

2001



Mountain Plains Regional Report

Sponsoring Agencies:

United States Department of Agriculture
Cooperative Extension Services
Public Health Departments
State and Local Food Stamp Programs
State Universities:
Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri,
Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota,
South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming

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INTRODUCTION

GOAL OF THE USDA FOOD STAMP NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

To provide educational programs that increase, within a limited budget, the likelihood of food stamp recipients making healthy food choices consistent with the most recent dietary advice as reflected in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid.

IMPLEMENTATION

State agencies charged with administering the Food Stamp Program for the USDA (e.g., Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services or Department of Health and Human Services) contract with the participating Cooperative Extension Services (CES) and state Public Health Departments to develop and deliver nutrition education programs. In turn, they partner with a wide range of state and local agencies to identify target audiences for nutrition education and to foster collaborative efforts in implementing nutrition programming.

FEDERAL FUNDING FOR THE MOUNTAIN PLAINS STATES IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2001*

Federal funds: \$11,815,926

Match: \$12,938,230

** Includes Nutrition Education Programs and Nutrition Education Networks*

PARTICIPANT STATES

Colorado**	Missouri**+	North Dakota	Wyoming
Iowa**	Montana	South Dakota**	
Kansas**	Nebraska	Utah	

*** These states also have nutrition networks.*

+ University of Missouri at Columbia and Lincoln University.

The strength of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program largely lies in its community partnerships with organizations and agencies that provide a wide range of resources such as referral of eligible participants, meeting space, child care, transportation, food demonstration supplies, interpreters, equipment, cash donations for supplementary resources and team-teaching.

Adult and Child Care Providers

After-school Programs

Alternative High Schools

Boys and Girls Clubs

Commodity Food Distribution Organizations

Community Action Agencies

County Extension Offices

Departments of Education

Divisions on Aging

Even Start

Grocery Stores

Head Start

Homeless Shelters

Hunger Coalitions

Indian Health Services and Clinics

Local Housing Authorities

Local Hispanic Centers

Mental Health Agencies

Parents as Teachers

Parks and Recreation Departments

Public Schools

Public Health Departments

Public Libraries

Religious Organizations

Salvation Army

Senior Centers

Social Services Agencies

PARTNERS

DEMOGRAPHICS

Demographic information varied among states, but the following is an estimate for the Mountain Plains Region as a whole. Direct client contact was defined as having either one-on-one or group education in which clients participated in formalized activity. Indirect contact was defined as calendars, kiosks, newsletters, interactive displays and CD-roms, radio/TV programs, PSAs and web-based programs.

Programming Efforts

Direct Client Contact	490,844
Indirect Client Contact	2,824,528

Counties Served

Urban	49
Rural	364

Total Adults	257,457
Total Youth	333,484
Total Teen	52,081
Total Seniors	78,048

Ethnicity

Caucasian	338,383
African American	31,024
Hispanic	25,049
Native American	14,997
Asian/Pacific Islander	2,657

Number of Clients Reached by Various Methods

One-on-one	64,700	Group Sessions	340,606
Newsletters	1,025,099	Fact Sheets	687,102
Displays	255,093	PSAs (Radio/TV)	1,248,192
Calendars	32,620	Web-based programs	4,655
Kiosks	4,430	Interactive CD roms	107

TOPICS

Topics included but not limited to the following:

- Food Resource Management
- Dietary Guidelines
- Nutrition Facts Labels
- Food Guide Pyramid
- Soul Food Guide Pyramid
- Supermarket Tours
- Healthy Eating for Seniors
- Food Safety
- Diet and Exercise
- Gardening
- Diabetes Awareness
- Breakfast-on-the-Go
- Choking Prevention
- Use of Soy
- Healthier at Any Weight
- Portion Size
- Mealtime/Family Time
- Meals for One or Two
- Eating Out
- Smart Shopping
- Use of Commodity Foods
- Making Eating Fun
- Healthy Snacking
- Nutrition for Teen Parents
- Heart Health
- Nutrition Misinformation
- Electronic Benefits Transfer
- Herbs and Supplements
- 30 Minute Meal Planning
- Osteoporosis
- Breakfast
- Physical Activity
- Folic Acid
- Infant Feeding
- Water
- Breastfeeding
- Calcium
- Nutrition for Pregnant Teens and Adults
- Preparing Meals with What's on Hand
- Needs vs Wants (Food Guide Pyramid & Nutrients)
- Balancing Healthy Eating with Physical Activity
- Recipe Modification/Food Preparation/Quick Meals
- Food Safety from Farm to Table
- Snack Children Can Make

TOPICS

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

OUTCOME MEASUREMENTS

To assess our impact, a regional reporting form and evaluation indicators have been developed. The indicators are based on the White Papers which were written by committees appointed by Food and Nutrition Services to identify needs that should be addressed by the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program. The five topics are: diet quality, food resource management, food safety, food security, and systems and environmental change. Under each of the broad categories, the Mountain Plains Region evaluation committee developed indicators to assess the program impact.

INDICATORS OF PROGRAM IMPACT

Dietary Quality

Impact indicators for diet quality were the number of participants who moved closer to the:

- recommended number of servings of the Food Guide Pyramid
- recommended level of physical activity
- recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

31,030 participants indicated they plan to or have made a change in one or more dietary quality indicators.

The director of the Crisis Pregnancy Center said, *“A list of our clients’ babies’ birth weights was posted and every client who attended the nutrition classes provided by FSNEP had a normal birth weight! The only low birth weight babies were born to clients who did not attend any nutrition classes.”* (MO)

After viewing TV shows and reading newsletters developed by FSNEP to engage homebound seniors in an interactive nutrition and physical activity program, a woman who is bedridden reported that her caregiver uses the recipes from the newsletters. In addition, the exercises are gentle enough for the woman to do in bed and she is feeling more flexible as a result. (IA)

The FNP staff member made a recipe book with one of her clients. *“I showed her simple recipes I thought she might like and made copies of them. We put the recipes that she chose in a notebook. We personalized it by putting her name on the cover. We have made some of the recipes together and others she is trying alone. She tells me at each visit which ones she liked and which she didn’t. She is working on menu planning. When her menus are completed, we will put them in the notebook as well. She is so proud of her recipe book that she hugged it!”* (NE)

Food Budgeting

Impact indicators for food budgeting were the number of participants who more often:

- use a spending plan
- utilize a menu plan
- shop from a list
- comparison shop

9,245 participants plan to or have made a positive behavioral change in at least one or more of food budgeting indicators.

