How Ohio SNAP-Ed Streamlined Data Collection and Elevated Data Literacy with PEARS

The Ohio State University Extension's SNAP-Ed program supports nutrition education and outreach across the state, empowering communities through evidence-based programming. Like many SNAP-Ed program's across the country, Ohio had been relying on a system built in Qualtrics to track and evaluation SNAP-Ed impact. While it served its purpose, the tool was labor-intensive. Staff faced challenges with time-consuming data cleaning, a clunky analysis process, and a user interface that wasn't intuitive. The old system also limited user access—only a few members of the state team could easily retrieve data, and end users had no way to update their own submissions. As a result, Ohio SNAP-Ed began seeking a more sustainable and efficient system.

What Ohio SNAP-Ed Needed

Ohio SNAP-Ed was drawn to PEARS for several reasons:

- **User-Friendly Interface:** A major improvement over their previous system.
- **Data Accessibility:** Gave local staff the power to edit their own data.
- **Multiple Avenues for Analysis:** Built-in tools simplified analysis for state and regional staff.
- **SNAP-Ed Specific Design:** Tailored to Extension programs, which helped with buy-in.
- **National Momentum:** Growing encouragement from FNS to move towards PEARS confirmed the decision.

Impact Highlights

The transition to PEARS has had the following benefits for Ohio SNAP-Ed:

- **Reduced Staff Overwhelm:** With an intuitive design, PEARS has made data entry less daunting for frontline staff.
- **Improved Data Access:** State staff and regional managers now have streamlined access to the data they need.
- **Increased Data Literacy:** PEARS' dashboards and reporting features have fostered greater confidence and understanding of data across the team.

A Smooth Transition

Over 12 months, Ohio SNAP-Ed prepared for PEARS with in-person trainings from the Canopy team while continuing to use the old system. This phased rollout ensured a smooth transition and gave staff time to get comfortable before going live.

A User's Perspective

Peter Gillette, Program Evaluator at Ohio SNAP-Ed, shares how PEARS transformed their approach:
"The platform has made it easier to manage our data and has strengthened our ability to tell compelling stories about our program outcomes."

He also praised the platform's support:
"I remember calling the PEARS support team long-distance and was immediately connected with someone who understood and resolved my issue quickly. That experience has been consistent from onboarding through today."

His advice?
"Strongly recommend PEARS for a number of the reasons already mentioned. It's a very savvy system for SNAP-Ed reporting data."

While Ohio does not currently use PEARS' Cooperative Extension feature set, Peter noted that it could be a valuable for other states looking for a system that support broader Extension reporting needs.

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