

## Got Fruit? How About Vegetables?

*You're the Cure—Increase Access  
to Fruits and Vegetables in Your Community*



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PREP NOTE: Ask the facilitator to provide a brief, written introduction to share with the program participants. Also prepare your opening remarks. For example, you may want to select an inspiring quote or reading.

- Kick off your program with a warm welcome and your opening remarks.
- Introduce the facilitator to your fellow community members. Or, if you are the facilitator, share with the group why this topic is important to you and your reason for offering to host this lesson.

## Got Fruit? How About Vegetables?

### Lesson Overview

#### Welcome

- EmPowered To Serve and the ETS Health Check
- Program Topic and Urgent Community Need

#### Got Fruit? How About Vegetables?

- Call to Action: You're the Cure—Increase Access to Fruits and Vegetables in Your Community

#### Closing Thoughts



- Get everyone “on topic” by reading through the lesson overview.
- Let participants know that the lesson takes about 1 – 1 ½ hours to complete.

## What is ETS? *EmPowered To Serve*

**EmPowered To Serve is a movement sweeping our nation to improve the health of multicultural communities**

- We unite as the ETS megacommunity to make healthy change happen in diverse communities across the country.
- Learn More at [EmPoweredToServe.org](http://EmPoweredToServe.org).

**The AHA's  
2020 Goal**

Improve heart health of all Americans by 20%.

Reduce deaths from heart diseases and stroke by 20%.



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It's why™

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To Serve™**

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- Read the introduction to EmPowered To Serve.
- Share why you joined the ETS movement.
- Encourage anyone who has not yet joined the ETS megacommunity to go online after the program and sign up for this national movement.
- Note that ETS is a movement of the American Heart Association/American Stroke Association in partnership with community organizations across the country.
- Highlight the American Heart Association's 2020 commitment to the country.

## ETS Health Check

### Blood pressure and weight check

- Starting point for you
- Optional and anonymous, no name



#### Why check blood pressure?

High blood pressure (HBP) is a risk factor for heart disease, the No. 1 killer worldwide.

HBP is also a risk factor for stroke, the No. 2 killer worldwide.

#### Why worry about being overweight?

Nearly 70 percent of adults are either overweight or obese.

Being obese puts you at a higher risk for heart disease, stroke, HBP, diabetes, and more.

- Explain that the EmPowered To Serve Health Check is a way for community members learn about their blood pressure and current weight.
  - Review the information on why to check blood pressure.
  - Highlight the reasons for worrying about being overweight.
- This optional health screening gives information needed to complete the My Life Check personal health assessment.
- If you have not already done so, please complete the My Life Check assessment using your unique URL. It only takes a few minutes to complete. Our goal is for 15 percent of our group to complete this simple health assessment.
- Did you already complete the My Life Check assessment?
  - Have you been working on making healthier choices?
  - You may want to go online and take the assessment again.
  - Check your score. See how you are doing!





## Fruits and Vegetables

**Fruits and vegetables are key to good health:**

- High in vitamins, minerals, and fiber
- Low in saturated (bad) fat

**They're juicy, crunchy, colorful, taste good, and are fun to cook with and eat!**

*The American Heart Association recommends eating a diet that focuses on healthy food choices including a variety of fruits and vegetables.*

- Review the information on the slide.
- Eat an overall health diet which includes a variety of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Fresh, canned, dried, packaged and juiced fruits and vegetables all count, as long as they are quality products without added salt and sugar.
- Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables brings these health benefits:
  - Lower risk of heart disease and stroke.
  - Improved blood pressure.
  - Better weight control.
  - Reduced cancer risk.
  - Support for healthy digestion.

## Program Objectives

**At the end of our time together, you'll be able to:**

- Talk about what other communities are doing to increase access to fruits and vegetables.
- Join local, state, and national levels advocacy efforts.
- Discuss steps that our group can take to make fruits and vegetables more readily available.



