EFNEP Policy: Use of Contemporary Technology in Conjunction with the Paraprofessional Model – Supporting Documentation, June 2017

This document supplements the EFNEP Technology Policy, June 2010. Jennifer McCaffrey, University of Illinois; Lisa Martin, Kansas State University; Austin Brooks, Virginia Tech, and Emily Foley, North Carolina State University, contributed substantively to its development. For questions, contact Helen Chipman, National Program Leader, Food and Nutrition Education, hchipman@nifa.usda.gov; or Mallory Koenings, Interim National EFNEP Coordinator, mallory.koenings@nifa.ugsda.gov

I.   A Spectrum of Possibilities

Decisions about how to incorporate contemporary technology into EFNEP should be carefully made. To assist in that process, potential options have been ranked as low, medium, and high implementation, depending on current programming, resources available, and staff training and oversight needed for success. Having a range of options allows universities with different resources and interests a way to incorporate technology into programming in a flexible manner. For example, universities that offer conventional programs or have limited staff resources may prefer to adopt one or two low implementation strategies, such as using text message reminders for upcoming classes to improve graduation rates or demonstrating different website resources in lessons to support behavior change. Universities that currently use social media or have technology initiatives underway may wish to scale up their implementation over time as staff become more comfortable utilizing these strategies. Some universities may wish to pilot high implementation strategies to develop a body of evidence for using contemporary technology in nutrition education for limited resource populations. Or, they may wish to collaborate to develop and test new technologies, such as a smartphone application or "app" for EFNEP.

Medium and high implementation strategies need to be tested to determine how well they work in conjunction with conventional approaches. Also, they need to be tested to determine if they meet the needs of states who wish to serve potential participants in remote locations.

Medium and high implementation approaches must align with or be incorporated into work underway by the EFNEP Technology Workgroup. High implementation strategies must be pre-approved by the EFNEP National Office. Depending on the intervention planned, non-EFNEP funds must be used. EFNEP funds cannot be used for research.

<u>**Examples of Low Implementation Approaches**</u> – Can implement immediately with existing resources
- Demonstration of technology/social media resources in lessons
    - Existing resources, such as MyPlate SuperTracker from the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, and videos created by reputable sources, such as other Cooperative Extension programs
    - "Media Moments" in lessons - visiting website, trying a recipe from a video, posting pictures, and connecting with social media
    - Interactive searches using smart phones
- Email/text message reminders for lessons to increase retention
- Email/text message challenges or requests to reinforce learning concepts between lessons to foster engagement, interactivity and practice of new skills, and to meet SMART goals
- Integrating existing apps, such as WIC Shopper and Cooking Matters Apps, into lessons where appropriate

<u>**Examples of Medium Implementation Approaches**</u> – Requires training, resources, guidance, and personnel to implement

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- Online make-up lessons to improve graduation rates
- Social media engagement to reinforce learning concepts
- Social media to reach and recruit new audiences
- Social media for reviews and post-graduation follow up
- Enhanced learning strategies using social media and interactive technology, such as videos, quizzes, games, and apps

Examples of High Implementation Approaches – Requires additional training and skills, more hands-on involvement, multiple steps to implement, considerable time and resources, and potentially multiple people to implement
- New video content to reinforce learning concepts or support online success stories
- Blended lessons – in person and online lessons to reach new audiences and improve graduation rates
- Interactive online lessons with built-in quizzes and hands-on activities, such as EatFresh.org
- Online group meetings using social media, such as Facebook Live and Google Hangouts, and other technology, such as online chats

Contemporary technology can also be used effectively to help other audiences and stakeholders learn about EFNEP and to highlight programmatic success on NIFA and partner websites and social media postings. Examples include NIFA's Twitter account - #NIFAimpacts, visual and oral success stories that highlight program benefits and impacts, and videos of EFNEP participants' class experience.

