

A vibrant collage of fresh fruits and vegetables, including tomatoes, lettuce, broccoli, and potatoes, arranged in a diamond shape. In the center, two young children are smiling and eating, with a girl holding an orange and a boy holding a tomato. The background is a mix of various produce items, creating a rich, colorful texture.

2023 IMPACTS

EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM (EFNEP)

IMPROVING NUTRITIONAL SECURITY THROUGH EDUCATION

A MESSAGE FROM EFNEP

For more than a half century, the **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** – “the People’s Department” – has funded **nutrition education** designed to improve safe food handling and preparation, as well as the nutritional health and well-being of the population. **The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)**, the nation’s first federal nutrition education program for low-income families and youths, remains at the forefront of providing nutrition education to improve the lives of historically underserved populations.

Funded through the **National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)**, EFNEP has a critical role in accelerating the **USDA’s four-pillar approach to Tackle Food and Nutrition Insecurity**, one of the Department’s current core priorities. EFNEP also aligns with the historic **White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition and Health** and corresponding National Strategy, both of which aim to end hunger, improve nutrition and physical activity, and reduce diet-related diseases and disparities. EFNEP is grounded in the latest version of the **Dietary Guidelines for Americans** and incorporates **MyPlate** into teaching activities. In addition, EFNEP has increasingly worked on **reducing food loss and waste**, another department-wide and national priority.

EFNEP is conducted by the **Cooperative Extension System** through Land-grant Universities in all U.S. states and territories and the District of Columbia. EFNEP is content- and relationship-based, learner-centered, culturally relevant and dynamic. Respect for lived experience is a core value of EFNEP. This is demonstrated by the vital role of peer educators and adaptation of content and methods to embrace differences in foods, learning styles, eating practices, languages, and family and community dynamics of those participating. Attention is also given to food costs and to the shopping, preparation, safety and storage of foods. This model supports program participants’ efforts toward self-sufficiency and nutritional health and well-being and improvements in organizational and community policies, systems and environments through its Cooperative Extension connections.

Since 1969, EFNEP has reached more than 35.5 million low-income families and youths. Consistently, more than half of EFNEP participants are people of color and/or Hispanic ethnicity - 72% of adults and 68% of youths/children in FY 2023. In recent years, EFNEP has also experienced an increase in refugee and immigrant participation.

EFNEP contributes to food and nutrition security as program families and youths gain knowledge and skills for healthier food and physical activity choices, increased food resource management (e.g. shopping and food preparation), food safety, and improved food security practices to keep healthy in challenging times. Consistent with previous years, adult and youth participants in FY 2023 reported improved behaviors following program involvement. Indeed, more than 96% of adult EFNEP participants reported improvement in what they ate.

National EFNEP priorities for FY 2023 included facilitating workforce development, increasing program reach and increasing appropriate use of technology in teaching. To reach these goals, USDA NIFA leadership hosted a successful two-year, six-session training series for all program coordinators nationwide. This timely series helped offset COVID-19 pandemic effects, such as program disruptions, staff burnout and changes in programmatic leadership. Program participation for both adults and youths continued to increase, although not to pre-pandemic levels. Universities increased their use of technology in program delivery, and several began applying a recently developed direct data app that allows participants to enter some of their own data. Universities also increased their reach to older youths in grades 6-12, as well as young adult populations.

This report reflects how EFNEP continues to make a difference in the lives of low-income families and youths, even and especially in times of adversity.