A single father of six said, “*My favorite aspect of the Cent\$ible Nutrition Program is the shopping and cooking. Shopping with a list decreased my impulse shopping and together with menu planning I am able to save \$100/month!*” (WY)

Food Safety

Impact indicators for food safety were the number of participants who:

- less often let food set out more than two hours
- wash their hands more often before touching food
- keep raw meat separate from other foods more often
- cook meat and eggs thoroughly more often

18,327 participants indicated they plan to or have made a positive behavioral change in at least one or more of food safety indicators.

A client who had participated in FNP in 1999 came back for a visit. When we were discussing food safety, she told a story about the Christmas dinner when the turkey was not cooked until it was done. She told her family that it wasn't cooked enough to eat and she didn't eat any of it. Other family members who didn't listen to her did get sick. It was a true success that the client recognized the dangers of eating the undercooked turkey. (NE)

Food Security

Impact indicators for food security were the number of participants who:

- decreased their use of emergency food assistance (food pantry, soup kitchen, etc)
- increased their use of non-emergency food assistance (food stamps, WIC, school breakfast, etc)

904 participants indicated they either decreased their use of emergency food assistance or increased their use of non-emergency food assistance.

The number of participants who indicated they had enough to eat:

3,224	Always
649	Most of the time
212	Sometimes
16	Never

ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION

A volunteer in our nutrition program at a senior site (RSVP) who was presenting “*Cooking for One or Two*” noticed that a couple of seniors were listening to the program who do not usually participate. After the lesson, they approached the volunteer and asked for some more information about the senior commodity program, a new program. The volunteer was able to explain the program and help them sign up to receive commodities that month. (Food stamps have recently decreased for many seniors after the expiration of a federal waiver. More seniors are reporting difficulty in purchasing an adequate diet). (MT)

A young woman in a FNP cooking class said, “*I’ve been doing good with my groceries. I cooked a pork roast that was on sale and we had several meals from that one piece of meat. I have been watching the store ads and planning my menus around the foods that are on sale. I have food in my freezer now—and I never had that before!*” (SD)

System and Environmental Change

Impact indicators for system and environmental change were the number of new:

- collaborations with existing partners
- collaborating partnerships

There were 1048 new collaborations with existing partners. There were 314 new collaborating partnerships.

The following is an example of a state’s FSNEP working with its partners to affect positive change within local communities.

A local food pantry was often short on food and what was available was outdated and contained canned goods that showed signs of rust or dents. In addition, many participants were not using their WIC Farmers Market checks because they lacked transportation to get to the market.

Subsequently, the FNP nutrition assistant provided education, local volunteers helped discard cans of food and organized the acceptable products. She also talked with the staff at Transitional Housing, who then offered to provide transportation to the market for participants.

As a result, the local food pantry was restocked with fresh, nutritious food and food pantry customers were provided safe and healthy foods in their food baskets. And the participants at the Transitional Housing now have transportation access and the opportunity to use their WIC Farmers Market checks to provide more vegetables in their families’ diets. (IA)

BARRIERS

Optimal programming is prevented because of the following:

Lack of childcare and transportation

Lack of client knowledge of the connection between diet and disease

Lack of client motivation

Lack of teacher time/ competition for classroom time

Lack of time/work schedules

Language

Literacy skills

Personnel changes at collaborating agencies

Pride and self-esteem issues

Recruitment difficulties

Transition of clients and/or no telephone

Weather

SUMMARY

As we complete our eighth year of FSNEP programs and networks in the Mountain Plains Region we find that many food stamp families have experienced a positive impact from these programs. The programs and networks have reached a wide variety of individuals in both urban and rural settings. The programs and networks continue to demonstrate, through many different methods, that families benefit from the nutrition education they receive. The participants are making wiser food choices, developing better food budgeting skills, continuing to improve their food safety practices and use emergency food assistant programs less often. It is our hope that the programs and networks continue to make a dynamic impact in the lives of our clientele through nutrition education.



CAPTURING COLORADO

THROUGH THE NUTRITION EDUCATION PLAN FOR FOOD STAMP CUSTOMERS

The Colorado Nutrition Education Plan (NEP) is an outreach function funded by the Food and Nutrition Service of the United States Department of Agriculture through the Colorado Department of Human Services, Food Stamp Program. The NEP is comprised of four parts: the Colorado Nutrition Network, Adult FSNEP, Youth FSNEP, and Alternative Strategies.

Colorado Nutrition Network

The Colorado Nutrition Network is a statewide collaborative alliance with the mission to link together public and private organizations to promote and coordinate nutrition education for low-income Coloradans. The Network has two major initiatives:

“Nutrition Links” will be a locally based, community nutrition education incentive award program to be initiated in 2001-2002.

Food Friends: Making New Foods Fun for Kids is a social marketing effort targeted at preschool-aged children. The program is implemented through Head Start and income eligible preschools for direct education.

Who the Network reached in 2000-2001

Food Friends reached 325 children. Each child received 8 or 12 lessons for a total of **3,180** direct contacts in 4 Colorado Counties.

Adult FSNEP

Adult FSNEP provides classes, demonstrations, and educational activities on nutrition, food choices, food buying and preparation, food resource management, and general diabetes education awareness to Food Stamp recipients and potential applicants. The Adult FSNEP is offered in 18 Colorado counties through Colorado State University Cooperative Extension.

