

Project: Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program - EFNEP

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Project Overview

Rates of obesity and poor nutrition continue to increase for both adults and children in the United States. This is especially prevalent among low-income populations, as parents frequently turn to calorie-dense but low-nutrient foods when family food resources are limited. Eating habits that are formed during childhood are critically important as they lay the groundwork for future patterns that can affect lifelong health. Families need guidance to get the most nutrition from their limited resources in order for their children to grow and thrive.

The Massachusetts Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is part of a national effort to improve the nutrition and health of low-income families with young children. The program identifies individuals from target communities who are recruited and trained to deliver nutrition education to small groups of families for 2 to 4 months. Educators teach with a special understanding of the lifestyles, food-ways, and challenges that families face and in a language they understand. Project staff use a creative curriculum that engages participants in group discussions, cooking demonstrations, food tasting, music, fun physical activities, and other hands-on learning. Staff are based at UMass Amherst and in four field offices across the state (Raynham, Lawrence, Springfield, and Worcester).

2015 Activity Summary

- EF-NEP Workshop Series (429)

Total Educational Contacts

	Youth Contacts	Adult Contacts
Direct	2809	1522

Narrative Summary and Impacts

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program's (EFNEP'S) mission is to assist limited-resource families to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behaviors necessary for nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well-being. Four professional staff (1.27 FTE) and 15 paraprofessional staff (10.67 FTE) provided nutrition education programming to low-income adults and youth. A total of 1,522 adults and 2,809 youth were reached in FY 2015.

Nationally standardized EFNEP evaluation tools showed the following program impacts from pre- to post- measurement:

Adult Participants

- 94.5% of participants showed a positive change in consumption for at least one of the food groups.
- 89% of participants showed improvement in one or more nutrition practices (i.e., plan meals, prepare foods without adding salt, read nutrition labels, or have children eat breakfast).
- 84% of participants showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices (i.e., plan meals, compare prices, not run out of food, or use grocery lists).
- 61% of participants showed improvement in one or more food safety practices (i.e., thawing and storing foods properly).
- 28% of participants reported an increase in physical activity.

Youth Participants

- 76% of youth improved their abilities to choose foods according to Federal Dietary Recommendations or gained knowledge in this area.
- 34% of youth improved their physical activity practices or gained knowledge in this area.
- 60% of youth used safe food handling practices more often or gained knowledge in this area.
- 38% of youth improved their ability to prepare simple, nutritious, affordable food or gained knowledge in this area.

