



Background on EFNEP

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) has been serving the nutrition education needs of low-income families and school-aged youth for 50 years! EFNEP was established in 1969 as the premiere nutrition education program to address hunger in America. Conducted through Cooperative Extension in every state and U.S. territory, EFNEP in North Carolina is administered through NC State University and North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. EFNEP's mission is to improve the health of school-aged youth and limited-resource families with young children through practical lessons on: basic nutrition and healthy lifestyles, physical activity, food resource management and security, and food safety.

EFNEP helps address the challenges that limited-resource families face when introducing healthy changes through hands-on nutrition education classes that include cooking, physical activity, and grocery shopping on a limited budget. EFNEP provides:

- Peer-to-peer, hands-on education in the community
- Healthy, low-cost recipes
- Simple strategies to help families move more together

Partnership and Potential

In the fall of 2018, NC State and NC A&T State Universities brought together a diverse set of stakeholders to think about how to increase EFNEP's already strong impacts at the state and local level. Stakeholders included representatives from government, health care, academia, public health, EFNEP participants and program leaders. Key questions explored by the group included: What does a healthy community look like? What role can EFNEP play in building healthy communities? What impacts does EFNEP demonstrate that can be leveraged to support long-term health?

From this dialogue, several key themes emerged:

Nutrition education programs like EFNEP have the potential to reach individuals across the life cycle to make healthy eating and physical activity the easy choice from birth to adulthood. We can see long-term gains in health outcomes when healthy eating and physical activity become "the norm" for children as they grow.

Clinicians and health care practitioners want to provide their patients with nutrition information and education, but they often lack the time, training, and resources to do so. Physicians should partner with local EFNEP educators, who can provide free nutrition education classes for their low-income patients.

EFNEP's success comes from meeting their participants "where they are." Educators reach out to community centers, faith communities, schools, and other places families naturally gather to build relationships and implement programs that can have a life-long impact.

People need help understanding the complicated messages they receive about health, cooking, and nutrition. EFNEP provides participants with clear, easy-to-understand messages and tools that can help them eat smart and move more every day.

EFNEP's Current Impacts

The program measures impact through 24-hour dietary recalls collected from adult participants and a food and physical activity behavior questionnaire collected from all participants prior to the educational experience and following the conclusion of the last lesson in the EFNEP series. Questionnaires are age appropriate and questions used have been extensively tested for validity. A national data analysis and reporting system (WebNEERS) is used to determine program impacts. EFNEP makes a real difference in the lives of our participants as demonstrated by the 2018 impacts in North Carolina.



95% of EFNEP participants **improved dietary intake.**

48% increased consumption of **whole grains**

50% increased consumption of **fruits**

53% increased consumption of **vegetables**

61% decreased consumption of **solid fats and sugars**



85% now practice **daily physical activity.**



89% practice better **food resource management.**



86% have improved their **food safety habits.**



Growing into the Future

With strong stakeholder support, EFNEP's positive impacts can only continue to grow. Through partnerships with clinical providers, EFNEP educators can fill crucial gaps in services for individuals who need life-saving information about how to improve healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Through hands-on classes that emphasize dialogue and relationship building, EFNEP is already having big impacts on the health of low-income North Carolinians. With additional resources and support that allows all families and youth to access the program regardless of where they live, that impact can grow, so that people receive these vital services as a part of their routine health care.



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