EFNEP
Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program

2017 Highlights
As the principal investigator of the UF/IFAS Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), I am proud to announce that our program will turn 50 years old in October 2018! As we gear up for this momentous occasion, we would like to share some of our greatest successes from 2017 with you.

This past year, EFNEP has worked in communities throughout Florida to provide series of research-tested, free nutrition education classes for limited-resource families and children. By completing the EFNEP series, struggling parents and youth are stretching their food dollars further at the grocery store, eating a variety of nutritious foods, moving more throughout the day, and improving their overall health.

To support our participants in making healthy choices, EFNEP relies on deeply established and brand-new partnerships to amplify our efforts in schools, workplaces, places of worship, and many more settings. We are so thankful to collaborate with numerous communities and leaders across the state and nation who share our passion for improving the health and well-being of Florida’s limited-resource families.

I invite you to join us in becoming a champion for and supporter of the UF/IFAS Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. To find out how to get involved, please reach out to us at efnep@ifas.ufl.edu.

In good health,
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# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About the Program</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Impact</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success Stories</td>
<td>6 - 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Escambia County</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillsborough County</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami-Dade County</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palm Beach County</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk County</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminole County</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFNEP Florida Map and Key Partners</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About the Program

**Purpose**
The University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) contributes to the health of Florida communities by helping low-income families improve their nutritional well-being. This is accomplished through a series of hands-on, interactive nutrition education lessons. Program participants learn and are encouraged to improve food and physical activity behaviors, especially those related to improving nutritional health and food security. By doing so, EFNEP contributes to the reduction of health disparities typically associated with those who have limited financial resources. It is also vital in addressing major societal challenges, such as reducing childhood obesity and hindering the effects of chronic disease.

**Mission**
EFNEP empowers parents and children to improve their nutrition practices, stretch their food dollars, practice food safety, and increase their physical activity. EFNEP also partners with local leaders to improve food environments and systems through a community-based, relationship-driven approach.

**History**
EFNEP has been making a difference in the lives of Florida families and children since 1969. As the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) sought solutions to poverty and hunger, President Lyndon B. Johnson authorized $10 million for EFNEP in 1968, and in 1969 Congress authorized $30 million under the Smith-Lever Act. Today, EFNEP remains a USDA-funded program under the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). EFNEP operates in all 50 states, U.S. territories and the District of Columbia. In Florida, EFNEP is located in Escambia, Hillsborough, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach, Polk, and Seminole Counties.

**Target Audiences**
Our target audience includes adult participants with children 18 years or younger who are eligible for public assistance programs, such as SNAP (Food Stamps), WIC, Head Start, or have children who receive free or reduced lunch or breakfast.

Eligible youth participants are between ages 5-18 and qualify in at least one of the following ways: attend a Title 1 school in which 50% or more of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch or breakfast; receive free or reduced school breakfast or lunch; or are in a household receiving SNAP or other federal assistance.

**Priorities**
EFNEP empowers individuals, families and communities to improve their health and well-being in the following areas:

- **DIET QUALITY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**—Improve diets and nutritional and physical well-being through the adoption of federal food and physical activity recommendations.
- **FOOD RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**—Increasing ability to buy, grow, or otherwise appropriately obtain, prepare, and store food that meets nutritional needs.
- **FOOD SAFETY**—Improve household food safety and sanitation practices.
- **FOOD SECURITY**—Increase ability to access food directly—and from food assistance programs when necessary—to ensure having enough healthy food to eat.

**Ensuring Excellence**
EFNEP ensures program quality and fidelity by systematically collecting and analyzing data related to participant demographics, food and physical activity behaviors, and food consumption. EFNEP’s nationally implemented surveys are scientifically valid and reliable tools. The data shape program priorities and hold EFNEP accountable to its mission.

**Community Partnerships**
EFNEP partners with local leaders to strengthen available support systems and enhance participants’ success. These include:

- Adult Education and Training Sites
- Adult Rehabilitation Centers
- Churches
- Community Centers
- Emergency Food Assistance Sites
- Extension Offices
- Farmers Markets
- Head Start Sites
- Healthcare Sites
- Libraries
- Youth Education Sites
- Public Housing
- Schools
- Shelters
- SNAP Offices
- WIC Program Sites
- Worksites
NEED

1 OUT OF 6 FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN LIVE IN POVERTY.

- 65% do not meet physical activity recommendations
- 82% eat fewer than five fruits and veggies per day
- 64% are overweight or obese

POOR HEALTH DISPROPORTIONALLY AFFECTS MINORITY FAMILIES.

89% EFNEP participants report belonging to an ethnic or racial minority group.

LOW-INCOME FAMILIES HAVE A HIGHER RISK FOR DEVELOPING NUTRITION-RELATED DISEASES.

