FFY 2022 PEARs Training FAQ

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document contains answers to all questions received during FFY 2022 live PEARs trainings.

Jump to questions about...

- **The Program Activities Module** (page 1)
- **The Indirect Activities Module** (page 3)
- **The Partnership and Coalitions Modules** (page 5)
- **The PSE Activity Module** (page 8)
- **The Success Story Module** (page 10)
- **Other PEARs Questions** (page 11)

Direct Education/Program Activity Questions

**How do you enter SNAP Happy Surveys manually?**

Add paper SNAP Happy Survey responses in the **Evaluation** section of the **Program Activities** module. You can watch a live demonstration of this in the Direct Education portion of [this video recording](minutes 15:52 – 17:08).

**We have a school that has changed names midway through an intervention. Is there a way to link the old and new names together?**

Yes. Please email the evaluation team at SNAPEdEvaluation@doh.wa.gov and provide the old name, new name, and the address.

**If we included pictures in our PEARs entries, do you need a release form that the school has provided verbally to us?**

Yes, we need a release form on file. Please remember to only upload photos without participant faces showing.

**Is there a preference for when to mark an activity as complete?**

If you’re completely done with an activity, like a direct education intervention, mark it complete. In fact, please make sure all completed direct education interventions are marked as **Complete** at the end of the quarter, if you want them to be counted toward that quarter.

Ongoing activities, like PSE activities that continue throughout a fiscal year, can be marked as complete at the end of the fiscal year.

**Can you explain more about exporting Direct Education data?**

**What does the survey data look like?** For paper surveys, you can see survey results when you download a “survey data” or “program activity” export from PEARs. “Survey Data” export options for export include “responses by survey” and “responses by matched ID”.

---

Washington State SNAP-Ed Evaluation
For electronic surveys, the evaluation team can pull survey data for you. Please submit an evaluation request including the PEARs Program Activity ID number(s) of interest. Please note that participants must use the correct PEARs Program Activity ID for their responses to be associated with your direct education series.

**Does the export show demographic data?** Yes, it does. You can see demographic (racial/ethnic data) data in program activity data exports.

**Can you see racial/ethnic data by gender?** Not immediately; you’d need to do some analysis to see it this way.

**We won’t see any evaluation data for paper surveys unless we enter it?** Please check with your IA about who is doing data entry in your region.

**If we do paper surveys how long do we need to keep them for?** SNAP-Ed guidance mandates for paper surveys to be kept for three years. However, individual agencies may have different requirements. Please check with your IA and agency for their requirements.

**About the COVID-19 Impact Field: What if the program started with no impact and then halfway through it was postponed? Do I change that field?**

Yes, please change COVID-19 Impact Field to reflect if it was modified or postponed mid-way through the series.

**Which curricula are reflected in the Program Activity module “SNAP-Ed Custom Data” templates?**

Preferred curricula are listed in the “template” drop-down list on the SNAP-Ed custom data page. Acceptable curricula are not listed in the “template” drop-down list.

You can find curriculum lists on CTW page of the website, or in this WA SNAP-Ed FFY2022 Curriculum list.
Indirect Activity Questions

**How do I document Indirect Activities?**
Enter data to the **Indirect Activities** module in PEARS. You can watch a live demonstration of how to enter data into the Indirect Activities module in the Indirect Activities portion of [this video recording](#) (minutes 29:24 – 39:21).

**How do I report multiple indirect activities at the same location?**
Add one indirect activity in PEARS for a series of indirect activities at one location. Then add each indirect activity as its own intervention channel. You can watch a live demonstration of how to enter data toward intervention channels in [this video recording](#) (minutes 34:11 – 37:25).

**How do I report the same or a series of the same indirect activities that are happening at multiple locations?**
If you’re repeating one or a series of indirect activities at multiple locations, report each one or each series separately by site.

**How do I calculate or estimate reach for indirect activities?**
See p. 32-33 in the [Evaluation guidance](#) or watch a live demonstration in the Indirect Activities portion of [this video recording](#) (minutes 34:11 – 37:25).

**How do we record Facebook and other media posts not related to a social media campaign?**
For Facebook numbers, please follow the instructions on p. 4-10 of the [Social Media Reporting guidance](#).

If you are doing a Social Media campaign, like Move Across WA, please follow the [Move Across WA Social Marketing Evaluation Guidance](#).

**How are PSE activities different from indirect activities?**
If you’re unsure whether your planned intervention is a PSE or indirect activity, please reach out to your IA to help you figure out where your activity belongs.

To learn more about what a Policy, Systems and Environmental (PSE) intervention is, see p. 17-19 of the [FFY 2022 SNAP-Ed Plan Guidance](#); to learn about how to incorporate PSE in your SNAP-Ed work, complete the [‘Systems Approaches for Healthy Communities’ PSE Training](#).

