This year, we celebrate the UF/IFAS Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program’s (EFNEP) 50th anniversary. For 50 years, EFNEP has been improving the health of the nation by teaching families to make better nutrition choices. One key to our success has been the dedicated peer educators who come from the communities in which they serve and are able to develop meaningful relationships that help our participants learn and change behaviors. In addition, our partnerships in the communities we serve have been critical to our work.

This year’s report is focused on recognizing our partners for their dedication and contributions over 50 years. We are especially proud of the work community partners are doing to change their environments to help our participants make healthy choices. Partners such as food pantries who have allowed our educators to come in and suggest how to offer the healthiest options. In fact, we have a whole section in this report called “EFNEP-Engaged Food Pantries” that highlights this work. As a result of these efforts, 64,031 people have been able to access healthy food options. This is the kind of impact that together we can have on communities!

In closing, I just want to thank you for helping EFNEP change lives. Families are healthier because you are making a difference. Children are eating healthy foods because you are giving them that opportunity. Without you, EFNEP’s impact would be far less, so we truly thank you for your willingness to join in our efforts. If you are inspired by the stories in this report and would like information on becoming a champion for and supporter of the UF/IFAS Extension Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, please reach out to us at efnep@ifas.ufl.edu.

In Good Health,

UF/IFAS EXTENSION EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

As Dean and Director of UF/IFAS Extension, it gives me great pride to introduce this report on the 50th anniversary of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. Since its beginning, UF/IFAS Extension has been improving the lives of Florida’s residents by adapting the scientific research of our land-grant universities into practical information we can use to solve real-world problems. Nowhere is that mission more necessary than with EFNEP. Malnutrition is a serious problem in our state, with nearly three million Floridians suffering from food insecurity, and millions more suffering from the effects of obesity, diabetes, and other chronic diseases. Unfortunately, for many, the most available food options are nutrition-poor fast and convenience foods. Families on tight budgets need to know how to recognize healthy food choices, where to find them and how they can afford them.

To address this problem, UF/IFAS Extension EFNEP uses research in nutrition, economics and consumer behavior to develop a series of hands-on, interactive nutrition education lessons. Through cooking lessons, recipes, physical activities, shopping trips and other activities, participants are empowered to take charge of their lives and make informed choices for a healthier life for themselves and their families. EFNEP partners with leaders in local communities to make nutrition education available when and where it’s needed, and the program is constantly improving because we systematically follow up on the progress of our participants and the effectiveness of our programming.

These strengths, and the dedication of our faculty, staff and volunteers, are the reasons why EFNEP has been making a difference in people’s lives for the last 50 years.

Sincerely,

Nick Place
Dean and Director, UF/IFAS Extension

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In Good Health,

Karla P. Shelnutt, PhD, RD
Principal Investigator, UF/IFAS Extension EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Associate Professor and Nutrition Program Leader
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UF/IFAS Extension and FAMU EFNEP, 2018 Annual Training, Gainesville, Florida
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 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, UF/IFAS Extension 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, 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**—increase 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 were scientifically validated. 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
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Community Centers
- Emergency Food Assistance Sites
- UF/IFAS Extension Offices
- Farmers’ Markets
- Head Start Sites
- Healthcare Sites
- Libraries
- Youth Education Sites
- Public Housing
- Schools
- Shelters
- SNAP Offices
- WIC Program Sites
- Worksites
EFNEP BY THE NUMBERS

3,783 adults and 6,291 youth graduated from the EFNEP educational series


FOOD CHOICES
Statewide Problem
82% eat fewer than five fruits and vegetables per day

85% Adults
95% Youth
IMPROVED FOOD CHOICES

FOOD SECURITY
Statewide Problem
14% are food insecure

58% Adults
20% Youth
IMPROVED THEIR FOOD SECURITY
$468 = AVERAGE COST SAVINGS PER YEAR

FOOD RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
Statewide Problem
49% reported cooking five dinners a week at home

86% Adults
46% Youth
IMPROVED FOOD RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

FOOD SAFETY
Statewide Problem
17% get sick from foodborne illnesses

88% Adults
53% Youth
IMPROVED FOOD SAFETY PRACTICES

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
Statewide Problem
do not meet physical activity recommendations

86% Adults
56% Youth
IMPROVED THEIR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY LEVELS

Celebrate with Us!

On behalf of our entire EFNEP team, we are honored to have served Florida communities over many generations. We look forward to many exciting years to come!
DAD PREPARING RECIPES WITH SON

A dad of a four-year-old boy attended EFNEP classes at a job training and recovery center. At the end of series, he said, “Thanks to the things I have learned in the EFNEP classes, I am now eating better and looking at the Nutrition Facts on everything I buy.” He also said that he really enjoyed the snacks and recipes that we prepared in class each week and he is excited about making the recipes with his little boy. He said he is looking forward to the future and living a healthier lifestyle.

– Escambia County

ADAPTING TO THE U.S. WITH A HEALTHY FOCUS

An EFNEP participant shared that she developed poor eating habits following her relocation to the United States from her native country. She gained weight after eating an abundance of fast food. She did not have time to cook at home and it was much easier to go through the drive-thru for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Upon completion of EFNEP, the participant shared that she had lost some weight and has become more active. The participant stated that she loved the entire program, but her favorite lesson helped her with her time management skills. Now, she prepares her meals using the weekly grocery store flyer and she has saved money because she no longer eats fast food. She uses her EFNEP pedometer as motivation to each her 10,000 step daily goal. And most importantly, she feels better.