Signed,



Helen Chipman

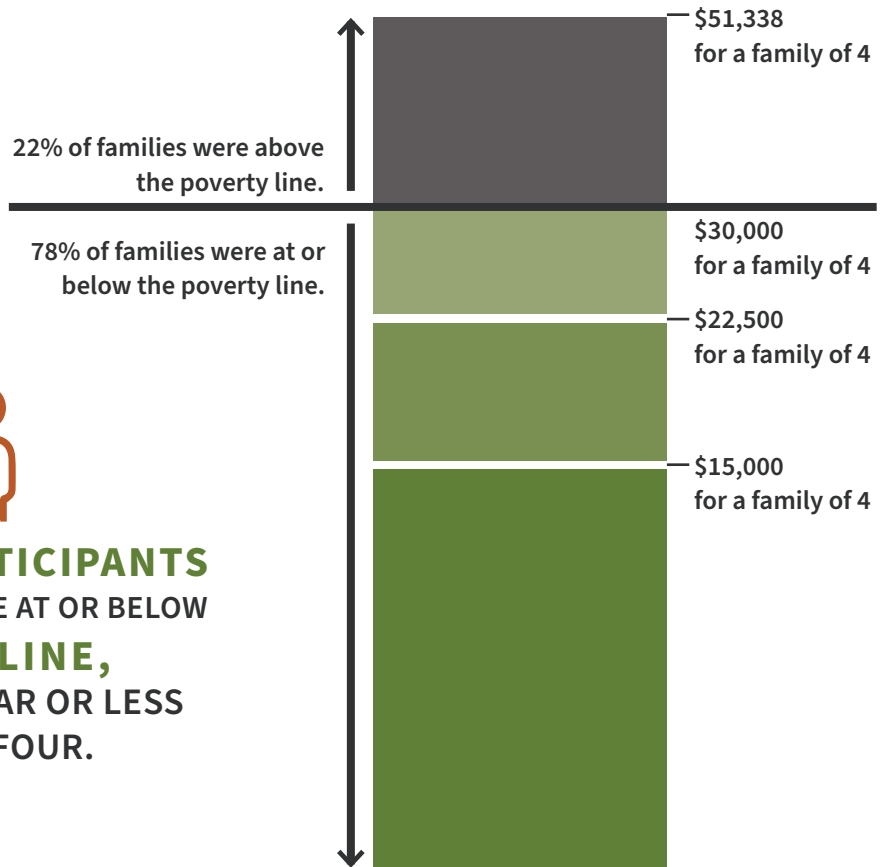
National Program Leader, Food and Nutrition Education

IMPROVING LIVES

>>>>>> REACHING LOW-INCOME FAMILIES



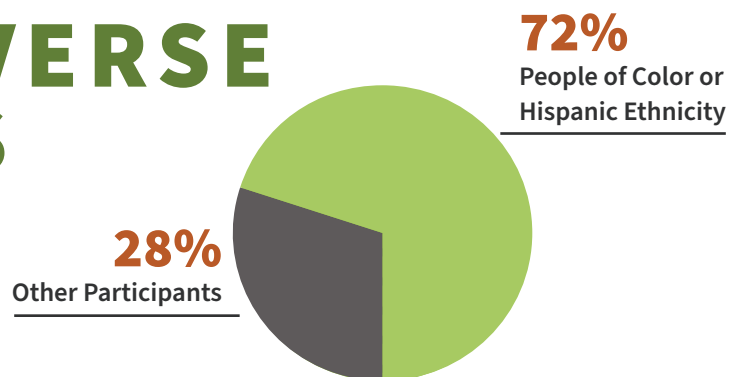
78% OF EFNEP PARTICIPANTS WHO REPORTED INCOME ARE AT OR BELOW THE POVERTY LINE, EARNING \$30,000 A YEAR OR LESS FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR.



In 2023, NIFA received \$70 million for Land-grant University Cooperative Extension partners to conduct EFNEP in all 50 states, six U.S. territories and the District of Columbia. EFNEP employed 1,237 educators who are members of the communities they serve. In turn, EFNEP educators worked directly with 50,649 adults and 204,222 youths. These educators tailored lessons on diet quality and physical activity, food resource management, food safety and food security to meet the specific needs of their respective program participants. Total participation increased slightly as universities and communities continued to adapt to a changed environment resulting from the global pandemic of the two previous years.

REACHING DIVERSE POPULATIONS

The majority of EFNEP adults are from historically underserved populations. An increasing trend is programming to refugee and immigrant populations.