To learn about what an Indirect activity is, see p. 31 of the [FFY 2022 Evaluation Guidance](#).

**We are partnering with a community organization to deliver recipes specific to the produce they distribute to community members every month. Is that considered an indirect activity or a PSE intervention?**
It sounds more like an indirect activity, but please double check with your IA on reporting questions like these.
I understand that the reach is specific to the site. However, is it unique to the module activity or does it cross over between modules?

PEARS calculates reach for each site across modules for EARS reporting. For other reporting, it depends on how we do data analysis. Using the "new" and "unique" reach fields in the intervention channels section of the Indirect Activities module can help minimize duplication.

Regarding school reach: If 200 students are reached with a newsletter, do we count any additional reach for parents receiving it?

If the audience of the newsletter is parents, guardians, and caregivers, you may include them in the indirect reach.

If you do not know the number of parents, caregivers, and guardians, count one per student.

How do I count reach of school blogs and online newsletters for a single school? Mine included recipes from our social media platforms that go to other audiences as well.

Keep each of the reach counts separated by site. If the school blog is aimed at students and online newsletters goes to parents, caregivers, and guardians, add them as separate intervention channels with their own reach at the same site (within the same Indirect Activity).

My PSE activity is a county-wide intervention with indirect activities that support it at different sites throughout the entire county. How do I record this in PEARS?

We are consulting with our PEARS workgroup. We will have a sure answer to this question by the time we completed the PSE live PEARS training in May.

We’re working on PSE activities for an entire district and also in some of the elementary schools within this district. When we add indirect activities for the elementary school, should we leave the NEW reach count as 0 since they’ve already been counted in the PSE module’s reach?

Yes. You would still count the UNIQUE reach, but the NEW reach would be 0 since you’ve already reached those students in another activity.
Partnership and Coalition Questions

What is the difference between partnerships and coalitions for entry purposes?

In PEARS, a partnership describes a relationship between your local agency and one other entity. A coalition describes a group that your local agency is part of that consists of more than one other entity.

If a Coalition or Partnership is doing a project together (e.g. PSE, Direct Education, etc.), that work should be reported elsewhere, correct?

Correct. The work or project should be reported in the appropriate PEARS module. For example, if a Coalition is working on a Safe Routes to School effort, the specifics of that work should be reported in the PSE module.

How in-depth do we need to be when recording meeting information? What is that information extracted and utilized for?

We don’t require LIAs to enter any of the meetings for either the Partnerships module nor the Coalitions module. It’s your choice to use this section of the module to track meetings and events that happened.

What are important sections to fill out for partnerships in PEARS for SNAP-Ed EARS reporting?

All PEARS entries for Washington State are eventually reported into a national reporting system called EARS. The three most important fields to fill out for this national-level reporting duty for SNAP-Ed are:

- **COVID-19 Impact** Field: Please don’t leave it blank. If your partnership or coalition wasn’t affected by COVID-19, please select “No Impact due to COVID-19”.
- **Assistance received from this partner** Field
- **Assistance provided to this partner** Field

When should I mark the Partnership or Coalition as complete?

Typically, partnerships and coalitions are maintained throughout a fiscal year. Please make sure to mark them as complete by the end of the fiscal year. This is not necessary at the end of a quarter.

How do I record a Partnership? What are the important sections to fill out?

You can watch a live demonstration of how to enter data into the Partnerships module in the Partnerships portion of this video recording (minutes 26:08 – 39:02). You can also find the same steps in writing in the Partnerships section of the Evaluation Guidance.

In the Partnerships module’s General Information section, can I select more than one intervention type?

Absolutely. Oftentimes, partners will collaborate for multiple intervention types, like Direct Education and PSE interventions.
In the Partnerships module’s “Assistance provided to this partner” field, shouldn’t we always add Planning and Development?

SNAP-Ed programs will almost always provide planning and development support to partners. That said, always choose the answers that best fit your partnership.

How do I record a Coalition? What are the important sections to fill out?

You can watch a live demonstration of how to enter data into the Coalitions module in the Coalitions portion of this video recording (minutes 45:12 – 55:46). You can also find the same steps in writing in the Partnerships section of the Evaluation Guidance.

If more than one LIA is part of the same coalition should they each complete a coalition entry?

If multiple LIAs are in a coalition, that’s a great time to use Collaborators section. You can add any PEARs user from within your region, including ones outside of your LIA.

If the other LIA should be able to add or edit data for this particular coalition, be sure to choose View and Edit for that individual’s permissions when you add them. As long as the LIA is listed as a collaborator, they will be able to see that entry on their PEARs dashboard.

Should IAs help “clean up” extra Coalition entries and support coordination among LIAs?

