

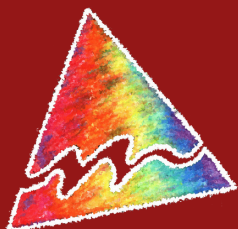
[HTTPS://BALLEQUITY.AMAMEDIA.ORG/PROJECT-SUPPORT/](https://ballequity.amamedia.org/project-support/)

2025



# NUTRITION BALANCED

To increase healthy cultural food access by implementing Food Service Guidelines (FSG) at area Asian Temples, and/or African American/Black Churches as well as expanding Produce Rx programs at area establishing clinics/hospitals, to better support pan-Asian and pan-African communities.



Asian Media Access

# YEAR 2 EVALUATION REPORT

## AMA Nutrition Efforts

### INTRODUCTION

Project SUPPORT is a cross-cultural, cross-generational, and cross-sectoral initiative, aims to improve health, prevent chronic disease, and reduce health disparities among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOCs). Supported by CDC's REACH funding, AMA leverages our extensive network of trusted community partners who provide subject matter expertise and have a history of successful engagement with the respective cultural and geographic communities.

Nutrition is one of the primary elements addressed by Project SUPPORT. The goal is to increase healthy cultural food access by implementing Food Service Guidelines (FSG) at area Asian Temples and Black Churches, and establishing Produce Rx at area clinics/hospitals.

### YEAR 1 LANDSCAPE REPORT

#### POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1: FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES

To ensure the health and safety of food prepared and served at the Cambodian Temple, the following food safety guidelines were recommended in Year 1:

- **Food Handling and Hygiene:** All food handlers must wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before and after food preparation, and wear gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods. Maintain separate cutting boards for raw meats, vegetables, and cooked foods to prevent cross-contamination.
- **Temperature Control and Storage:** Perishable foods should be refrigerated immediately upon receipt or preparation at temperatures below 40°F. Discard any perishable items left out for more than two hours. Hot foods should be held above 140°F until served.
- **Cleaning and Utensil Use:** Establish a cleaning routine for all kitchen surfaces, utensils, and storage areas, with sanitization protocols for all equipment used in food preparation and serving. Separate serving





utensils should be used for each dish, and utensils should not be reused between dishes to prevent contamination.

- **Waste Management:** Designate specific bins for recyclables, compost, and general waste, and ensure garbage is disposed of regularly to prevent contamination and pests.
- **Food Safety Posters in Khmer:** Provide food safety posters in Khmer to be displayed in the temple's kitchen and food preparation areas. These posters will also be available for community members to take home, promoting safe food handling practices when preparing meals for monks and temple gatherings

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATION 2: PROMOTING BALANCED MEALS USING THE HARVARD HEALTHY EATING PLACE**

To enhance nutrition and encourage balanced meals, the Healthy Eating Plate from Harvard University should be adopted as a guiding model for food offerings:

- **Guidelines for Healthy Offerings:** Emphasize a balanced plate that includes a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and plant-based proteins. Replace refined grains and processed foods with whole grains and minimally processed options.
- **Education and Demonstration:** Provide education on portioning meals according to the Healthy Eating Plate. Include demonstrations to show how traditional Cambodian dishes can be adjusted to fit these guidelines, such as incorporating more vegetables, using plant-based ingredients, and moderating salt, sugar, and oil content.
- **Adapted Recommendations:** Recognizing lactose intolerance in the community, substitute milk with water or plant-based alternatives as the primary beverage, per the Harvard Healthy Eating Plate model.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATION 3: REDUCING USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC AND STYROFOAM**

To support environmental sustainability and reduce waste, the Cambodian Temple should minimize the use of single-use plastics and Styrofoam in all food services:

- **Phase out plastic wraps, plastic bags, and Styrofoam bowls/plates** by encouraging the use of reusable, biodegradable, or compostable alternatives whenever possible.

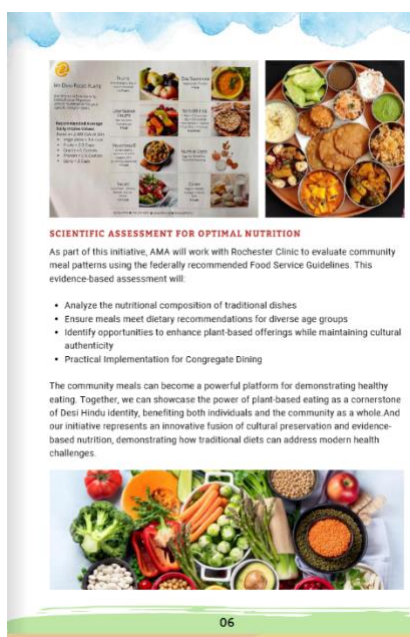
- Community Awareness: Educate community members and food service volunteers on the environmental impact of single-use plastics, encouraging them to bring reusable containers and utensils.
- Monitoring and Adjustment: Regularly assess the use of disposable items in the temple's food service and work towards sustainable practices, providing guidance on safe alternatives that meet food safety standards

## YEAR 2 PROGRESS UPDATE

### POLICY RECOMMENDATION 1: FOOD SAFETY GUIDELINES

The Year 1 Landscape Review informed Food Safety Guideline programming during the second year by leveraging culturally adapted framing. For example, the Temple Advisory Board advised new framing for the Khmer Food Safety Posters and bridging the recommendations with actionable ideas for community leaders. Actionable insights lead to updating of Khmer Food Safety Posters to shift language from “policy” to “practice” that emphasizes “health as merit-making” and “modern applications of Buddhist mindfulness” for increased adoption.

