

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

Support \$3,180,887 to North Carolina Cooperative Extension to expand EFNEP nutrition education program outreach.

Status

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a federally-funded nutrition education program that receives formula grant funding through Smith-Lever 3(d) funding. In North Carolina EFNEP operates through North Carolina Cooperative Extension in partnership with NC State University and NC Agricultural and Technical State University. EFNEP receives \$2.7 million in federal funds per year. In most participating counties, the county dedicates a portion of its budget to the position.

EFNEP has 48 years of proven success in addressing key behaviors that help families overcome food insecurity and reduce their risk of chronic diseases such as hypertension, heart disease and stroke. Although success is consistent, funding has never reached a sufficient level to meet the needs of all low-income families and youth in our state. Our funding request is to expand EFNEP to the 57 counties not currently served by federal funds.

From its inception, EFNEP differentiated itself from other nutrition programs by using Peer EFNEP Educators that live in the communities where they work to address the needs of our most vulnerable families. Peer EFNEP educators deliver a series of hands-on, interactive lessons to program participants that help them learn new skills to overcome the economic challenges of placing healthy foods on the family dinner table and strategies to incorporate physical activity into their daily routine. Lessons are evidence-based and tailored to meet the needs of the audience.

By adopting healthy behaviors, families participating in EFNEP reduce their risk for nutrition-related chronic diseases. Participation in EFNEP should result in individuals and families experiencing improvements in four core areas: diet quality and physical activity, food resource management, food safety and food security.

Sound fiscal management practices, partnerships with county government and grant awards have helped stretch the funds received. In most cases, county funds contribute 50% of salary and benefits for a designated county EFNEP Peer Educator. In 2017, EFNEP is serving 43 counties. The program seeks to serve all 100 counties.

Funding

A cost-benefit analysis shows that for every dollar invested in EFNEP there is up to \$10 in savings for health care costs. Foundations capable of awarding the amount of funding needed do not have direct education as a focus and often target specific counties to the exclusion of others. EFNEP seeks to serve all needy families in the state by expanding statewide.

Budget

NC EFNEP will allocate the greatest portion of funds to deliver the program to participants as follows:

- 70% for paraprofessional salaries and benefits, travel, training and teaching equipment to deliver the program to participants in their communities
- 10% for professional salaries and benefits, travel
- 20% for participant educational materials

Impact

EFNEP graduates of the program in North Carolina in 2016 reported the following:

- 97% improved dietary intake
- 90% practice better food resource management.
- 76% have improved their food safety habits.
- 60% reduced their sodium intake
- 59% reduced their intake of solid fats and added sugars
- 50% now practice daily physical activity.