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- Share that today's program is about rallying our community voice for health equity, when all Americans have the same opportunity to improve their health and avoid deadly diseases.
- A healthy diet is shown to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.
  - Choosing healthy options is one of the best, easiest and smartest ways for people to take control of their heart health.
  - The EmPowered to Serve movement embraces Life's Simple 7 – the seven simple steps that we can take toward ideal heart health.
  - Even small changes can bring long-term benefits.
- Do you recall that we talked about the My Life Check personal health assessment?
  - My Life Check helps you learn where you stand with Life's Simple 7.
- Back to our lesson—we are going to learn about:
  - Why the American Heart Association recommends 4 to 5 servings EACH of fruits and vegetables every day.
  - How to advocate so that everyone in our community can have better access to fruits and vegetables.

## Point #1

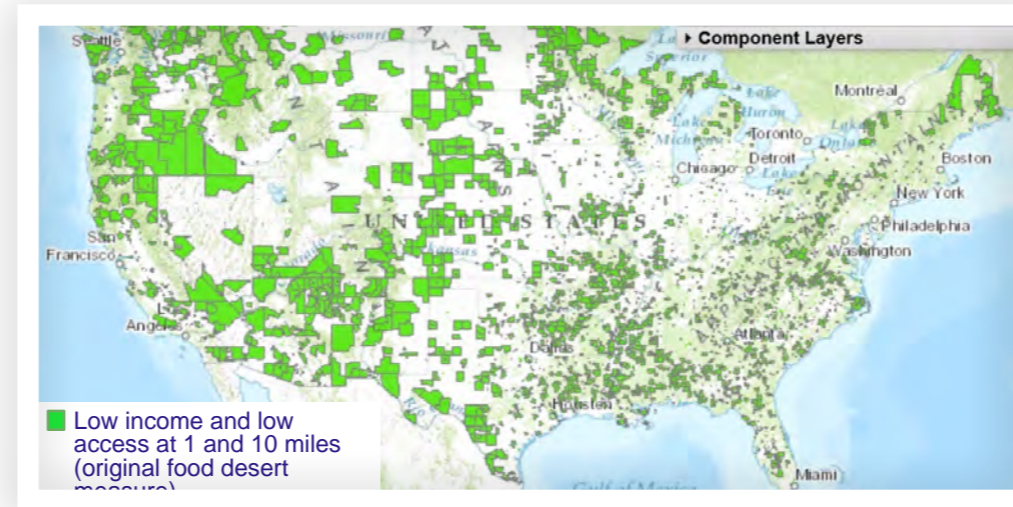
Access to quality fruits and vegetables is VITAL for good health, including reducing the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and obesity.



Explain to the group:

- Most of us are not getting the amount of fruits and vegetables recommended for good health.
- Our children are also not getting what they need.
- Not everyone has the same opportunity to choose healthy foods.
- Many people have difficulty providing a good variety and quantity of high-quality fruits and vegetables for all of their family members.

## Not Everyone Has Access



### What is a Food Desert?

A city neighborhood or country town without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food.

- This map shows what areas in our country have limited access to affordable and healthy foods.
- The areas with green shading are called as food deserts.
  - A food desert is a city neighborhood or country town without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food.
- People who live in these areas often face lengthy trips to supermarkets and shopping centers and are often surrounded by fast-food outlets and convenience stores offering less-healthy choices.





### Limited Store Options

- In many urban and rural communities, corner stores, convenience stores, bodegas, and gas stations are the only nearby places to buy food.
- They may have limited or no quality fruits and vegetables to buy.
- These produce items may be very expensive.

- Explain that how often we may consume fruits and vegetables depends whether we can buy them locally.
  - In other words, there is a relationship between low-income consumer access to retail grocery stores and poor dietary intake.
  - Neighborhood differences in access to healthy food is a rising concern because it can profoundly affect the quality of the diet.
- Also, as food costs rise, individuals and families who live in rural food deserts pay even higher costs, especially for healthy foods.
  - In 2009, among U.S. adults living in the greatest poverty, only one in three consumed the daily recommended serving of fruit.
  - And, just one in five met recommended daily vegetable intake levels.
- Transportation challenges in many neighborhoods are another factor that can make getting healthy foods harder.