### POLICY RECOMMENDATION 2: PROMOTING BALANCED MEALS USING THE HARVARD HEALTHY EATING PLACE



The Year 1 Landscape Review informed Promoting Balanced Meals Using the Harvard Healthy Eating Plate programming during the second year by compiling a culturally adapted recipe book designed by community meal providers. These traditional Cambodian dishes included options with less sugar and more vegetables, promoting nutrition without sacrificing tradition. This cookbook allows education and demonstration that can be done at home by anyone, increasing accessibility of education about balanced meals and real-life adoption of the guidelines through following the recipes (left).

### **POLICY RECOMMENDATION 3: REDUCING USE OF SINGLE-USE PLASTIC AND STYROFOAM**

Programming based on Year 1 recommendations for Reducing Use of Single-Use Plastic and Styrofoam programming aimed to understand the barriers or cultural factors limited adoption of the recommendation. Key activities undertaken per this policy recommendation included:

- Cost analysis of Styrofoam versus reusable dishware for template stability and sustainability
- Discussion and research toward the installation of an energy-efficient dishwasher to enable a transition from disposable to reusable dish sets while upholding policy recommendations for cleaning and utensil use.

### **PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

All three policy recommendations for Food Safety Guidelines focus on community education and awareness through culturally adapted and community-focused messaging. These Year 1 recommendations informed continued partnership developments by identifying at-risk communities with strong congregational and community mindsets. The following partners have been identified to undergo FSG assessment during Year 3 and policy recommendations will be adapted to their unique context:

- Hindu Temple of Minnesota - Maple Grove, MN
- Overcomers' Victory Church – Saint Paul, MN
- Rochester Church - Rochester, MN
- SV Temple – Edina, MN
- Sikh Society of Minnesota – Bloomington, MN
- Sewa-Aifw – Brooklyn Center, MN
- Wat Munisortaram Cambodian Temple – Hampton, MN
- Wat Promwachirayan – Saint Louis Park, MN

### **CONCLUSION**

Year 1 Policy Recommendations informed not only programmatic implementation efforts, but reshaped cultural and linguistic framing, guided partnership development, and introduced novel adaptations to unique contextual situations. AMA has successfully adapted and implemented food safety guidelines, health food and balanced meal guidelines, and reusable dishware practices amongst a broad range of communities. Moreover, their initiative highlights the importance of collaborative partnership to improve community trust and messaging.



# Project SUPPORT

(Supporting **U**nder-served through  
**P**roduce/**P**ark Prescription, and  
**O**pportunities to **R**ecreation-activity &  
**T**obacco-control)

## Nutrition



The strategy aims to analyze dietary patterns and increase access to healthy cultural food by implementing Food Service Guidelines (FSG) at Asian Temples and Black Churches. Additional strategy to establish Produce Rx area at clinics and hospitals.

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**4** Location: Serving the Hindu Temples in MN

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**48** Cultural dishes examined during **4** observation sessions

## Conclusion

The Food Service Guideline assessment tools were successfully applied to evaluate the congregated dining experience at the area Hindu Temples. Based on the assessment, policy recommendations were made to better support balanced nutrition for the community, incorporating considerations for cultural dietary preferences. Additionally, cultural diet assessment factors were suggested for inclusion in the Food Service Guideline.

Project SUPPORT is led by Asian Media Access, collaborated with Multi Cultural Community Alliance, for more information at 612-376-7715 \* [amamedia@amamedia.org](mailto:amamedia@amamedia.org)



# Successful Nutrition Policy Recommendations

## 01

**Preserve Hindu Cultural Traditions:** The Hindu Temples already excel with plant-based vegetarian meals, clean stainless steel kitchens, dedicated volunteer service, and environmentally conscious recyclable plates. These sattvic traditions of avoiding garlic/onions, serving diverse legumes, vegetables, and grains create an excellent foundation for community health and spiritual nourishment.



## 02

**Enhance Food Preparation:** Gradually introduce baked samosas, air-fried puris, and steamed preparations alongside traditional deep-fried items. Reduce sugar coating, offer fresh fruits as alternatives, and feature more lightly-spiced vegetables. Replace white rice with brown rice options and use whole grain flours to maximize nutritional benefits. Emphasize plant-based alternatives by using lighter oils, nuts, and seeds in place of ghee, and choose dairy-free or low-fat options to create flavorful dishes with less saturated fat.



## 03

**Policy & System Enhancement:** Implement Temple Wellness Committees combining religious leaders with health professionals. Establish cooking workshops teaching healthier preparation methods, create seasonal menus emphasizing whole foods, develop educational programs connecting Ayurvedic principles to modern nutrition science for sustainable community health.



## 04

One highlight for our **Produce Prescription Train-the-Trainer effort** is the presentation from Chuck Carroll, "The Weight Loss Champion," transformed his life by losing 275 pounds through plant-based nutrition after struggling with severe food addictions. Chuck credits 90% of his success to adopting a plant-based lifestyle, proving that understanding food addiction science and choosing whole foods over processed ones can break the cycle of compulsive eating and transform health.



Learn more at -  
<https://ballequity.amamedia.org/project-support/>





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