



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Nutrition education helps reduce costs, improve lives

Land-grant educational efforts such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) assist families—particularly those with limited incomes—to improve their nutrition with cost-effective, healthy food choices. These programs have been proven to help participants improve their health, reduce obesity and help them prevent chronic, diet-related diseases.

SUCCESSFUL EXAMPLES INCLUDE:

- In **Tennessee**, a program called Farmers Market Fresh helped SNAP-Ed participants improve their intake of vegetables and fruits. Using a marketing campaign, educators encouraged clients to use SNAP benefits to buy vegetables and fruits at farmers markets. At the markets, the educators also demonstrated recipes and provided nutrition and food safety education. The effort reached nearly 250,000 adults. Surveys showed that 97% of participants increased vegetable consumption and 96% ate more fruit. The economic benefits of the SNAP-Ed program there are in excess of \$42 million in savings from the reduction of long-term care costs for dietary associated diseases.
- In **North Carolina**, SNAP-Ed participants reported significant behavior changes including 72% of elementary school children eating more fruits and vegetables, 77% of children and youth becoming more active and 49% of adults increasing their activity. In addition, 93% of food pantries and small retail stores that received the education made at least one change to help promote better nutrition among their clients that were receiving federal financial assistance.
- EFNEP in **California** helped create one of America's healthiest schools. Educators assisted the Juanita Blakely Jones Elementary School in San Bernardino, where 95% of students are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Previous attempts to improve health at the school were not successful when a garden planted by the students was vandalized and students and teachers became discouraged. However, Extension educators helped the school secure a grant that funded the building of a large garden and organization of an event to celebrate Every Kid Healthy Week. EFNEP education also provided nutrition education and physical activity promotion to help the school create a culture of health.
- Educators in **Texas** are working to reduce the highest impact diseases and their consequences throughout a 27-county region of the state. In one year, educators held 18,200 educational events, resulting in 1.9 million adult educational contacts with economic benefits estimated at \$265 million. Extension health and wellness programs included diabetes education, nutrition and exercise, food safety, child safety seat education and early cancer detection.

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- An **Iowa** program called Buy. Eat. Live Healthy helps families on tight budgets establish eating habits that promote good health into the future. Of the more than 1,000 families that participated this year, 94% improved at least one measure of diet quality, 85% improved at least one measure of physical activity, 86% improved food-safety practices and 82% improved food resource management.
- Nearly half of **Indiana** counties now have one or more active health coalitions. The education provided in these 48 counties is particularly needed in rural areas, where low-income residents are less likely to have access to fresh and healthy food retailers. The efforts have increased healthy food consumption at schools, healthy concession stands at sporting events, gardening projects and physical activity programs.
- More than 77,000 clients received nutrition education last year in **Virginia**. Unique programs targeted kids, teens and adults. Benefits from the programs included weight loss, diet improvements and increases in disease-prevention behaviors. In addition to education, educators in the state are building local and regional coalitions to increase awareness of the benefits of healthy nutrition.
- **Tennessee** Extension piloted its first Master Food Volunteer program. The volunteer curriculum of 15 training topics was designed to increase the knowledge and skills of volunteers in Extension, promote volunteerism and increase the availability of education on nutrition and food safety. As a result of the training, Master Food Volunteers have led seasonal eating presentations at a farmers market and a community center, taught consumers how to choose and prepare foods at farmers markets, taught food label workshops for senior citizens and coordinated preparation of food kits for a food pantry, among many other activities.

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Prepared by the National Impacts Database Communications Subcommittee, supported by ESCOP, ECOP and USDA/NIFA.

02/2020

Photograph provided by the USDA.