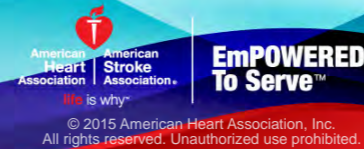
## Getting Better Access

### AHA advocates for policies that:

- Raise public awareness about the importance of a healthy, balanced diet and lifestyle.
- Increase the availability and use of fruits, vegetables, and other nutritious foods.



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- The American Heart Association is rallying communities across the nation to:
  - Work to eliminate food deserts and improve access and affordability of healthy foods.
  - Strengthen nutrition standards in schools for meals and competitive foods and in all government nutrition assistance or feeding programs.
  - Work for strong nutrition programs in agriculture legislation.
- Many communities around the country have achieved great successes.



**Point #2**  
*Other communities have increased access to fruits and vegetables—we can, too.*

**We'll look at three examples:**

- Community efforts
- State policy changes
- Federal advocacy impacts

- Review the information on the slide.
- Introduce the three examples:
  - Community—Encouraging young adults of color to go into healthcare careers and apply for scholarships.
  - State program—Ensuring coverage for low-income adults, including free preventive health services through Medicaid.
  - Federal level—Working to keep and improve the reform law and for other policies to address health inequities.

## **Community Efforts** ***Get Healthy Philly***

**Philadelphia, PA**  
**Make farm-fresh food more available in neighborhoods where fast food and junk food dominate the market.**



- Sets up farmers' markets in communities that did not before have access to fresh fruits and vegetables
- Gives families on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or food stamps) incentives to buy healthy food at farmers' markets—called Philly Food Bucks

- Ask for two volunteers to read the information.





## Philly Food Bucks

- For every \$5 in food stamps spent at the farmers' market, consumers get a \$2 coupon good for fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Many of the farmers' markets, including 10 new ones opened with funding from the city, are in low-income neighborhoods.
- The program is also keeping local farms boosting the income of local farmers.

- Ask for two volunteers and ask each to read two bullets.
- Reinforce the message by noting that Philadelphia is working on a local level to promote better access to healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables.

## State Policy Changes *Make a Real Difference*

### Alaska

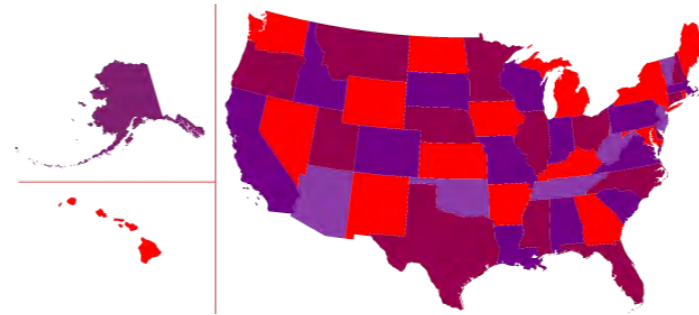
Governor increases funding for obesity prevention and control:

- Puts locally grown vegetables from the Alaska Farm to School program into more schools
- Allows electronic benefit transfer such as WIC EBT cards at farmers' markets

### Mississippi

Governor signed bill establishing Farm to School Council:

- Makes it easier for schools to purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables
- Improves quality of food served in schools
- Strengthens local economy



- Ask for two volunteers to read the examples on the slide.
- Explain that these are just two of many examples that show how your community might work on the state level to encourage the Governor and other elected officials to create policies that promote better access to fruits and vegetables.

## Federal Advocacy Impacts

### To Protect Access

- You're the Cure advocates from CO, KS, MN, NE, OR, and TX met with Congress.
- Urged their Members of Congress to protect the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.
- Encouraged continued funding providing snacks of fresh fruits and vegetables to low-income schools across the country.



- Review the information on the slide.
- Share that the next two slides provide real-life examples of the impact of this federal policy on their local schools.