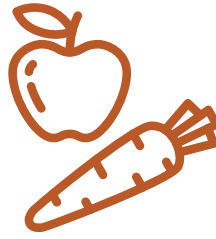


SAVING MONEY

EFNEP graduates reported a collective food cost savings of

\$639,678.92

IMPROVING DIETS

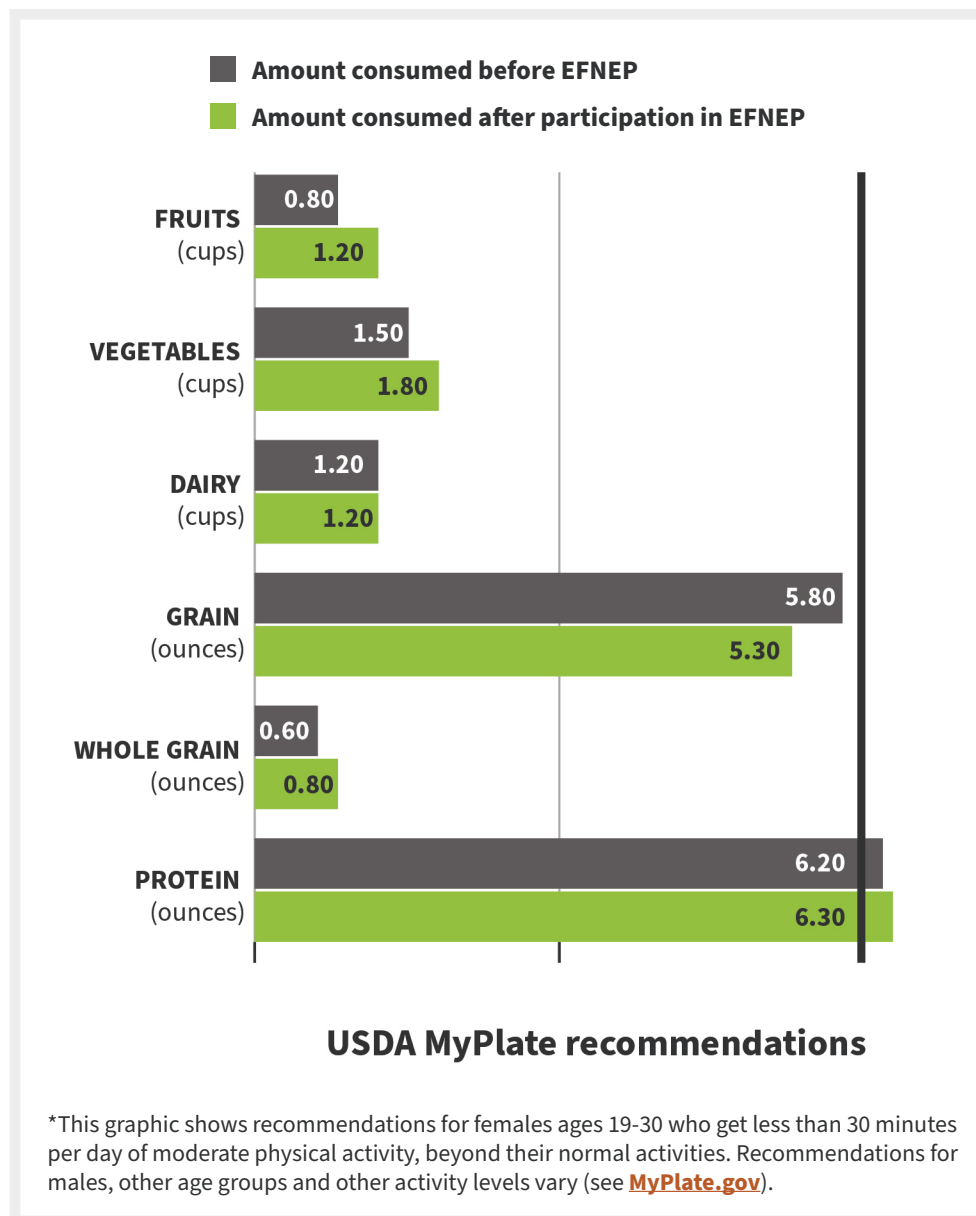


96% OF ADULTS

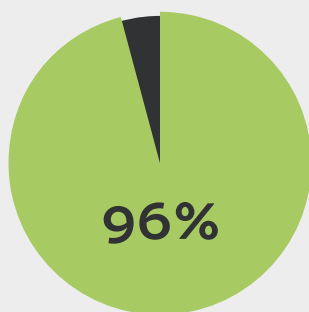
improved their diet, including consuming additional fruits and vegetables.