97% EFNEP participants report earning an income that fell below the federal poverty level.

IMPACT

FOOD-RELATED BEHAVIOR CHANGES

4,257 adults and 5,634 youth graduated from the EFNEP educational series and as a result:

- 93% improved nutrition practices
- 85% increased food resource management practices
- 89% increased food resource management practices
- 43% increased their physical activity levels
- 56% improved food safety practices
- 75% improved their food safety practices
- 58% improved their food security
- 48% improved their physical activity levels

FINANCIAL SAVINGS AMONG EFNEP PARTICIPANTS

- $2,024,217 INVESTED BY EFNEP
- $253,000 SAVINGS ON TOTAL FOOD COSTS
- $21.5 MILLION SAVINGS ON FUTURE HEALTHCARE COSTS

AND

- 93% increased nutrition practices
- 85% increased food resource management practices
- 89% increased food resource management practices
- 43% increased physical activity levels
- 56% improved food safety practices
- 75% improved food safety practices
- 58% improved food security
- 48% improved physical activity levels


http://www.floridacharts.com
https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines

2017 HIGHLIGHTS | 5
Success Stories

A Boost in Confidence

An EFNEP graduate sent a thank-you letter explaining that she had obtained employment at a seafood restaurant. She said that the food safety she learned in the EFNEP classes really helped her feel confident in her interview and the knowledge continues to help her at her new job. She stated that she is so grateful for the EFNEP certificate, which is hanging in her living room.

Cooking at Home

A single EFNEP dad said that he is now cooking for his son instead of getting fast food all the time and they are both really enjoying it. He shared that he made chicken soup from scratch one night for dinner and it turned out really good. He incorporated whole grain noodles and he thought it was even better than soup in a can.

Healthy Snacks Replace Fast Food

A woman, who is raising her eight-year-old nephew, would leave each EFNEP class and pick her nephew up from school. He would always prompt her to stop at a fast food restaurant on the way home, which frustrated her because of the expense and extra time. A few weeks later, she was ecstatic to share that she no longer needed to stop for fast food. She had given her nephew a bag of the Energy Snack Mix from one of the EFNEP classes and he loved it. They didn’t go through the fast food drive-through that day or any day since. Now, she makes Energy Snack Mix bags on Sundays and has them ready for him every day after school. She is preparing other recipes also, which are healthy snack alternatives. She expressed her gratitude for helping her and her nephew eat healthier, save time and money.
Healthy Does Not Mean Expensive

An EFNEP participant shared, “I now realize how many calories that I would eat over my daily intake by learning how to read a food label. My family has incorporated exercises into their daily routine with me”. The participant continued to explain that she loved all the classes, which were fun and showed her that eating healthy is great and not expensive.

Small Changes Lead to Health Improvements

A participant shared that her eating habits had changed significantly thanks to EFNEP. She had been diagnosed with high blood pressure and had a difficult time managing her health, yet did not see a need to change the way she ate. She admitted that it took changes in all of her foods. She now eats less salt on her food and changed her serving sizes. She bragged, “My [blood] pressure is getting better!"

Looking Differently at Menus

A middle school student admitted to never really looking at nutrition information on a menu. After the EFNEP classes, the young man now looks at menus more carefully and watches his calorie intake and meal choices. He even cut down on eating cakes, cookies, candy and soda as he now drinks more water. He also shared the information he learned with his family.
**Success Stories**

**Saving Money on Groceries**

A participant shared that she had no idea that she was spending too much money on groceries. Even though she received coupon flyers every day, she never paid attention to them. Through EFNEP, she learned how to check for the coupons of products she buys for her family and how to make a shopping list so she only buys what they need. She and another program participant even began collecting and sharing coupons to maximize their savings. Since attending the EFNEP classes, she has noticed over $80.00 in monthly grocery savings.

**Cooking for the Family**

A woman came from Cuba to live with her son, his wife and her three young grandchildren. Her family was overweight and they would pick up dinner from a restaurant every day, not allowing her to cook for them. She began taking EFNEP classes and she shared the information with her family. Soon after, her son asked her to cook for the family. She began preparing fruits, vegetables, and healthy snacks to take to school and work. As a result, all family members lost weight and felt much more energetic and her son was happy to see that he was even saving money.

