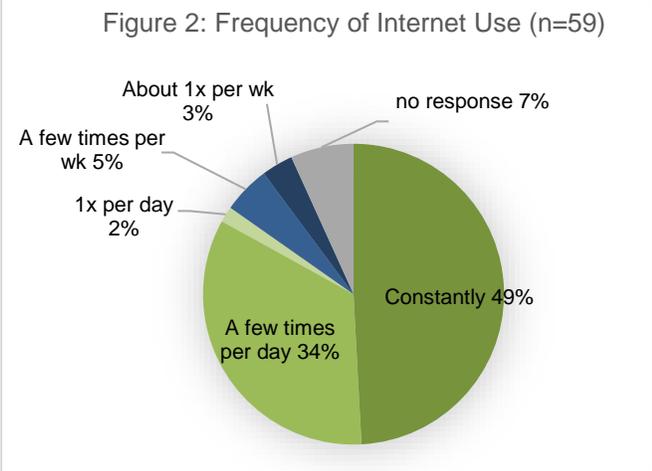
**Internet use.** Internet use was common among respondents from households with food assistance, with 88% indicating internet use (59 out of 67).



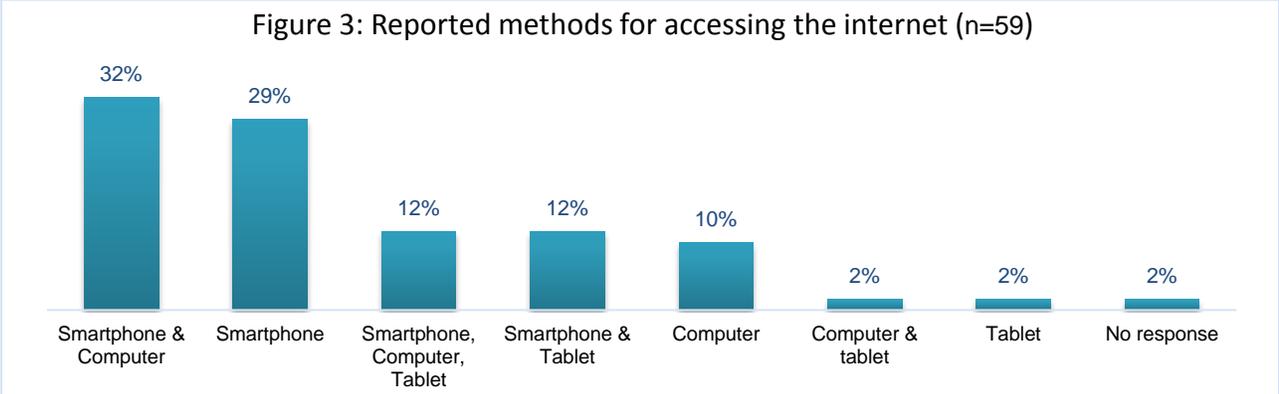
The pilot survey results for the WIC/SNAP households suggests that internet use is very common among the <55 population but may be somewhat uncommon among the over 55

population (Figure 1). Only 25% of respondents 55+ responded that they use internet compared to 97% of the <55 population. (Note that the number of respondents for the 55+ population was small =8). By race, 83% of the Black/African American respondents and 100% of the American Indian / Alaskan Native and Asian respondents reported using the internet (12/12).

**Frequency of internet use (n=59).** Overall, 85% of the internet users from a household with food assistance reported daily internet use. Most respondents reported using the internet constantly (49%) or a few times a day (34%).



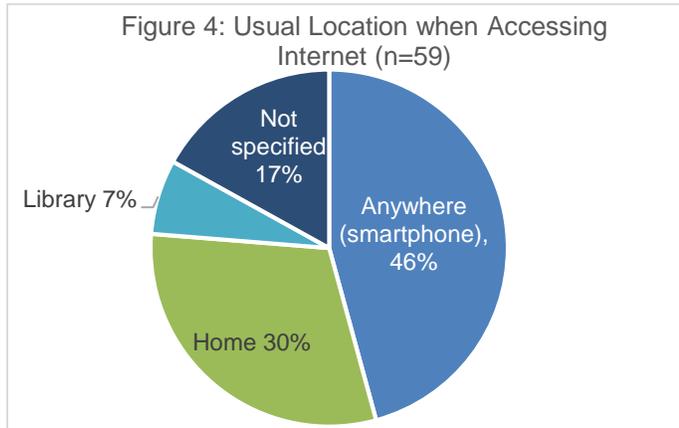
**Devices used to access internet (Figure 3).** When asked the devices used to access the internet, 85% reported using a smartphone (n=50), 56% reported using a computer (n=33), and 27% reported using a tablet (n=16). More than half of respondents reported using a smartphone along with a computer and/or tablet, while only 10% reported use of only a computer. Among respondents who reported use of a tablet, 85% reported also using a smartphone (n=14) and almost half reported using both a computer and smartphone n=7).