DEMONSTRATING RESULTS

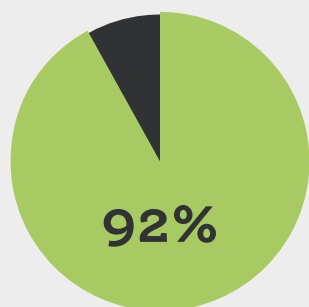
Data reported through diet recalls shows that EFNEP graduates eat more closely to MyPlate.gov recommendations. The data also shows there is still a need for nutrition education.



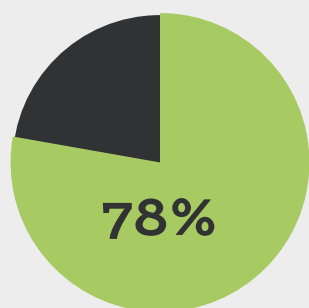
CHANGING ADULT BEHAVIOR



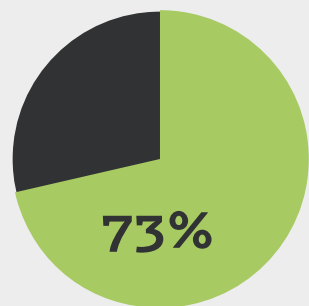
Percentage of adults improving diet quality practices



Percentage of adults improving food resource management practices

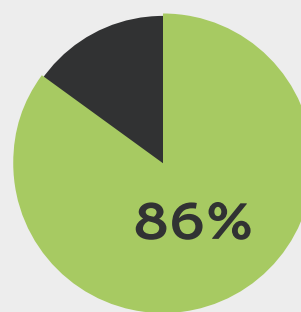


Percentage of adults improving food safety practices

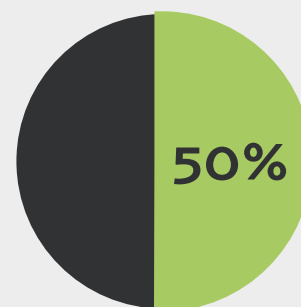


Percentage of adults improving physical activity practices

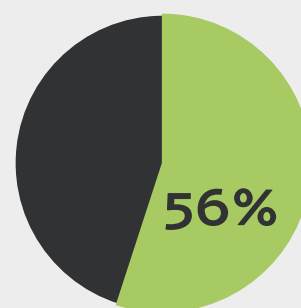
INFLUENCING YOUTHS



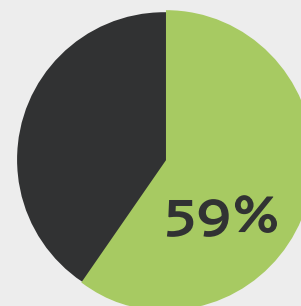
Percentage of youths increasing knowledge or ability to choose healthy foods



Percentage of youths increasing knowledge or ability to prepare low-cost, nutritious foods



Percentage of youths improving food safety and preparation knowledge or practices



Percentage of youths improving physical activity knowledge or practices

SHARED STORIES >>>>>>

Climate change, lack of affordable food and rapid urbanization have all been attributed to food and nutrition insecurity in Micronesia. One extended family found that the husband's low daily wage was insufficient to meet the needs of the family, who were surviving on imported chicken and rice. They found that nutritious vegetables were unaffordable. Through EFNEP, the wife learned to prepare nutritious meals and to incorporate locally available vegetables into family meals. She even received an award at the state's annual food fair for the best healthy recipe.

COLLEGE OF MICRONESIA

One food pantry client was referred to EFNEP when it was discovered that she was not choosing meat because it was outdated and she would have to throw it away. After being taught food safety principles through EFNEP, she realized that she did not need to throw away the frozen meat. As a result of what she learned, the pantry client reported being more food secure.

