

Tennessee Nutrition & Consumer Education Program Executive Summary

Improving Lives of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Families

2011-2012

State of Affairs

The Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) reported that 1,342,885 individuals in our state received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps) benefits in July 2012. This figure marks a 5 percent increase in participation from July 2011. The average SNAP benefit per person in the state of Tennessee was \$133.82 per month and Tennessee ranked 11th among all states in the total number of individuals receiving SNAP benefits. (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/SNAP-main.htm>)

Extension Response

The goal of the Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program (TNCEP) is to help SNAP recipients and other low-income individuals and families gain the knowledge and skills needed to effectively use SNAP benefits and related resources in order to reduce the risk of inadequate nutrition. This goal is accomplished through direct nutrition education that promotes eating more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products and leading physically active lifestyles. We teach food safety and resource management techniques that contribute to selecting healthy lifestyles.

During 2012, TNCEP conducted a \$3.08 million nutrition education program in 80 counties. In spite of the increased numbers in SNAP participants, TNCEP was faced with a significant funding reduction from the previous year as a result of passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. We received only 32 percent of prior federal dollars and had to reduce nutrition education staff positions across the state. Although this reduction presented many challenges, UT Extension

agents, program assistants, coalition members, TNCEP partners and volunteers continued their efforts to educate the target audience. Of the total funding, \$1.03 million was provided through contractual agreement with the TDHS and the U.S. Department of Agriculture SNAP. County TNCEP coalition partners and city, state and county employees donated \$798,000 of in-kind match to provide nutrition education to SNAP qualified audiences. UT Extension agents and program assistants contributed \$1.25 million of in-kind contributions.

Economic Impact

TNCEP returns benefits of \$32.8 million in reduced long-term health care costs for \$3.08 million spent in federal fiscal year 2012.

Education

- Extension faculty, county coalition members and program partners conducted 8,124 teaching sessions. As a result of these classes, 251,328 direct education contacts were made with SNAP recipients and eligibles.



- Educational programming occurred in 1,033 different locations frequented by SNAP recipients. These learning environments included schools, community centers, TDHS offices, health departments, child care centers, elderly service centers, family resource centers and public housing sites.
- TNCEP educational exhibits were presented at 1,021 different events to provide indirect education to 1,057,129 community members.
- Through social marketing and mass media, 3,635,644 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 recipient and eligible audiences.
- Extension specialists maintained links for nutrition and health-related subject matters as part of the UT Extension website. Topics pertinent to TNCEP audiences were identified to assist educators accessing research-based nutrition and health information and resources.

Program Participants are Making a Change

Evaluation of clients participating in our program revealed that as a result of a series of TNCEP education lessons (n = number of evaluations):

- 83 percent increased their consumption of fruits. (n = 31,583)
- 80 percent increased their consumption of vegetables. (n = 31,583)
- 80 percent adopted healthier lifestyles by increasing their physical activity. (n = 28,848)
- 87 percent of youth and 91 percent of adults washed their hands more often. (n = 37,722; 9,609)
- 70 percent increased their consumption of whole grains. (n = 27,248)
- 72 percent increased their intake of fat-free or low-fat dairy products. (n = 28,669)
- 78 percent took steps to achieve or maintain a healthy weight for themselves. (n = 21,501)
- 82 percent demonstrated improved practices related to food safety and food storage (n = 40,607)



TNCEP Connects Statewide

- TNCEP programming is planned at the local level by county coalitions. During the 2011-2012 program year, 947 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, 2,250 partners and volunteers contributed 25,503 hours to TNCEP nutrition education. Additional contributions were made through use of public spaces and cash donations directly to county programs.

For nutrition resources and program information, visit our website, <http://fcs.tennessee.edu/tncep>.

For more program information, contact:

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