Who Adult FSNEP reached in 2000-2001

This program graduated 1,245 individuals. *Eat Well for Less* and *La Cocina Saludable* had 6,804 direct contacts, averaging 6 classes per individual. *Dining with Diabetes* had 380 direct contacts, averaging 3.4 classes per individual. Mini Lessons reached 2,060 people. Total direct contacts for Adult FSNEP was **9,244**.



Youth FSNEP

The Youth FSNEP program is implemented in a school-based setting. The program will be offered in 13 Denver elementary schools and 1 middle school in the Denver Public School District, as well as 1 elementary school in Alamosa. The program consists of lessons taught in traditional classroom settings or in after-school settings. The curriculum Seeds for Health was offered in 120 3rd grade classrooms statewide.



Who Youth FSNEP reached in 2000-2001

This program reached 7,293 students. Each child received an average of 8.4 lessons for a total of **61,293** direct contacts.

Alternative Strategies

The major initiative offered by this component is the *La Cocina Saludable* Interactive multimedia program. *La Cocina Saludable*, Spanish for “The Healthy Kitchen”, has six bilingual learning modules: Make It Healthy, Make It Safe, Make A Change, Make It Fun, Make A Plan, and Make A Great Start. This touchscreen computer program was placed in such sites as food assistance offices, WIC clinics, health clinics, and other locations that are visited frequently by limited resource families.



Who Alternative Strategies reached in 2000-2001

La Cocina Saludable completed **2338** modules of direct nutrition education in 23 Colorado counties. The system allows agencies to monitor user interactions.

Together, through a total of 76,055 direct contacts, the Colorado Nutrition Network, Adult FSNEP, Youth FSNEP, and Alternative Strategies have positively influenced the behaviors of the Food Stamp customers with nutrition education.



CAPTURING IOWA

Target audience

The Iowa Family Nutrition Program serves adults, pregnant teens and school-aged children in eight urban and twenty-one rural counties. In FY 2001, 1,637 adults and pregnant teens participated in a series of one-on-one and group nutrition education sessions and 5,635 youth received nutrition education through group activities.

Objectives

The behavioral and educational objectives of Iowa are to:

- increase the ability of individuals and families with limited resources to use their food dollars and food stamps wisely to purchase and prepare safe, nourishing foods, which will lead to increased nutritional status of family members
- increase knowledge of nutrition and the addition of healthy food choices in elementary-aged youth

Partnerships and Collaborations

Local school districts, area educational agencies, community action groups, Head Start, Parents as Teachers, Youth and Shelter Services, WIC, Promise Jobs, Hispanic Ministry, Transitional Housing, Even Start, Southern Iowa Domestic Abuse Program, etc.

Evaluation of Impact

Behavior Changes (of the 818 adult and pregnant teens who graduated from the FNP program):

- 77% made a positive change in one or more nutrition practice (i.e., planned meals, made healthy food choices, children ate breakfast, read nutrition labels)
- 75% made a positive change in one or more food resource management practices (i.e., planned meals, compared prices, did not run out of food, used grocery lists)
- 63% made a positive change in one or more food safety practices (i.e., thawed and stored foods properly)

After attending a nine week series of FNP classes, a young teenage mother is now excited that her family is able to spread their food stamp money throughout the month and they depend less and less on the food pantries in her community. She knows they are available in an emergency, but she is learning to shop smarter by watching the ads, using coupons, buying in bulk and most importantly, shopping fewer times a month because she has learned to plan her family's meals for a month at a time. She has also learned to buy fruits and vegetables in season to save money. "I never realized how much fun it could be to feed my family, how good I feel when I can stretch our food dollar throughout the month and how rewarding it is to know that I can help my son grow strong by buying the right kinds of foods."





Behavioral Objectives

Overall: To conduct or enhance nutrition education among low-income Iowans through innovative partnerships that promote a healthy diet and life-long physical activity.

Social Marketing: Among communities that participate in the *Pick a Better Snack* campaign, target populations will be motivated to select fruits and vegetables as snacks. Physical activity will be promoted with a variation of the campaign, *Pick a Better Snack and Act*.

Coalition Building: Community nutrition coalitions will use appropriate assessment and evaluation tools to measure the impact of their nutrition and physical activity programs.

Partnerships and Coalitions

Thirty-two community nutrition coalitions conducted network FSNEP projects. Community partners include Extension, public schools, public health agencies, area agencies on aging, community colleges, state universities, community action agencies; city parks and recreation programs, and food pantries.

State partners include: Departments of Public Health, Education, Elder Affairs, Agriculture, and Human Services; Iowa State University Extension; Iowa Dietetic Association; commodity groups; retail grocers and 5 A Day Coalition of Iowa; Food Bank of Iowa; Iowa Public Television; non-profit and private health organizations; and the Governor's Food Policy Council.

Evaluation and Impact

An area agency on aging and a community college partnered with the county public health department to produce 40 weekly television shows to engage homebound seniors and congregate meal participants in an interactive nutrition and physical activity program, "*Food, Fitness and Fun*." Participants at the congregate meal sites are watching the show and participating in exercise. There are 200 weekly requests for the nutrition newsletter. There is increased participation in the Meals on Wheels program and other senior programs.

When the Iowa Senior's Farmers Market program was offered for the first time in Iowa during the summer of 2001, "*Food Fitness and Fun*" went on location to promote the new program and interviewed program directors. By the end of the program, this area agency on aging had the highest redemption rate of farmers market coupons in the entire state. The director of the agency gave much of the credit for this to the television program.

A small group of four to six ladies meet each Thursday at one of their homes to view "Food Fitness and Fun" and to do the exercises. They even write down the exercises so they can exercise on other days. Sometimes they call in to offer suggestions to make the TV show better.

The Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program in Kansas has two components: the Family Nutrition Program (FNP) and the Kansas Nutrition Network (KNN) which work closely together to serve the limited resource population in the state. KNN brings together partners from all over the state who are interested in improving the nutritional status of the low-income population. A major goal of the network is to develop research-based outreach strategies. From there, FNP takes the baton and provides nutrition education activities through a collaborative effort of extension and partnering agencies or organizations such as public schools, WIC, Head Start and senior sites.