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

A grandmother with diabetes participated in EFNEP while her grandson was in preschool. She shared how she'd had no restrictions on the types of food she consumed – sugar-laden drinks, candies and sugar-infused bread were common in her diet. Her medication dosage had to be increased due to alarmingly high sugar levels. Through EFNEP, she began eating a greater variety of vegetables at mealtime and opted for healthier snacks. She learned that “maintaining a healthy and balanced diet does not require extravagant expenditures.” She further observed a significant reduction in food waste within her household as a result of her newfound knowledge. Her next goal is to involve her husband and grandson in increasing their physical activity.

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

In Davidson County, Tennessee, the EFNEP peer educator partners with a nonprofit organization that provides services to refugees and immigrants. She taught 17 Spanish speakers and five Arabic speakers in her first class using flipcharts, pictures and language assistance from interpreters. The partnership has since expanded to include a regular series of EFNEP classes to participants who attend English as a Second Language classes. This program has helped expand materials offered in additional languages. University of Tennessee EFNEP has been offering materials in Spanish for several years but has expanded materials offered in Arabic, which is one of the top languages spoken in the state.

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

A family signed up for EFNEP as they wanted to learn together. Prior to the classes, the family's diet was high in sugar, they didn't know how to balance their meals, and meat was left out of the refrigerator to thaw. After participating in EFNEP, the father decreased his soda intake from two cans per day to only occasionally. He now adds vegetables to the meals when he cooks. The family eats more balanced meals and the father has lost 10 pounds. The family goes grocery shopping together, and the oldest son is learning to read food labels and pay attention to the ingredients.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

SHARED STORIES >>>>>>

Extending EFNEP's reach to more older youths has been a national EFNEP priority for the last four years. At a high school in Alaska, several students became very interested in cooking. They worked with their parents to learn how to cook, and some even did the shopping. They now help cook meals at home, including meal planning and shopping.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA - FAIRBANKS

EFNEP was offered as a six-week after-school youth program for eligible youths in grades K-8 in partnership with the James River Valley Library System. The variety of ages allowed for different youths to assist with different aspects of recipes based on complexity and practice teamwork and to showcase skills at the end of the class. Family members had the opportunity to learn more about healthy eating and MyPlate through games and to sample recipes the youths prepared in class. Participating youths shared that they are now eating more fruit, vegetables, dairy products/calcium-rich foods and whole grains; asking questions about food; offering help with food preparation; trying new foods; and asking for healthful snacks. Parents reported: "My children loved everything about this class, and are helping now at home preparing snacks;" "She loved learning how to use the kitchen utensils;" "She loves making and trying snacks/foods;" and "We have a large family, the tasting event introduced our family to great new recipes that we are using in our menu planning regularly."

NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Students at an alternative high school in Rock County gave examples of what they would do differently after participating in EFNEP for six weeks. Examples were to wash produce before consuming it; look at nutrition fact labels more often; increase the amounts of fruits and vegetables they eat; try new foods; follow directions on a recipe; make their own salsa; and taste food first and add salt only if needed. Following EFNEP, they partnered with 4-H to create a web-based resource and QR code sticker that could be placed on grocery gift cards to share their learnings in words and images in ways that speak directly to other teenagers.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

In a rural Georgia community with a high at-risk population, a high school teacher reached out for assistance with life skill development and nutrition education. Together, she and the EFNEP peer educator established a welcoming, safe and engaging atmosphere. The school administration became supportive and is now considering how to have EFNEP regularly available for their students. The teacher shared, "The peer educator has added just what our youths needed, to see a peer talking about healthier choices and providing them with options. Many have started to eat breakfast, which I can see has improved their attention span in class and their overall attitude."

UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

After teaching students MyPlate and how to incorporate physical activity into their daily routines at a local church in rural Louisiana, one EFNEP peer educator was thrilled to learn that the students had created two baseball teams and played against each other in the afternoons and on weekends.

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

For more information, visit [NIFA.USDA.GOV/EFNEP](https://nifa.usda.gov/efnep) or contact helen.chipman@usda.gov.