

Tennessee Nutrition & Consumer Education Program Executive Summary

Improving Lives of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Families

2012-2013

State of Affairs

The U.S. Department of Agriculture reported participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Tennessee averaged 1,316,810 per month for fiscal year 2012. This figure represented a 3.2 percent increase in participation from fiscal year 2011. The average benefit per person in the state of Tennessee was \$132.20 per month in fiscal year 2012, and Tennessee ranked 11th among all states in the total number of individuals receiving SNAP benefits (<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.

Extension Response

UT Extension contracts with the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) to provide a statewide SNAP nutrition education program (SNAP-Ed), called the Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program (TNCEP). TNCEP is a local coalition-driven program that assesses county need and coordinates local SNAP-Ed activities. The goal of TNCEP 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 coalition members, partners and volunteers educate the target SNAP-Ed audiences. TNCEP 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 fiscal year 2013, TNCEP conducted a \$2.7 million nutrition education program in 79 counties. Of the total funding, \$1.01 million came from contractual agreement with TDHS. UT Extension agents and program assistants contributed approximately \$936,000 of time and effort for SNAP-Ed programming. County TNCEP coalition partners, volunteers, and city, state and county employees donated an additional \$749,000 of in-kind activities to the program.

Economic Impact

In fiscal year 2013, TNCEP returned cost benefits of up to \$28.7 million in reduced long-term health care costs for \$2.7 million spent. These figures are 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 9,665 teaching sessions in fiscal year 2013. As a result of these classes, 234,009 direct education contacts were made with SNAP-Ed audiences.

- Educational programming occurred in 931 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 2,143 different events to provide indirect education to 133,650 community members.
- Through social marketing and mass media, 3,996,316 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.
- Extension specialists maintained links for nutrition and health-related subject matter as part of the UT Extension website. Topics important to TNCEP audiences were identified, and evidence-based nutrition and health information and resources for educators were provided.

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 the following (n=number of evaluations):

- 79 percent increased their consumption of vegetables. (n=21,823)
- 77 percent increased their consumption of fruits. (n=9,082)
- 71 percent increased their consumption of whole grains. (n=9,307)
- 78 percent increased their intake of fat-free or low-fat dairy products. (n=13,111)
- 78 percent reported selecting foods and beverages that promote healthy weight. (n=9,768)
- 87 percent adopted healthier lifestyles by increasing their physical activity. (n=11,720)
- 86 percent of youth and 92 percent of adults washed their hands more often. (n=17,662; 5,011)

- 76 percent improved at least one practice related to food safety and food storage. (n = 17,651)

TNCEP Connects Statewide

- TNCEP programming is planned at the local level by county coalitions. During fiscal year 2013, 792 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, 2,127 partners and volunteers contributed 22,962 hours to TNCEP nutrition education. Additional contributions totaling more than \$74,000 were made through the use of public spaces and cash donations directly to county TNCEP programs.

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

For more TNCEP program information, contact:

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The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more about SNAP or to apply for benefits, contact your local Tennessee Department of Human Services office, visit the website (<http://www.tn.gov/foodstamps>) or call toll-free: 1-866-311-4287.

This Family & Consumer Sciences Department project is funded under agreement with the Tennessee Department of Human Services and the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

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Visit the UT Extension website at <https://utextension.tennessee.edu>.

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