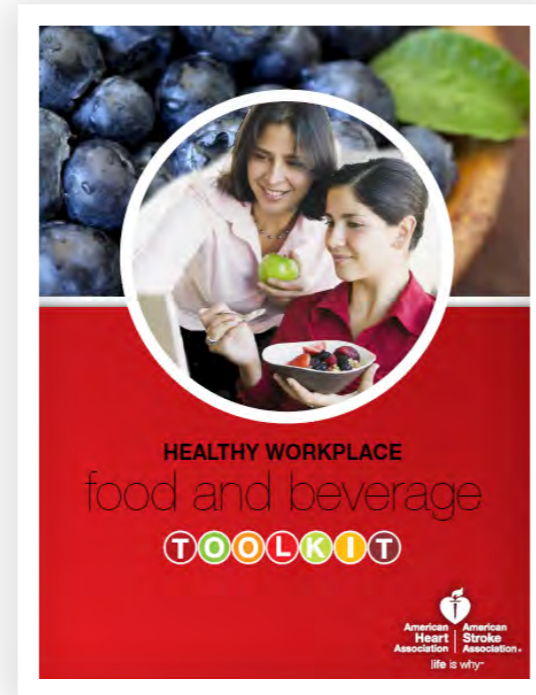
## Sample Resources

The American Heart Association offers targeted tools

- Healthy Workplaces Food and Beverage Toolkit
- Voices for Health Kids—Healthy Food Options Could be Just Around the Corner Toolkit

- Review the information on the slide.





## Changing Workplaces

- Offers suggestions for vending machines, snacks, or catered special events
- Helps you to promote making healthy changes
- Offers easily modifiable guidance to fit the needs of your office or organization

PREP NOTE: Find the URL for the Health Workplace Food and Beverage Toolkit on the resource list for this lesson. Download copies before the program.

- Review the information on the slide.
- Hand out the copies and ask the group to flip through and pass them around so everyone can see them.



## Voices for Healthy Kids

- Kids eat better when there are policies that increase their access to healthy foods.
- Voices for Healthy Kids actively supports policy changes where children live, learn, and play.

- An example of the help provided by the American Heart Association in working with communities to increase access to healthy foods is the “Voices for Healthy Kids Corner Stores Toolkit.”
  - This kit helps communities increase their access to affordable healthy foods.
  - Specifically, the kit provides information on how to advocate for the local corner store and quick marts to carry high-quality fruits and vegetables.
- Pass out a few sample kits for the group to review.

## Brainstorming



**What types of things might we do as a community to increase access to fruits and vegetables?**

- Read the question on the slide.
- Note that before we discuss what types of things we can do as a community to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables, we'll watch a video about a great resource to help support our advocacy efforts.

## You're the Cure - A Community of Advocates



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PREP NOTE: Review the resources list for this lesson. Find the link for the video with “You’re the Cure: A Community Fighting Heart Disease and Stroke.” Download the video before the program, or skip this slide.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W\\_sCzz66SRU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_sCzz66SRU)



### Point #3

*Join You're the Cure: Volunteer, Advocate, and Take Action*

**As a united community, we can make a difference.**

- We can push for healthy changes in our community and influence those who decide about the supply of fruits and vegetables to our community.
- You're the Cure offers structure and guidance, gives direction, provides updates, and connects you to AHA state contacts.



***Let's Get Heard!***

- Review the information on the slide.
- Explain to the group:
  - Join You're the Cure.
  - Choose the "My Profile" and check out our state contacts.
  - By reaching out to our state contacts, we can join statewide efforts to push for tobacco control and clean air.

[www.yourethecure.org](http://www.yourethecure.org)

Offers info about how to engage at community, state, and federal levels

- Provides updates on how to make a difference on issues that matter to you— and to all of us as a united community voice

**you're** the **cure**



- Review the information on the slide.
- Note that this is a national network of advocates who are making a real difference to improve health on local, state and federal levels.



## Let's Be the Cure

Let's figure out what issues as a group we want to identify as our key actions.

- Get engaged with You're the Cure.
- Share our stories online.
- Recruit five friends to join You're the Cure.
- Respond to action alerts.
- Ask friends to respond to action alerts by sharing on Facebook and Twitter.

