

# Tennessee Nutrition & Consumer Education Program SNAP-Ed Executive Summary

Improving Lives of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Families 2013-2014

## The Issue

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that the average monthly participation in Tennessee for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was 1,312,505 for Federal Fiscal Year 2014 (FY 2014). For the first time in several years, this represented a 2.2 percent decrease in participation from FY 2013. The average benefit per person in the state of Tennessee was \$123.93 per month in FY 2014 and Tennessee ranked 11th among all states in the total number of individuals receiving SNAP benefits ([www.fns.usda.gov/pd/SNAPmain.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/SNAPmain.htm)). To promote improved knowledge and skills related to healthy nutrition and lifestyle choices and effective resource management, stakeholders and current literature identify the need to provide education programs for SNAP participants.



Photo courtesy USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

## Extension Response

UT Extension contracts with the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) to provide a statewide SNAP nutrition education program (SNAP-Ed) titled the Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program SNAP-Ed (TNCEP SNAP-Ed). TNCEP SNAP-Ed is a local coalition-driven program that assesses county need and coordinates local SNAP-Ed activities. The goal of TNCEP SNAP-Ed is to help low-income individuals and families reduce health risks associated with poor nutrition by gaining knowledge and skills needed to effectively use SNAP benefits and related resources.

UT Extension county agents and program assistants as well as TNCEP SNAP-Ed coalition members, partners and volunteers educate the target audiences. TNCEP SNAP-Ed activities promote eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products and leading physically active lifestyles. Educators teach food safety and resource management techniques that contribute to healthy lifestyles.

During FY 2014, TNCEP SNAP-Ed conducted a \$2.71 million nutrition education program in 81 counties. Of the total funding, \$1.14 million came from a

contractual agreement with TDHS. UT Extension agents and program assistants contributed approximately \$993,000 of time and effort for SNAP-Ed programming. County coalition partners, volunteers donated an additional \$578,000 of in-kind activities to the program.

## Economic Impact

In FY 2014, TNCEP returned cost benefits of up to \$28.8 million in reduced long-term health care costs for \$2.71 million spent. This figure is based on research indicating that for every \$1 spent in nutrition education there is a potential long-term health care cost reduction of \$10.64. (*Rajgopal, R. et al, J. Nutr. Educ. 2002; 34:26-27*)

## Education

- Extension faculty, county coalition members, and program partners conducted 5,539 teaching sessions. As a result of these classes, 207,129 direct education contacts were made with SNAP-Ed audiences.

- Educational programming occurred in 827 different locations frequented by SNAP recipients. These learning environments included schools, community centers, TDHS local offices, health departments, child care centers, elderly service centers, family resource centers, and public housing sites.
- TNCEP educational exhibits were presented at 938 different events to provide indirect education to 59,409 community members.
- Through social marketing and mass media, 647,464 indirect contacts were made with Tennesseans. Although all contacts made through these point-of-delivery methods were not SNAP recipients, the key nutrition messages were targeted for SNAP-Ed audiences.



Photo courtesy USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

## Program Participants are Making a Change

Evaluation of SNAP-Ed participants in our program revealed that as a result of a series of TNCEP education lessons, the clients reported (*n* = number of evaluations):

- 66 percent increased their consumption of vegetables. (n = 5,392)
- 72 percent increased their consumption of fruits. (n = 5,392)
- 79 percent increased their consumption of whole grains. (n = 2,223)
- 71 percent increased their intake of fat-free or low-fat dairy products. (n = 4,864)
- 74 percent reported selecting foods and beverages that promote healthy weight. (n = 6,008)
- 74 percent adopted healthier lifestyles by increasing their physical activity. (n = 6,008)
- 90 percent of youth and 93 percent of adults washed their hands more often. (n = 14,296; 3,032)
- 81 percent improved at least one practice related to food safety and food storage (n = 9,408)

## TNCEP SNAP-Ed Connects Statewide

- TNCEP programming is planned at the local level by county coalitions. During FY 2014, 716 coalition

members were involved in county-level education and needs assessment. These coalition members represented many different organizations including local and state government agencies, education programs, community organizations, businesses, Extension faculty, and SNAP recipients.

- Through matching partner participation, 1,460 partners and volunteers contributed 17,805 hours to TNCEP nutrition education. Additional contributions totaling more than \$55,610 were made through use of public spaces and cash donations directly to county TNCEP programs.

For nutrition resources and program information, visit [ag.tennessee.edu/fcs/Pages/Food/TNCEP.aspx](http://ag.tennessee.edu/fcs/Pages/Food/TNCEP.aspx).

For more TNCEP program information, contact:

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