Overview
Altarum, a non-profit health research and consulting organization, was contracted by the State of Maine Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Family Independence (OFI) to evaluate the delivery of nutrition education through Maine’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed). Maine SNAP-Ed is implemented statewide by the University of New England (UNE) through contracts with local community coalitions. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2021, as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to evolve, OFI and UNE sought to assess impacts on in-person nutrition education and any facilitators or barriers associated with implementation of virtual approaches by nutrition educators, classroom teachers, and partners.

Objectives
Altarum developed evaluation plans to examine a variety of virtual teaching modalities and to establish promising practices. Three program components were evaluated in FFY 2021 that included virtual teaching approaches:

1. Evaluation Methods
Altarum, the external evaluator for Maine SNAP-Ed, conducted a process evaluation to understand the effectiveness of virtually teaching SNAP-Ed classes, capture how SNAP-Ed participants and partners have responded to virtual teaching, and identify promising practices and lessons learned from virtual teaching. Evaluation activity included key informant interviews with Nutrition Educators (n=19) and SNAP-Ed partners and teachers (n=7) involved with the virtual classes.

2. Results
The transition from in-person to virtual SNAP-Ed classes required significant adaptability and creativity among Nutrition Educators. The transition from in-person to virtual SNAP-Ed classes required significant adaptability and creativity among Nutrition Educators. The transition from in-person to virtual SNAP-Ed classes required significant adaptability and creativity among Nutrition Educators. The transition from in-person to virtual SNAP-Ed classes required significant adaptability and creativity among Nutrition Educators.

3. Conclusions
Challenges in delivering SNAP-Ed classes virtually.
For each program component, the following research questions were explored:

- To what extent was programming affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What are the success and challenges experienced from using virtual teaching to deliver SNAP-Ed classes?
- What lessons were learned that can be applied to the future implementation of SNAP-Ed classes?

Methods
In collaboration with OFI and UNE, Altarum developed key informant interview guides for use with 19 nutrition educators and 7 classroom teachers or partners that participated in the evaluations of virtual teaching, EWPH, and FSK. The guides comprised mostly open-ended questions to gather rich, qualitative data from key informants. Interviews occurred via phone between March and July 2021. Qualitative data were analyzed and coded for emerging themes and variations. Where appropriate, verbatim comments were provided from interviews to illustrate themes and variations.

Evaluation
Successes in delivering SNAP-Ed classes virtually.
Results
Extant that programming was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
• Nutrition educators successfully delivered SNAP-Ed classes during the pandemic by offering various instructional methods to meet the needs of the communities they serve.
• The transition from in-person to virtual SNAP-Ed classes required significant adaptability and creativity among nutrition educators.

Conclusions
Nutrition educator perspectives are mixed regarding their desire to continue and expand virtual classes with most recognizing the need for hybrid teaching approaches. There are benefits and drawbacks to delivering virtual classes, which may impact effectiveness with different audiences. These should be considered when determining whether to continue offering in-person, virtual, or hybrid teaching approaches in the future.