- Review the information on the slide.

## Things We Might Do

### Potential Ways to Increase Access to Fruits and Vegetables

1. Organize a farmers' market.
2. Start a community garden.
3. Teach families how to grow container gardens.
4. Petition local grocery stores/corner stores to carry more fruits and vegetables.
5. Have a parent coalition meet with an after-school or daycare site and request fruits or vegetables be served as the snack.
6. Organize a letter-writing campaign and set up meetings with state leaders. For example, ask for funding to host a farmers' market in an underserved community.
7. Get everyone to sign up for "You're the Cure" and send a note to their Congressperson that says our kids need healthy meals at school.



- Review the information on the slide.
- Engage the group in a discussion about where to focus energies.
  - This might be on the community level, as in the work being done in Philadelphia. On a state level, this might mean organizing a letter-writing campaign, visiting state officials or both. On the federal level it could mean joining with the American Heart Association to change federal laws and regulations to provide more access to fruits and vegetables for everyone in our community.
  - *Be sure to point out that the YTC site offers the tools to communicate with elected officials. You can connect with AHA state advocacy staff to get started.*
- Get the discussion going with any or all of these conversation starters:
  - Do local fast-food restaurants and other local eating places serve quality fruits and vegetables?
  - Can you buy and prepare as many fruits and vegetables as you would like for your family?
  - Where do you usually buy fruits and vegetables?
  - Why do you go to that location?
  - Is there public transportation to stores that sell quality fruits and vegetables?
  - Does limited access to fruits and vegetables make it hard for you and your family to get your 9 to 10 servings per day?
  - What makes it harder?
  - What would make it easier?
  - What are personal and community barriers to eating enough fruits and vegetables?
  - What types of things can we do as a community to overcome these barriers?
  - What types of things might we do as a community to increase access to fruits and vegetables?
  - What action steps can we commit to make TODAY to move forward?

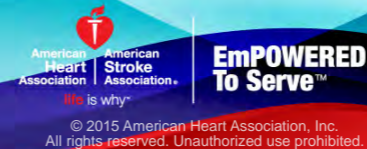




### Call to Action

- You're the Cure—Increase Access to Fruits and Vegetables in Your Community
- Share what you learned with 5 friends. Ask them to join you in being an active community voice!

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- Review the call to action on the slide.
- Remind the group that \_\_\_\_\_ is what they have agreed to do and encourage them once more to sign up at [www.yourethecure.com](http://www.yourethecure.com).



## Create a Culture of Health

### Commit to take action:

- Go to [EmPoweredToServe.org](http://EmPoweredToServe.org).
- Use My Life Check® to check your progress.

**Join Us for more ETS Programs.**

- Encourage everyone to be active in the EmPowered To Serve movement.
- Share how being part of the ETS megacommunity helps you embrace a lifestyle of health.
- Encourage everyone to come to a future ETS health lesson.

## Wrap-Up



### We appreciate your thoughts!

- Post what you liked best online at:  
<http://community.empoweredtoserve.org/home>



- Thank everyone for coming.
- Thank the facilitator and all of the volunteers who help coordinate the program.
- Take a moment to share an inspirational reading or ask the group to join you in an uplifting song.
- **Reminder!** Once your participants have left, be sure to complete the Ambassador Questionnaire. For details, see your Ambassador Guide, page 11.

## EmPoweredToServe.org

### Help create a sustainable culture of health:

- Unite with others to drive **lasting** (sustainable) positive change.
- Learn ways to improve **community beliefs and behaviors** (culture) about health.
- Share best practices and develop strategies that promote **sound body, mind, and spirit** (health).



- Put this slide up as your closing slide and leave it up until all of the participants leave the room.



## We are EmPOWERed To Serve

...Serve our health, serve our community



The American Heart Association requests that this document be cited as follows:  
American Heart Association EmPOWERED To Serve Health Lessons. [empoweredtoserve.org](http://empoweredtoserve.org)  
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