– Hillsborough County
SAVING MORE MONEY

A friend of an EFNEP participant shared that they had low potassium, which put him at risk for a heart attack or stroke. The EFNEP participant had recently learned to eat more fruits and vegetables so he shared this tip. Time passed and the next time the EFNEP participant saw their friend, the friend said, “My doctor told me to stop taking the medication because I am doing so well by eating a variety of fruits and vegetables. By no longer buying medication, I am saving more money to buy more of this food.” The EFNEP participant shared, “It is incredible how much we learned from EFNEP. Not only for ourselves, but you can pass the knowledge to others too.”

– Miami-Dade County

ROLE MODELING TRANSFORMS FAMILY

An EFNEP participant said at the first class, “I have a strong family history of diabetes and I am heading down the same path as my father. His foot was amputated and he eventually died from it. It is very difficult for me to monitor my eating habits to keep my sugar under control. I do not cook at home for my family and we eat out a lot. I am worried about my kids and diabetes.” During the class, she learned about the importance of eating a variety of fruits and vegetables, exercise, and using measuring cups for better portion control. She also learned that parents are to be the role models for their children. The participant was very reluctant to try some of our recipes at first. She eventually tried each one and said, “It is very good, not bad, or I could try making this at home.” Towards the end of the series, the participant stated, “I enjoy cooking and serving all kinds of different dishes now. It is amazing to see my kids are eating them too. I have learned a lot from these classes especially how to make healthier choices. This will help me to cook better for myself and my children.”

– Palm Beach County
SKEPTICAL COUPLE EATING HEALTHIER
At the first lesson of the EFNEP series, a participant and her husband hesitated about continuing to take the program, thinking it would not be beneficial for them at all. She thought she knew everything on nutrition, grocery shopping, reading labels and health management for her and her family. They decided to continue with EFNEP and at the end of the series, she was very happy with the nutritional changes and satisfied with the program experience and the knowledge gained. She said, “We have started reading labels more and eating healthier. I have been more active and have lost 20 pounds after starting this program. I went from drinking three cans of sodas a day to two a week! EFNEP is amazing!”
– Polk County

WEEKLY PHOTOS OF MEALS
An adult participant enrolled in EFNEP after attending the HOPE Helps Food Pantry resource fair. During the EFNEP series of nutrition classes, the participant emailed weekly photos of her healthier meals, demonstrating how she was already applying the EFNEP lessons. She no longer buys sugary drinks for her family and she is even motivating her church community to serve water instead of sweetened beverages at youth events. The participant shared, “I’m so glad I had the opportunity to take these EFNEP classes. I learned lots of good information, which was life changing! The best part was cooking and tasting recipes. I learned new ways to cook and healthy meal ideas. Also, the classes were fun and enjoyable.”
– Seminole County
EFNEP participants regularly supplement their diets with foods lacking nutritional quality found at pantries. Making environmental changes where participants access food offers opportunities to practice EFNEP series-based education principles. EFNEP-Engaged Pantries sought to improve client services, increase nutrient-dense items, and enhance nutrition education. EFNEP agents observed daily operations and identified appropriate interventions based on pantry needs and available evidence-based approaches. Retrospective surveys were conducted with pantry staff to examine environmental-level changes at six EFNEP education sites in Escambia and Palm Beach Counties. Interventions varied based on need. EFNEP-Engaged Pantries resulted in many environmental improvements. Increases in client services included transitioning to a choice-based shopping experience instead of receiving preselected items (50%), more cultural foods (33%), foods and materials presented in different languages (100%), and expanded referral services (e.g., WIC or SNAP) (83%). Improvements in offering healthy items included requests for healthy food drives (50%), on-site gardens (50%), and donated produce in addition to other healthy items (83%). Finally, nutrition education was enhanced with Florida-friendly and culturally diverse recipes (100%) and written education materials (83%). Support continues in the form of healthy food donations, money, and volunteer time because of the success of the program. Improving the environment of Florida pantries could lead to improved health outcomes and reduced health disparities among Florida’s most food insecure.
COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

IMPACTS

EFNEP-ENGAGED PANTRIES

“I thought fresh fruits and vegetables were too expensive, so I didn’t usually buy them. But then I started attending cooking and nutrition classes offered through a Palm Beach County food pantry, and my thinking changed. They showed me how to shop on a budget by using the weekly store flyer, using coupons and looking at unit pricing. They also made me aware of local pantries that provide fresh produce, not just shelf-stable canned items.”

– EFNEP Adult Participant in Palm Beach County

“Because of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, the clients have better access to fresh produce and nutritious foods. The food delivered in our program has helped teach the clients how to eat healthy and has improved the diets and morale of clients. The clients are learning a different way of eating. We are so grateful for all that EFNEP has done for us. We hope to continue this partnership well into the future.”

– EFNEP Partner in Escambia County
For more information about EFNEP, visit: http://efnp.ifas.ufl.edu/

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