



Nutrition and Health

PHOTO: UMD

SNAP-Ed and EFNEP improve nutritional health of low-income populations

Nutritional issues, including food and nutrition insecurity, obesity and sedentary lifestyles, continue to be an issue for many Americans, especially those in low-income households. Federal programs such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) are designed to complement each other to increase reach and improve the nutritional health of low-income populations. Combined, they reach over 2.1 million people each year. Land-grant university partners are vital to carrying out that work on the ground.

Successful examples include:

- University of **California** Cooperative Extension convened multiple partners to expand the use of CalFresh – California’s version of SNAP – at local farmers markets. Since 2017, there has been a 171% increase in CalFresh and Market Match redemption, indicating an increase of locally sourced fruit and vegetables in the diets of low-income families. These purchases have generated a total of \$386,000 in direct income to local farmers.
- The University of **Arkansas** at Pine Bluff’s EFNEP Extension program partnered with agencies and schools to provide research-based nutrition practices through hybrid educational sessions to address how families can stay healthy during the pandemic. Eighty-nine percent of adults and 78% of young participants reported improved nutrition practices such as eating more fruits and vegetables, drinking less sugary drinks and cooking dinner at home. Seventy-six percent of adult participants are now more physically active.
- **Oklahoma** State University Extension educates low-income individuals, families, school-age youths and pregnant teens on diet quality, food safety, physical activity, food security and food source management through virtual platforms and in-person classes. Ninety-five percent of adult graduates improved in one or more diet quality areas such as eating fruits and vegetables, drinking fewer sugary beverages, or

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cooking dinner at home. Seventy-four percent improved in one or more physical activity areas like exercising for at least 30 minutes a day or making small changes to be more active.

- As part of SNAP-Ed in **Alabama**, Auburn University Extension collaborated with local, state and national leaders and stakeholders local and state policy changes, systems changes, environmental improvements and promotional efforts to make it easier for individuals with limited resources to choose healthy foods, healthy beverages and physically active lifestyles. An estimated 51,560 low-income residents benefited from programs to increase access and appeal of healthy foods and beverages. In community and school gardens, 75 changes were made to increase nutrition education in gardens, establish or reinvigorate food gardens and use recipe demonstrations to encourage use of garden produce. These gardens yielded 7,000 pounds of produce valued at \$12,700, which equated to 35,959 servings of vegetables.