**A Family Enjoying New Foods**

After taking classes through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, a participant shared that she now incorporates new foods, like quinoa and zucchini, into meals for her family. This change was met with some resistance; however, her family really came to appreciate the new healthy options. Additionally, the food portions her family consumed changed and her children started packing lunches and eating more vegetables as snacks. Her husband and her now regularly walk at the neighborhood park at least three times a week. They have already seen a change in how they feel and look, with the program participant losing seven pounds and her husband losing five pounds!
Saving Money and Improving Health

An EFNEP participant was concerned about weight gain after her doctor said she was at risk for diabetes. She could not understand why she continued to gain weight so she began taking EFNEP’s classes. Eager to try everything she learned, the participant began controlling her food portions and incorporated more fruits, vegetables and whole grains into her diet. By the end of the series, she stated that she had lost eleven pounds and she was even saving money on groceries. The woman expressed that she was very happy she completed the classes, which were offered in her native language, Creole.

Classes Inspire Father to Cook

During his first class, an EFNEP participant was reluctant to try a new recipe. After some encouragement, he tried the pasta dish and to his surprise, he liked it. At the end of the series, the participant emotionally shared that he never cooked because he believed that cooking was “difficult and took too long.” He stated, “This class not only showed me how to quickly prepare my meals, but it also helped me save money because I rarely eat out now. I made all the recipes at home with my 5-year-old daughter.” Tears formed in his eyes as he explained how his relationship with his daughter had changed because of his new lifestyle.

Healthy Changes Impact Diabetes

An EFNEP participant shared, “I was falling behind in school, I didn’t have energy, my diabetes was out of control and I wanted to give up with school. But during these classes, I started to learn how to better manage my problems. At first, it was very difficult for me to try different kinds of vegetables at first because I never grew up eating them. I didn’t cook them at home so my kids were not exposed to them either. After learning that parents are the role models for their children, I made some changes at home. I was surprised to see a difference in my energy level after switching to whole grain foods. Portion sizes were also a big change. Thank you - these lessons helped me regain my desire to continue school and my diabetes is in better control. My family is more open than I thought to these healthy changes.”
Success Stories

Using the Nutrition Facts Label for Health
An EFNEP participant stated, “Before taking this program, I didn’t realize the importance of the Nutrition Facts label on products and also portion control. As a stroke survivor, I was including fruits and vegetables in my diet but I wasn’t sure of the right recommendations for my daily diet nor all the benefits of them like getting enough fiber, vitamins, protein, etc. Now, I take the time to read and learn from each food label. I am eating more vegetables and fresh fruit and I am drinking 100% fruit juice and more water. I watch my food portions. I am exercising more, have more energy and feel less tired. I have even lost five pounds!”

Learning to Make Better Choices
An EFNEP participant shared, “Having suffered from a heart attack some time ago made me make some changes in my diet and my lifestyle. Before starting this program, I had some general knowledge about food groups and what to eat, but I did not know about recommendations and other good tips to apply on my daily diet and choices, etc. Class after class, I was learning new things about how to improve the quality of my diet and how to make better choices to benefit my overall health. I now avoid using salt on my meals, I add less sugar to my coffee, I am eating plant-based protein foods, and I add fruits and vegetables so I get more fiber in my diet! Thanks, EFNEP!”

“I Am Extremely Thankful to EFNEP!”
An EFNEP participant and mother mentioned that she continuously struggled to have her children eat whole grains, fruits, vegetables and less sugary snacks. Her husband had passed away from a chronic disease and she wanted to prevent this for herself and her other family members. Through the EFNEP classes, she learned how to manage her weight and now her kids are consuming more fruits and veggies. By learning how to plan and buy food while saving money, she is now able to provide a stable amount of food for the entire family. “I have gained valuable nutrition information and my overall family’s diet has improved 100%. I am extremely thankful to EFNEP!”
Success Stories

Vegetables with Every Meal
At the end of an EFNEP series, a participant shared, “Every time I plan my meals, I make sure I add vegetables. The image of MyPlate stayed in my head and I tried to add vegetables to all my meals. Once it’s done I think of you.” The participant continues to prepare healthy meals for her family and occasionally sends photos of her meals to the EFNEP educator as reminder of how the series improved their eating habits.

A Family Eats Healthy for $10
Creating a healthy meal is challenging for many people and even more so for families on a limited budget. One EFNEP participant was absolutely positive that there was no way that she could feed her family a healthy dinner for $10. Using the information learned in the class on using store flyers, coupons and specials as well as discussions among participants, she was amazed to learn that she could plan and prepare a family meal for under $10. After the series was complete, she continued to use the information learned to prepare healthy meals for her family. She sent a photo of a healthy meal she prepared which included sardines, colorful vegetables and brown rice, all for under $10.
Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

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Key Partners
- Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
- Florida Department of:
  - Agriculture and Consumer Services
  - Education
  - Health
- Florida Hospital
- UF/IFAS Extension:
  - Family Nutrition Program
  - 4-H
  - Florida Master Gardener Program
- University of Miami
- The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

For more information about EFNEP, visit: http://efnep.ifas.ufl.edu/

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