Behavioral Objectives

Each activity addressed one or more of the following objectives.

Participants will:

- choose and prepare nutritious meals and snacks
- balance food they eaten with physical activity
- use safe food handling, preparation and storage practices
- manage food resources and use thrifty shopping practices for nutritious foods.

Community Partners

Partnership is a vital part of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program in Kansas. Here is a list of examples in descending order of frequency.

- schools, libraries, learning centers
- health departments, WIC
- senior centers
- Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
- Head Start, Early Head Start
- commodity food distribution sites
- hospitals and clinics
- food banks and pantries
- churches
- shelters
- Heartland SHARE

Evaluation of Impact

Evaluation of program impact for youth and adults is a major consideration for FNP. Data was collected in four core areas: food safety, food resource management, dietary quality, and systems and environmental change. The following are examples:

Adults

Of the participating adult population, 43% intend to wash hands more often before eating; 53% intend to plan meals ahead of time more often and 52% intend to eat more than one kind of vegetable or fruit per day more often. As an example of system and environmental change, Shawnee County FNP, in partner-

ship with agencies and organizations including hospitals, lactation consultants, Shawnee County Health Agency, La Leche League, Parents as Teachers, Healthy Families and EFNEP, joined together for the second year in educating their community about the benefits of breastfeeding and other important infant feeding practices. Four of the sessions were offered in Spanish for Spanish-speaking clients. As a consequence, breastfeeding has increased in the county. Resulting from the heightened awareness, employers are beginning to provide breastfeeding mothers the flexibility to pump their milk while at work, thus supporting mothers in their efforts to provide the best nutritional start in life for their infants.

Youth

Of participating Kindergarten-2nd graders, 22.5% of the children increased their recognition of grain products, 17.7% increased their recognition of dairy products, 15.6% increased their recognition of fruit and 19.4% increased their recognition of the amount of time needed to properly wash hands.

An example of KNN's growing success is the Heartland SHARE outreach project, which has resulted in the distribution of 6,000 additional SHARE food boxes this year. KNN's efforts were multifaceted including an award-winning outreach brochure and training event for limited resource audiences called Ready, Set, Cook. The event was based on suggestions of focus groups that were held to determine what food stamp clients viewed as important to them, as well as what barriers they felt would prevent them from taking advantage of this event.

Summary

In the words of a public school principal, *"Nutrition program - ming that FNP is doing is some of the best community collaboration and use of resources that I have seen...giving children the experience and knowledge that will reduce their risk of developing unhealthy lifestyles."*





CAPTURING MISSOURI

Educational/network activities through University Outreach and Extension (University of Missouri and Lincoln University), and the Department of Health and Senior Services

Target Audience

Food stamp recipients of all ages including youth and the adults who support them, and seniors with young children in the home.

Objectives

Food Security

- to ensure that individuals and families have enough to eat with less reliance on emergency food assistance.

Food Safety

- to improve households' safe handling, preparation, and storage of food.

Food Resource Management

- to enhance practices related to thrifty shopping for and preparation of nutritious foods.

Dietary Guidelines

- to motivate consumers to adopt eating and lifestyle behaviors that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid

System and Environmental Change

- to bring change to the system or environment that makes healthy food and lifestyle choices more available to food stamp participants

Partnerships and Collaborations

Partnerships and collaboration are key to successful programming across Missouri. Partnering agencies for educational and network activities include WIC, local community agencies, prisons, housing authority, health departments, Head Start, Senior Centers, Department of Education and schools, University Outreach and Extension, Department of Social Services—Food Stamp Division, Department of Mental Health, Department of Agriculture, Bootheel Heart Health Coalition, and Bootheel Healthy Start.

Evaluation of Impact

Method of impact evaluation varied so as to capture results of the unique programs offered within the Missouri Nutrition Network and University Outreach and Extension (University of Missouri and Lincoln University) Family Nutrition Programs. Here are some highlights:



Adult Participants

Missouri Nutrition Network questionnaires revealed the following:

- About 61% of Supermarket Festival participants would consider buying different foods such as more fruits and vegetables, leaner meats, and more grains.
- About 77% of Supermarket Festival participants said that they would consider preparing foods more healthfully including cutting fat and cholesterol, using whole grains, and trying new recipes.
- Of 282 participants who attended cooking classes, 100% said that they learned new tips and techniques.

Lincoln University Family Nutrition Program participants reported these successes:

- A participant baked food with herbs to reduce salt intake, and liked it so much that she decided not to use salt in cooking anymore.
- Several participants are checking sodium content of foods before they buy.
- Several participants tried baking rather than frying, and switched from shortening to cooking oil.
- A participant is eating more fruits and vegetables since attending nutrition class.
- A participant cooked brown rice, and found her children liked it better than white rice.
- A participant is walking a mile a day Monday through Friday since attending classes.

Teens/Youth

In the University of Missouri Family Nutrition Program, a subset of 178 teens reported their changes since attending classes:

- 48% reported changes they made to keep food safer;
- 71% reported changes they made to eat healthier meals and snacks; and
- 63% reported changes they made to be more physically active.

Teachers whose classes received the University of Missouri Family Nutrition Program reported these changes:

- 477 teachers reported an average of 62%* of students were more aware of nutrition
- 227 teachers reported an average of 49%* of students made healthier food and/or beverage choices
- 160 teachers reported an average of 57%* of students were more willing to try new foods
- 123 teachers reported an average of 75%* of students had improved food safety habits

**Estimated percents based on average of percents provided (not provided for all groups), with classrooms treated as equal in size.*



CAPTURING MONTANA

Target audience

Limited resource families and individuals across the life span, many of whom are Native American, are the focus of Montana's Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program.

Montana FSNEP continues to provide opportunities for food stamp participants to learn how to budget food stamp dollars, prepare food safely, utilize food resources, and prepare nutritious, low cost foods.