If possible, yes please! This helps reduce duplication, and ensures that our reporting numbers are accurate.

My coalition consists of a lot of members, 100+ organizations. Do I have to add every single coalition member?

Best practice is to report all members of a coalition that you are part of in PEARs. Start by adding the coalition members that you work with frequently or closely; for example, those who you work with in a sub-committee or in a different kind of closer collaboration. Continue adding coalition members throughout the fiscal year, as time allows, and copy the coalition forward into the next fiscal year’s PEARs Coalitions module to reduce entry burden the next fiscal year.

If the coalition is very large, you may consider selectively “bundling” coalition members into groups by sector of influence. Please inform your IA before you enter any bundled coalition member groups into PEARs. Afterward, follow steps listed in the How to Bundle Coalition Members in PEARs document.

In PEARs in the Coalition Member section’s Member’s Sector of Influence field, how do we categorize members to avoid using “other”?

Try your best to match them to an existing category. You’ll be able to add more details about your coalition member in the fields that follow that one.

Some examples: Choose Food Industry for emergency food distribution or food banks. Choose Community Design for community foundations or service organizations.

You can use the Coalition Section in the Drop-Down supplement to easily see all the drop-down selection options for Member’s sector of influence.
I’m working on a PSE intervention. When should I complete the Partnership Readiness Assessment (PRA)? Does it make sense to complete it when I’m still developing a partnership and establishing things like communication?

YES! Completing the PRA will help pinpoint priority areas to work on, which could be especially helpful as you’re getting a new partnership off the ground. If you feel comfortable, you could also ask your partner to complete the PRA alongside you, then compare and discuss your responses and recommendations. Even if the score isn’t high, focus on the recommendations, not the score.

Do I have to complete a Partnership Readiness Assessment (PRA) for every partner I work with?

We encourage you to consider completing a PRA for every partner, especially for partners who you collaborate with for PSE activities.

What are next steps after I’ve completed the Partnership Readiness Assessment (PRA)?

1. Report that you completed the PRA in PEARs in the Partnerships module.
2. Talk with IA about the results and brainstorm opportunities to strengthen the partnership.
3. Talk with your partner about the results.
4. Invite your partner to complete the PRA alongside you, and you can both discuss opportunities to strengthen the partnership afterward.
PSE Questions

When youth participate in a PSE activity by taking a survey, can we count them in the “youth involved” box in the PSE module?

Yes! You can count youth who actively participate in a PSE project in this field. This can include helping develop, prepare, and create the PSE project, as well as providing feedback.

How much detail should be included in the PSE module?

Please check with your IA to see what their requirements are. While the evaluation team does not have specific requirements, it can be beneficial to provide a description of what is happening with a particular PSE project over time so others can pick up where you left off. Comments fields are carried from year to year when an activity is copied so make sure to include a date or fiscal year when you add a new comment.

What is the best way to use the “individual effectiveness” section?

Use the Individual Effectiveness Section of the PSE module to track individual level data, like surveys or focus groups. It is often most helpful to conduct a baseline assessment at the beginning (or before) PSE work is implemented and again at regular intervals throughout a project to measure incremental change.

How can we best capture activities that span multiple fiscal years?

To track PSE activities over multiple fiscal years, copy activities from prior years to the current reporting year (instructions on page 26 of the evaluation guidance) and keep running notes in the PSE entry. In the notes section, please delineate the fiscal year so you, your IA, and the evaluation team can track progress over time.

How do we enter multiple PSE activities at the same site?

PSE work that is part of the same intervention can be reported together as a single PSE activity. If PSE work represents multiple interventions, then each one needs a separate entry. The SNAP-Ed 3-year plan describes interventions. If you are unsure whether your work should be in one or multiple PSE entries, reach out to your IA.

How should we report outcomes for virtual outreach and social media?

While this type of activity can support PSE work, it is considered an indirect activity. Please report information for virtual outreach and social media in the Indirect Activities Module.

How should we determine reach and eligibility for different sites and PSE projects?

For reach, it is always best to work with your partner site directly. If that is not possible, you can use other existing data sources like the US Census, OSPI school report card, or the WA SNAP-Ed PSE Reach Map.

For eligibility, please reach out to your IA who can walk you through the instructions in the WA SNAP-Ed Guidance.

How often do we need to update the PSE module?
Because PSE projects are often ongoing, deadlines for the PSE module are more flexible than other modules. Please ensure that PSE activity entries are created during the quarter that work begins, and that each entry is fully updated and complete by the end of each fiscal year. Please note that your IA may have additional requirements around deadlines!

**How do we report a cross-regional project?**

The same PSE activity will need to be created in each region. One person from each region would create the activity. If there are other PEARs users from the same region who work on that PSE project, they can be added as “collaborators”. Please note that PEARs users cannot be added in a region unless they have an account in a particular region.

