



Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

# EFNEP

- Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education program (EFNEP) is a unique program that currently operates in 781 counties throughout the 50 states and in the territories of American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. It is designed to assist low-income audiences in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behavior necessary for nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well-being.

EFNEP targets two primary audiences: low-income youth and low-income families with young children. In Fiscal Year 1999, EFNEP reached 450,655 youth and 183,624 adults; approximately 671,782 family members were indirectly reached through the adult participant.

## Who Are EFNEP Families?

- 76% of EFNEP families are enrolled in one or more food assistance programs.
- 36% of the enrolled families have income at or below 50% of the poverty level.
- As shown in figure 1, 64% of the families are from minority groups.

## How Is EFNEP Taught?

EFNEP is delivered as a series of lessons, often over several months, by paraprofessionals and volunteers, many of whom are indigenous to the target population.

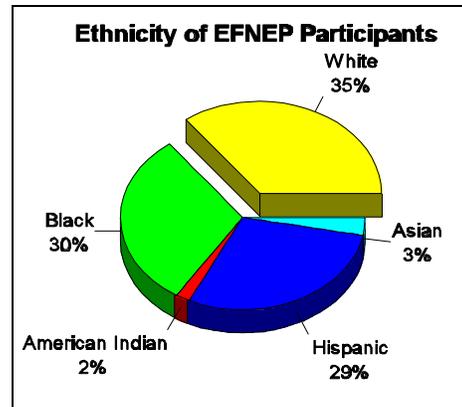


Figure 1

The hands-on, learn-by-doing approach allows the participants to gain the practical skills necessary to make positive behavior changes. In 1999, 2,698 paraprofessionals along with 41,138 volunteers delivered an average of 10 lessons to EFNEP participants with 62% of them completing the program, and 23% continuing the program in the year 2000. Through EFNEP, participants learn self-worth **C** that they have something to offer their families and society.

## How Are Accomplishments Measured?

Data from the EFNEP Evaluation/Reporting System is used to measure food practice improvement and dietary improvements. Ten key food-related practices were measured at entry into EFNEP and upon graduation. These behavior changes translate into significant improvements in daily living skills.

Results measured from 68,816 participants show that:

- 83% improved in one or more food resource management practices (i.e., plans meals, compares prices, does not run out of food or uses grocery lists);
- 87% improved in one or more nutrition practices (i.e., plans meals, makes healthy food choices, prepares foods without adding salt, reads nutrition labels or has children eat breakfast);
- 65% improved in one or more of the food safety practices (i.e. thawing and storing foods properly).

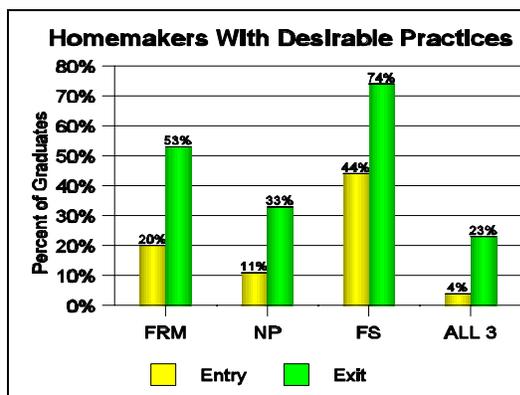


Figure 2

As figure 2 indicates, when participants first enrolled in the program, only 4% followed the acceptable practices for all indicators. At the end of the program, 23% had achieved this goal. These practices were measured based on entry and exit assessment of four indicators of Food Resource Management (FRM), five indicators of Nutrition Practices (NP), and two indicators of Food Safety (FS).

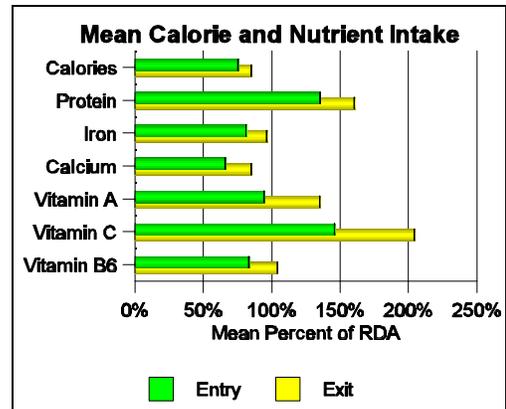


Figure 3

The dietary intake of six key nutrients that are often limited in the diets of low-income audiences: protein, iron, calcium, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, and Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> are also measured. As figure 3 illustrates, as a result of participation in EFNEP, intake levels for each nutrient increased.

There were also substantial improvements in the intake of food to meet the recommendations of the Food Guide Pyramid. At entry, only 18.4% of the 86,356 participants measured, had a diet that provided even half the recommended number of servings of breads and cereals and at least one serving from each of the other food groups. At exit, 44% of the participants had achieved this minimal level of intake. Ninety-one point nine percent (91.9%) showed positive change in any food group at exit.

*To learn more about EFNEP click on [www.reeusda.gov/4h/efnep/home.htm](http://www.reeusda.gov/4h/efnep/home.htm), or contact the federal office at 202-720-6079.*

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