Behavioral Objectives

Adult participants in FSNEP can expect to learn how to

- use the Food Guide Pyramid and Dietary Guidelines to make healthful food choices
- use food shopping strategies to cut costs and stretch food stamps/food resources
- use planning skills to make food from food stamps last for the month
- use safe and sanitary food preparation techniques
- use safe food storage techniques

Youth participants can expect to learn how to make healthy food choices and practice food safety techniques more often.

Partnerships and Collaborations

FSNEP's major collaborators are Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services and their local offices of Public Assistance, WORC program, WIC, food banks, Senior Meal Sites, Head Start and Area Councils on Aging.

In 2001, Montana FSNEP focused on strengthening collaborations with local partners. New ways to reach and serve the food stamp audience were also explored. As a result, more programs were presented at senior meal sites, community food banks, and after-school programs for low income youth. Nutrition Assistants contacted agencies in their communities working with the food stamp audience and addressed techniques for better participation in classes and programs. The most effective way to recruit people into nutrition classes is for them to meet the nutrition assistant and be invited to participate. As a result, nutrition assistants are spending more time providing demonstrations and short lessons at Offices of Public Assistance, WIC Head Start, and food banks. This has led to increased participation in the series of lessons.

In addition, the use of volunteers has been very effective. FSNEP recruited and trained seniors in the Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) to present lessons at senior meal sites throughout the county.

Evaluation of Impact

Impact data includes the number of people reached including 14,876 direct contacts and 27,882 indirect contacts. Direct contacts include youth, adults, and seniors.

- Data from participants in a series of lessons indicate positive changes in nutrition practices, food resource management practices and food safety practices.
- Individuals who participate in a single lesson provide written feedback on changes they are going to make as a result of participating in the program.

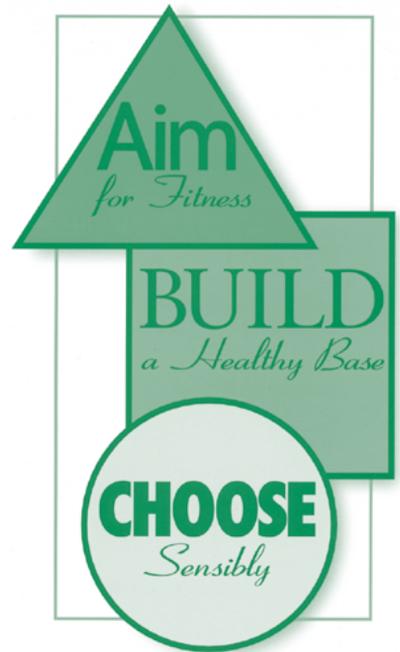
Examples are:

- Food shopping changes include: planning meals more often; reading food labels; preparing meals instead of using convenience foods.
- Food safety behavior changes include: never leaving meat on the counter to thaw, washing hands more often, and refrigerating leftovers sooner.
- Dietary quality behavior changes include: letting kids cook and choose foods; eating more fruits and vegetables

Success stories are another way to capture change in attitudes, behaviors and knowledge.

Yellowstone County FSNEP trained five Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) participants to teach lessons for seniors at eight senior meal sites throughout the county. Each volunteer presented two lessons, Food Safety and Cooking for One or Two at various senior meal sites. Volunteers recorded program impact and provided feedback on their experiences. The volunteers felt they were well received and they were conveying important nutrition messages for the seniors. Comments from participants included, "Our bodies won't have to battle food borne illness as well as something else if we keep our food safe." Ideas seniors stated they will use include: wash fruits and vegetables better, use disinfectant solutions, not thaw meat on the counter, make a full recipe and freeze half for another time, and use frozen vegetables to prevent waste. Several volunteers had seniors approach them and ask for more information on the new senior commodity program and how they can get signed up for it. Using peers has been a very effective way to communicate with the seniors. Four additional volunteers are being trained for FY 2002

Melba, a nutrition assistant on the Fort Peck Reservation, presents classes in conjunction with tribal elders. The tribal elders share cultural traditions and Melba presents FSNEP lessons which incorporate traditional foods and "new" information. Participants enjoy the blend of traditions with their "ways of today." Comments from participants include: I learned to shop and spend more wisely; learned more about budgeting and think more about it and plan to use the tracking system for my income and expenses; I learned that a very simple meal can include all five food groups; and it makes me feel better about myself and my kids.





CAPTURING NEBRASKA

Target Audience

Limited resource families which include food stamp recipients, especially single parents, minority households, pregnant and parenting teens, at risk youth and older adults.

Objectives

1. Food Stamp recipients, especially single parents, older adults and minority households, will develop new skills and learn behaviors leading to improved nutritional well being and economic self sufficiency.
2. Pregnant and parenting teenagers receiving food stamps will increase knowledge of nutrition, improve their nutritional intakes and develop financial resource management skills.
3. Limited income children ages 3-18 will increase nutrition knowledge and application of the knowledge.
4. Nutrition education and training network (Community Nutrition Partnership Council) will provide educational in-services to support limited resource families.

Partnerships/Collaborations

The Nebraska FSNEP program has developed partnerships with local schools, community action agencies, WIC programs, local food pantries, the food bank, local Health and Human Service Systems Food Stamp Program, TANF case workers, housing authority, senior programs, commodity food programs, Head Start and Early Head Start Programs, after school programs and summer feeding programs.

Evaluation of Impact

Using behavior checklist and conducting entry/exit 24-hour recalls on our graduates, the FSNEP program continues to help our families improve their nutrition, food safety and food resource management practices. Of the current 576 graduates of the program (entry versus exit data),

- 65% improved in at least one food resource management area
- 78% in one or more nutrition practices
- 49% in one or more food safety practice
- 87% improved in their nutrient intake according to their 24-hour recall

Areas client improved in but still were below recommendations were:

- Number of fruit servings per day. The majority of clients on entry had zero servings per day.

- Calcium intake. Over 50% still did not meet their daily requirements even though most improved from their entry 24-hour recall.