**In the strategy section, what is an example of when SNAP-Ed has “no role”?**

Typically, SNAP-Ed will be involved in some but not all aspects of a PSE project. For example, they may support planning but have “no role” in implementation.

**If PSE “change” or “intervention” options don’t match my PSE work, what is the best way to capture our data?**

Please start by working with your IA to identify the best place for you to report your data. If you and your IA still have questions after starting work together, please reach out to the evaluation team.

**How do I report a PSE project that is still in a formative or planning stage?**

PSE projects can be entered into PEARs during the formative phase without “changes adopted”. When choosing the stages of implementation, use the checkboxes for “planning and preparation for implementation”. You may find additional information to get you started in the PSE section of the Evaluation guide, the PSE Evaluation Toolkit, the PSE Process Measures, and the PEARs PSE Training Video.

**How do I estimate PSE reach and demographics?**

Please follow instructions in the PSE section of the Evaluation guide, the PEARs PSE Training Video, or work with your IA. Please note that the reach should represent the total reach for all changes adopted in the current reporting year at this site or organization.

**How do I record a site for a county- or community-wide PSE intervention in PEARs?**

For community-wide projects, please pick a representative site for the community you serve and then link all PSE and indirect activities for the community-wide project to that site. You can pick a representative site by either 1) enter a site that at the geographic center of the community or 2) enter the agency doing the PSE project as the site of the PSE project. If you are entering this site for the first time, please clarify that the site is for the entire community project in the site name. For example, if a PSE project was targeting all of Thurston County, we could pick a centralized address, like DOH campus address in Tumwater, and then name that site “Thurston County Community Food Access PSE Site”, or something similar.
Success Story Questions

Why are success stories always linked to program activities?

The PEARS Success Stories Module currently only has a drop-down to link to program activities, but success stories don’t just have to be about program activities or direct education! When writing a success story about a PSE project, a successful partnership, or other project, please include the PEARS Activity ID Number and name of the project or partnerships in the comments section, and use the “Site” field to link to the site where the activity took place.

Can we use photos with people in the background that did not sign a photo release?

No, you must have a photo release for anyone who is not a SNAP-Ed staff member. You may blur background faces to de-identify. To respect the privacy of participants, identifying photographs of participants should not be used on publicly facing documents and resources, even with a photo release.

Can you use photos of people? What about partner staff?

Yes, you can use photos of people, including SNAP-Ed staff and partner staff, with a photo release. To respect the privacy of participants, identifying photographs of participants should not be used on publicly facing documents and resources.

Can we crop photos?

Yes, you may crop photos. For example, if you want to use a photo with a busy background or item distracting from the focus of the photo, or a person who did not sign a photo release, cropping may be appropriate.

How long do photo releases last?

Photo releases need to be as clear as possible. Typically, photo releases are understood as lasting through perpetuity (forever), but each photo release is unique to your organization.

How do you use photos that are uploaded to PEARS?

Photos in PEARS may be used for social media posts, news releases, SNAPshots, and other public facing materials.

Is wearing a mask enough to de-identify a participant?

No, a participant may still be identified wearing a mask or face covering in most cases.

How are keywords used?

Washington SNAP-Ed does not use key words in the Success Stories Module.
Other PEARs Questions

Has the PEARs tool been adapted to take into account cultural differences amongst SNAP-Ed participants?

We need more detailed information to answer this question. While PEARs as a platform has opportunities for improvement of how cultural differences can be reported, there may be ways to account for cultural differences when you collect or enter data. If you’d like assistance developing an evaluation plan for your local programming that accounts for cultural differences in your community, please submit an evaluation request.

How do I pull Program Activity, Survey, or Demographic data from PEARs?

Please watch this video recording to see how data is pulled from the Program Activities module in PEARs. The spreadsheet includes demographic data and survey data, if available.

What happens to information after we report it? Who sees it? What gets done with it?

Your IA will look at information that you entered for program monitoring purposes. The CTW team may look at select information to see which curricula get the most. The evaluation team downloads and analyzes PEARs data both for program improvement and federal reporting purposes. The evaluation team can learn about which and how certain interventions have benefitted the communities you are working with. PEARs data can also help the evaluation team identify areas where IAs and LIAs can adjust programming to meet communities’ needs, as well as improve programming. Lastly, the data also gets shared with our federal funders, USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). At the federal level, the data gets analyzed again to show regional and nationwide outcomes.

What is the best naming convention to keep my activities and reach tied to a site during analysis?

Please reach out to your IA, as each region has their preferred methodology.

This material was funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-841-1410. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email SNAPEdEvaluation@doh.wa.gov.

June 2022