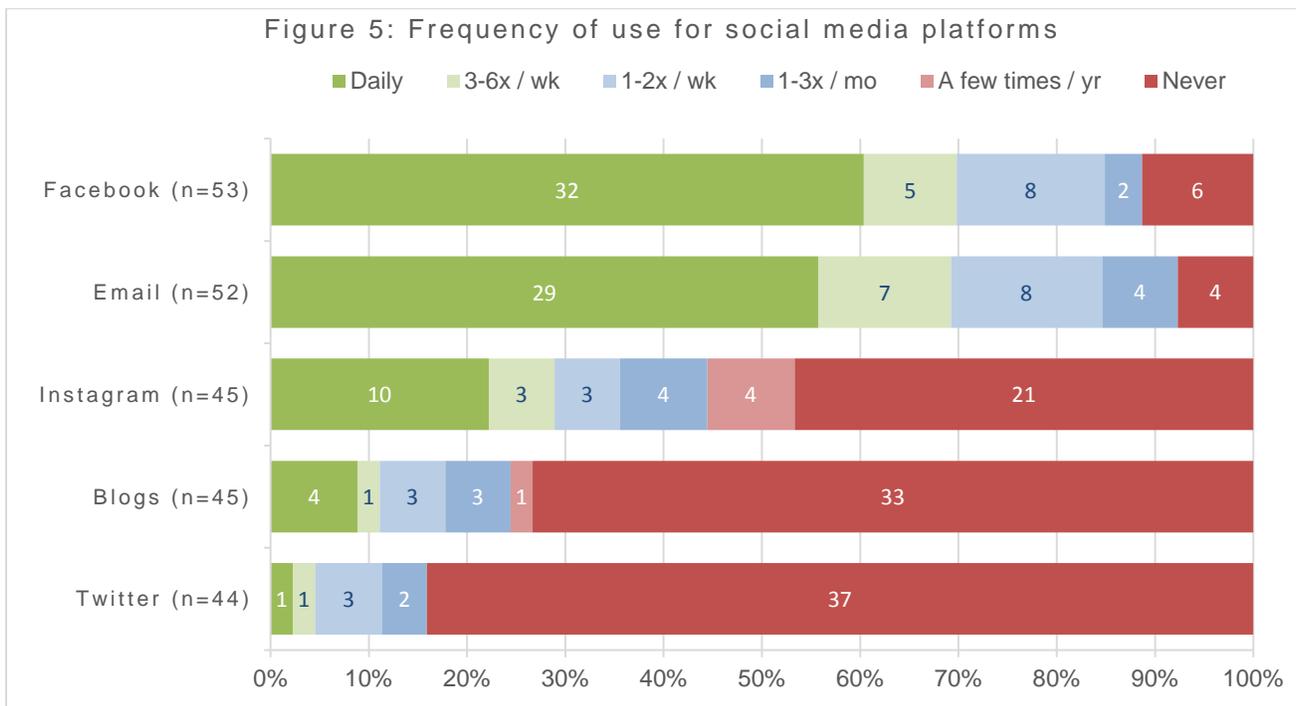
**Smartphones.** Using a smartphone on a daily basis for internet and texting was common. More than 91% of respondents reported using their smartphone daily to access the internet (48 out of 53) and 81% reported using their smartphone to text on a daily basis (43 out of 53). More than half of respondents had unlimited data on their cell phone plan. Among

respondents who lack unlimited data, almost 60% reported worrying about running out of data. Daily use of a smartphone for internet was reported by 91% of respondents and 81% reported daily use of a smartphone for texting.

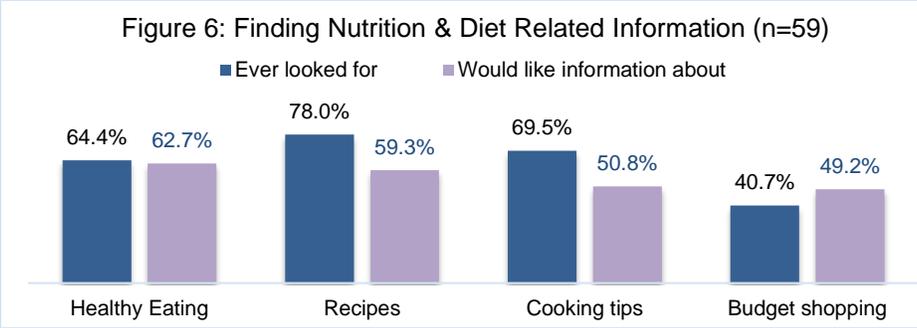
**Usual location when accessing internet.** Almost half of respondents reported accessing the internet anywhere with their smartphone (46%), 30% reported being at home, and 7% reported being at the library (Figure 4).



**Social media platform use.** Survey participants were asked about their use of social media platforms and other web-based communication. As shown in Figure 5, most respondents reported using Facebook (60%) and e-mail (56%) on a daily basis whereas blogs and Twitter were never used or rarely used by most respondents. Use of Instagram appears more frequent, with 36% of respondents using it on at least a weekly basis; however, 56% use it never or rarely.



**Nutrition & diet-related internet searches.** Many of the SNAP-eligible internet users who completed the survey reported an interest in information about healthy eating, cooking tips and budget shopping: 80% had searched for recipes, 70% for cooking tips, 64% for information about healthy eating and 41% for information about budget shopping (Figure 6). When asked what type of information they would like, interest was highest for healthy eating (63%) and recipes (59%). Approximately, half of the respondents wanted information about cooking tips (51%) and budget shopping (49%).



**Preferred method of receiving nutrition-related information by topic.** The SNAP-Ed eligible internet users who indicated an interest in nutrition-related information were then asked to indicate if they would like to receive that information via email, Facebook, text, blogs, Instagram and/or Twitter. Based on the responses, shown in Figure 7, it appears that communicating messages over e-mail, Facebook and possibly text are the best ways to reach the SNAP-Ed eligible audience for each of the nutrition topics. Instagram and Twitter were not a desired method for almost all respondents. Of note, preferences appear to differ based on topic. For example, more than half of respondents interested in healthy eating would like that information on Facebook, 35% would like it via email, 14% via text and 8% via blog. For recipes, almost half of respondents would like the information via email and 23% would like it via text or on a blog. (We will need to do additional surveys to better understand implications for different age groups).