Group Presentations Impact Data

Using regional indicators the participants from group presentations also demonstrated improvement.

- 403 participants indicated they washed their hands before touching food
- 582 participants moved closer to the Food Guide Pyramid recommended servings
- 186 participants indicated that they shopped from a list more often
- 296 participants indicated they comparison shop more often
- 86 participants decreased their frequency of seeking emergency food assistance
- 74 increased the use of available non-food emergency food assistance programs.

Youth Programming

4,988 youth participated in youth programming.

- Of 1,632 youth participating in programming on eating a variety of foods and importance of good nutrition, 77% demonstrated an increase in knowledge of why nutrition is important for good health.
- Of 1,349 youth that participated in food safety/food resource management programming, 81% improved in their practices of food preparation and safety and increased their ability to select low-cost nutritious foods



A FNP staff member commented, "I noticed that a client's refrigerator could use some sorting and cleaning. I told her that next time we got together we would work on it. At the next visit, she showed me how she had already cleaned out her refrigerator! The following week a family consultant who also works with this client was in the home while I was there. The client proudly showed her the refrigerator. The response was, 'I've never seen it so clean!'"

A client wrote the FNP staff person a letter saying how she is trying to improve her cooking for her family. At a later visit when the family consultant was in the home, the client's young son told her, "I like my mom's cooking!"



CAPTURING NORTH DAKOTA

Target Audience

The North Dakota Family Nutrition Program serves limited resource individuals of all ages including youth, young families with children and seniors. FNP clients are in 52 of the state's 53 counties as well as three Indian Reservations.

Objectives

The overall objective is to help food stamp recipients acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and changed behaviors needed for maximizing resources to achieve nutritionally sound diets.

In particular participants will:

1. make food safety changes through thorough cooking of protein-based foods.
2. make food purchasing changes through menu planning.
3. increase their consumption of grain products.
4. be assured access to enough food.

Partnerships/Collaborations

Partnership and collaboration are key elements to the success of the state's Family Nutrition Program. A particularly strong partner is the North Dakota Department of Human Services (NDDS), as evidenced by their monthly electronic transmission of food stamp household mailing labels to the NDSU Extension Service for the FNP News. In addition, case reviewers from the NDSU conduct in-home surveys of client satisfaction on a monthly basis. Forty percent of the survey questions relate to the ND Family Nutrition Program newsletter.

Evaluation of Impact

Survey results for the year indicate:

- 75% of the respondents indicated they received the FNP News.
- 84% of the respondents who received the FNP News indicated they read it.
- 58% of the readers indicated they have used something from the newsletter to change food purchases or meal preparation.

Another successful project in North Dakota was the "*Farm to Table*" food safety training provided to all FNP staff and then delivered to food stamp recipients as the "*Thermy*" campaign. Participants were given information on safe cooking temperatures of protein-based foods; learned correct procedures of checking food temperatures; learned correct procedures for calibrating and caring for a thermometer and were given a metal-stemmed food thermometer. Follow up educational sessions focused on safe food storage temperatures and participants were given a refrigerator/freezer thermometer upon completion of the post-test.

Respondent surveys indicated:

- 85.3% knew the four steps to food safety
- 95.1% identified correct thawing procedures
- 94.5% knew correct internal temperatures of ground meat
- 71.0% used the food thermometer to check temperatures
- 80.3% felt more confident they were serving safe foods
- 92.5% planned to use the refrigerator thermometer

Success Stories

Dietary Quality

A FNP staff member reported, "The WIC coordinator was pleased that every client took dried beans or peas after they tasted my stew. She also reported that clients came back in December and said they had used the recipe for their families they received at the FNP lesson."

Food Safety

Several people who participated in the Thermy Project told the FNP staff member that they are using thermometers to check the temperatures of hamburgers, hot dishes and reheated foods. They said that understanding about food borne illness made them realize how important it was to use thermometers.

Food Purchasing

One social service referral was a single mom who wanted more information on food shopping and meal planning. One day she brought a friend with her. I challenged them to try to finish planning the menu we started together and shop only once that week. I called each of them in about one week to see how they were doing. Both replied the lesson had helped cut down their daily trips to the store and as a result had saved a lot of money.





CAPTURING SOUTH DAKOTA

**SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY –
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES**

ACHIEVING A HEALTHY AND ADEQUATE DIET THROUGH FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION

The South Dakota Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP) represents a partnership between the South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service, the South Dakota Office of Economic Assistance, and the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Public and private partners include state agencies, universities, and commodity groups that address food and nutrition issues. Local partners include WIC offices, Head Start and Healthy Start programs, low-income day care centers, income qualifying schools, alternative high schools, after-school programs, adjustment training centers, senior meal sites, food pantries and other emergency food sites, low-income housing, hospitals, clinics, tribal health, and counseling centers. Local preferences guide program delivery.

FSNEP has two components: 1) the Family Nutrition Program (FNP), in which Extension nutrition assistants work directly with program participants; and 2) the South Dakota Nutrition Network, by which cooperating organizations provide consistent, practical, research-based information. Program goals are to help people with limited financial resources gain basic skills in food safety, diet quality, food budgeting, and food security practices so that they might achieve a healthier, more adequate diet.

Geographic Reach

In FY 2001, FNP was available in 11 counties; 5 additional counties were reached by a partnership with the South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs. Nutrition Network activities were conducted with limited resource audiences statewide.

The Family Nutrition Program (FNP)

FNP targets families and individuals with limited financial resources, especially seniors, families with young children, and youth. Direct contacts consist of group and individual teaching, whether as a single event, regularly scheduled presentations, or a series of lessons. Indirect contacts consist of displays, newsletters, and fact sheets that are viewed or distributed, whether or not the nutrition assistant is present. Participants are taught skills in meal planning, food shopping, food preparation, food safety, food budgeting, and use of nutrition guidelines.

Program Participation

In FY 2001, 104,002 participant learning contacts were made. Of these, 27% (27,270 contacts) were received directly by

group classes and one-on-one instruction; 73% (76,732 contacts) were received indirectly, through visual displays, newsletters, and fact sheets. FNP participants spanned the lifecycle: 21% were children, 8% were teenagers, 40% were adults, and 31% were seniors. Mostly, they were female, Caucasian, and not disabled.

Program Evaluation

Program effectiveness was determined according to behavioral changes reported by participants in pre-/post-assessments, written and verbal comments, and by direct observation. Not all individuals who participated in FNP completed pre-/post-assessment forms, so changes reported here are conservative estimates. According to these forms:

- 4,983 participants reported improved food safety practices (washing hands, preparing, cooking, and chilling foods properly)
- 5,482 participants reported changing what they ate to improve the quality of their diets (following Food Guide Pyramid, Dietary Guidelines, and physical activity recommendations)
- 1,280 participants reported improved budgeting practices (following a spending plan and menu plan, shopping from a list)
- 2,922 participants reported increased food security (use of emergency food assistance when needed, having enough to eat)

Verbal and written feedback supported these pre-/post-assessment results. Two examples illustrate this point.

After attending a class on using a thermometer at a senior center, one woman indicated that she had purchased a thermometer and had used it to check the temperature of her meat ever since.

A mom at the WIC office commented that she keeps the monthly FNP fact sheets on hand and refers to them frequently for helpful information. She still struggles with having enough dollars to provide for her family, but she has made changes that have helped—taking a list to the store, trying to not shop too often, following store ads, and planning ahead.

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Nutrition Network Activities

Beginning in FY 2000, The South Dakota Nutrition Network became part of the South Dakota Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP). Food Stamp Program eligible families with children under 18 years of age and professionals who impact this population are the target audience of the Network. Current goals are to: 1) enhance the quantity and quality of nutrition education in South Dakota schools and communities; and 2) secure Network sustainability. A Nutrition Network-Team Nutrition partnership between the South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service and South Dakota Department of Education and Cultural Affairs is helping accomplish these goals. For the past two years, Nutrition Network and Team Nutrition activities have been coordinated in order to reach both low-income and general youth audiences, their families, and the communities in which they reside.

The Nutrition Network's role has been to target schools and preschools with high levels of free and reduced meals, strengthen school/community linkages, and share resource materials developed for limited resource audiences. Team Nutrition's role has been to provide training and age-appropriate curricula to elementary school teachers and preschool educators.

Elementary School Teachers

In FY 2001, participating teachers increased their nutrition teaching time by an average of 8.75 hours each. Surveys conducted with participating teachers and teachers who did not participate in the Nutrition Network-Team Nutrition partnership showed: 1) participating teachers acquired more knowledge, were more comfortable teaching, and taught more in the classroom than did non-participating teachers; and 2) teachers who did not participate in the project did not recognize a need for nutrition training. Of the teachers who did not participate, some were already teaching nutrition, yet had misconceptions about nutrition information. They may have been a source of misinformation for their students. Surveys conducted with youth to examine whether the information received from teachers translated to improved behavior were inconclusive due to a low student response rate.

Preschool/Child Care Providers

Age appropriate curricula resources were distributed to 46 preschool and daycare providers in Spring 2000. Head Start and other low-income providers were especially targeted for receiving these materials, which were secured through Team Nutrition and Dairy Council funding. Evaluation of these efforts in 2001 showed that preschool and daycare providers were teaching nutrition to their children using the resources they had received.



Parent and Community Involvement

Thirteen competitive minigrants were awarded to local communities through Coordinated School Health, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funding. Nutrition coalitions were formed with schoolteachers and administrators, parents, students, and other interested community members, with Extension educators serving as the key contact. Communities set local goals for increased nutrition and physical activity education. Efforts to target low-income audiences included teaching basic food skills to Head Start parents and teaching youth and families in low-income communities, after school programs, and alternative high schools. More than 10,500 adults and youth from 20 schools and other communities across the state participated in these educational opportunities.

Parents and children demonstrated increased knowledge and skills in nutrition and physical activity. Goals for improving food and physical activity choices were made. Additionally, school and community changes were made, examples being the formation of a local soccer league in a rural community, the introduction of a salad bar at a local school and the addition of juice to a vending machine, where sales nearly equaled that of soda pop.



Program Viability

Efforts to raise awareness, report impact, and generate increased commitment to limited resources audiences included a presentation at the Society for Nutrition Education Annual Meeting in Oakland, CA, July 2001; a display prepared for the South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Annual Conference in Brookings, SD, October 2001, and a PowerPoint presentation to Network partners in Chamberlain, SD, March 2001. These resources are available for Network partners to use with additional audiences.

South Dakota FSNEP is experiencing slow growth by maximizing use of program resources. FNP will expand to 12 counties in FY 2002 with the formation of an additional two county unit. The list of Nutrition Network partners has been consolidated to 52 active partners to avoid unnecessary mailing costs, and more effectively target program resources. Program sustainability will remain a high priority for FY 2002.

Target Audience

The Utah Family Nutrition Program targets individuals and families receiving or eligible to receive food stamps. The largest percentage of the population served are school-aged youth. FNP was available in 25 of 29 counties. In many counties customers are referred to FNP by the local Department of Workforce Service which houses the food stamp offices. Some counties are working with young mother programs, others with Head Start, WIC and senior centers. Most counties are partnering with clergy to identify low-income families in need of nutrition education assistance.

Objectives

To increase the ability of individuals and families with limited resources to use their food dollars and food stamps wisely to purchase and prepare nourishing foods, and to provide a safe food environment. This will be accomplished by providing free and easily accessible nutrition education in the home and small group settings. The preferred method of instruction is one-on-one teaching within a customer's home. The primary curriculum for the Utah Family Nutrition Program is Eating Right is Basic (Michigan State).

Partnerships and Collaborations

Utah FNP partners with the following agencies and organizations: WIC, Local Department of Workforce Service Centers, senior centers, public schools, Indian Health Center, Head Start, food pantries, etc.

Evaluation of Impact

Results achieved under the Food Safety initiative include improvement shown in thawing and storing foods properly.

- 25% (74 participants) indicated they less often let food set out more than two hours
- 54% (161 participants) indicated they less often thaw frozen food on the counter

Results achieved under the Diet Quality initiative include improvement shown in nutrition practices related to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the Food Guide Pyramid.

- 54% (161 participants) moved closer to the number of servings recommended in the Food Guide Pyramid
- 41% (107 participants) moved closer to the Dietary Guidelines.

Results achieved under the Food Budgeting initiative include improvements shown in menu planning, shopping from a list and comparison shopping.

- 64% (186 participants) utilized a menu plan more often.
- 52% (150 participants) shop from a list more often.
- 46% (134 participants) comparison shop more often.

Results achieved under the Food Security initiative include improvement in having enough food.

- 45% (130 participants) indicated that they had enough to eat more often.

Seniors reported FNP changed or improved their life.

129 seniors having completed at least six lessons show the following behavior changes:

Drink 8 glasses of liquid per day:

- 71% (91 participants) most of the time consumed 8 glasses of liquid of day.

Eat something in the morning within 2 hours of waking:

- 80% (103) participants will most of the time eat something in the morning within 2 hours of waking.

Eat different foods from each group in the FGP:

- 53% (69 participants) will most of the time eat different foods from each group in the FGP

Store raw and cooked foods together:

- 93% (120 participants) will never store raw and cooked foods together.

Thaw frozen foods at room temperature:

- 77% (100 participants) will never thaw frozen foods at room temperature.

Plan menus to stretch food resources:

- 29% (37 participants) will always plan menus to stretch food resources.

Shop with a grocery list:

- 75% (97 participants) will most of the time shop with a grocery list.

Marci is a young mom with a thirteen month old daughter who liked to bake but not cook when she started FNP classes. By the time she graduated, Marci was planning and preparing dinner every night-reducing the number of times the family was grab - bing take out because no one could decide what to make for dinner. As a result, she had cut her food bill by about \$50 every two weeks.





CAPTURING WYOMING

Target Audience

The Wyoming Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program, known as the Cent\$ible Nutrition Program, provides nutrition education for limited resource individuals of all ages from school-aged youth to seniors.

Objectives

Food stamp and food stamp-eligible recipients will develop new skills and gain knowledge leading to improved nutritional well-being and increased ability to manage food resources.

1. Wyoming Cent\$ible Nutrition Program will be a recognized leader for program management, employee training, program assessment and educational opportunities that lead to food security for program participants.
2. Wyoming CNP will be a recognized partner in community collaboration which brings about system and environmental changes leading to food security for food stamp eligible participants.
3. Food Stamp and food stamp-eligible recipients will achieve food security.

Partnership/Collaborations

The Wyoming CNP has partnerships with the Department of Family Services (food stamp offices), Public Health, WIC, Senior Centers, Head Start, emergency food providers, Department of Education, public schools, Latino Family Resource Center, county correctional institutions, and Wyoming Department of Employment to name but a few.

Evaluation of Impact

Educating the limited-resource audience is done at two levels: through presentations at cooperating agencies where clients are considered one-time contacts, and by enrolling participants in a series of lessons.

Behavior change has been identified in the following areas: Food Resource Management Practices, Nutrition Practices and Food Safety Practices.

Food Resource Management Practices

1. Plans meals
2. Compare prices
3. Does not run out of food
4. Uses grocery lists

81% of homemakers showed improvement in one or more practices.

- Entry surveys report 26% of participants demonstrated acceptable practices of food resource management.
- Exit surveys report 52% of participants demonstrated acceptable practices of food resource management.

Participants showed an average savings of \$27.54 per month on food purchases.

Nutrition Practices

1. Plans meals 2. Makes healthy food choices 3. Prepares foods without salt 4. Reads nutrition labels 5. Children eat breakfast

89% of homemakers showed improvement in one or more nutrition practices.

- Entry surveys report 8% of the participants demonstrated acceptable nutrition practices.
- Exit surveys report 35% of participants demonstrated acceptable nutrition practices.



Other dietary improvements include nutrient intake of protein, iron, calcium, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, and Vitamin B6.

The mean nutrient adequacy ratio (NAR) for all nutrients increased from .73 at entry to .81 at exit (1.0 equals 100%).

Graduates increased the number of servings in all food groups.

Food Safety Practices

1. Thawing foods properly 2. Storing foods properly

63% of homemakers showed improvement in one or more of the food safety practices.

- Entry surveys report 59% of participants demonstrated acceptable food safety practices.
- Exit surveys report 82%.

Success Stories

“Since completing my CN classes, my high blood pressure and cholesterol have gone down. I can attribute that to reading the nutrition labels and staying away from prepackaged food, which now I know have a lot of salt. I’m cooking better now and have lost weight and feel better. I use my cookbook like you wouldn’t believe!” **Note:** This client was drinking 6 huge mugs of soda per day and eating doughnuts. After taking the series of lessons she began to reduce her calories and eat more nutritiously. She has lost 50 pounds. She has been able to reduce her blood pressure from 198/100 to 150/86 without medication. She lowered her cholesterol from 300 mg to 150 mg without medication. She cut her diabetes medication from \$400 per month to \$200 per month and her doctor is beginning to wean her off of it completely. She now exercises 3 times per week, has improved her mental attitude. She states she feels more in control of her life. She was spending \$350 per month on groceries. She now receives \$142 in food stamps and often has food stamps left over at the end of the month.

“Before I took this class I didn’t feed my family a balanced diet. After taking this class I now use beans in my cooking which I never used before. I watch the type of snacks my kids eat so that they are healthy and nutritious. I have learned that you must provide all of the food groups to meet a healthy diet. But the biggest thing I’ve done is to drop from 4 or 5 sodas a day to less than one. By using all the things I’ve learned my food is better prepared and my food bill is about half what it used to be. Thank you.”



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