II. Points of Programmatic Placement

Contemporary technology can be incorporated into EFNEP before, during, and after participation in EFNEP, as reflected below and illustrated graphically. See *EFNEP Technology Concept Map*.

Before Enrollment
- Recruitment – Social media can provide a vital opportunity for recruiting new participants to EFNEP. Participants can be introduced by former program participants who "share" program activities with friends and followers. They can also obtain EFNEP class information through social media search or "Event" features.

During Enrollment – Combining in-person lessons with technology driven lessons and activities
- Enhanced Learning and Engagement Strategies in Class – Contemporary technology approaches can be used in class to engage participants' different learning styles. Videos, websites, and apps can be used to engage clients as part of in-person classes. Use of photography on social media and showing participants different social media sites may lead into longer term engagement.

- Enhance Learning and Engagement Strategies out of Class – Social media and other technology can be used to reach participants when they are not physically in an EFNEP class. Participants can read, respond to, and share social media posts. This can keep them interacting with EFNEP on a daily basis and continue learning throughout the series. Technology can be used to send reminder text messages of upcoming classes or send a short health message. Technology can also be in the form of videos for enhanced or additional learning on a topic and can be sent to participants or posted on social media.

- Make-up lessons – These lessons are technology-driven and provide participants an easier way to graduate when participants are unable to finish face-to-face with the rest of their class. Integrity of EFNEP is maintained. Graduation rates may increase.

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- Blended lessons – In a blended series of lessons, the use of in-person and technology-driven lessons are planned to complement the activities of both and provide an easier path to graduation. Some lessons are taught face-to-face and some through an online or other technological format. Integrity of EFNEP is maintained and flexibility is given to address barriers that some participants and community partners may have, such as time, transportation, and childcare constraints.

Following Enrollment

- Post-Graduation – Contemporary technology can help EFNEP stay in touch with former participants to facilitate continued learning, enhance or sustain behavior change over time, and increase opportunities for follow-up evaluation to look at long term changes. Participants that have been involved in an online group may wish to remain as an online group, which may result in increased social support, networking, and the development of social capital. EFNEP staff would not be involved in maintaining such groups. Former participants may also be encouraged to connect with other online communities for further engagement on topics that were introduced through EFNEP or be included on a public group for general EFNEP posts.

III.   Additional Details for Use of Technology Strategies

Essential elements that apply regardless of methods used
- Targets EFNEP Audiences
  - Must follow the national EFNEP Policy Document (Audiences section).
  - Recruitment efforts should be through in-person contacts, participant and partner agency referrals, and use of audience specific targeting tools that may be available in some social media channels.

- Content
  - Must be of similar quality, accuracy, and appropriateness as other EFNEP resources. Careful oversight will be required by program coordinators and supervisors to ensure appropriateness of content and use of time, and avoidance of web surfing.
  - Special care should be given to avoid anything that is crude, derogatory, or offensive and to quickly remove such content when posted by others.
  - Users and contributors should always consider how they would respond if social media or other contemporary technology communications were delivered face-to-face. They are never anonymous.
  - Users and contributors should be especially mindful of quality, appearance, accuracy, and tone. Once online, information can take on a life of its own.

- Dosage
  - Must maintain or increase current dosage where current dosage is less than 10 hours for adults and 6 hours for youth. Dosage is measured as time spent interacting with participants.

- Privacy, Confidentiality, and Security
  - Must be especially vigilant in protecting the privacy of the EFNEP audience which, as low-income families, youth, and children, are particularly vulnerable.

- o Must follow USDA and university media release guidelines for photos, videos, and participants' posts, pictures, and voices (See USDA's Privacy Policy linked to MyPlate SuperTracker).
  - o Must follow any additional university policies relating to privacy, security, and technology – including social media.
  - o Participants must always opt in, i.e. must choose to interact rather than be added automatically by EFNEP program staff.

- • Security and Quality Control
  - o Supervisory and university EFNEP leadership are responsible for carefully monitoring content and for balancing the use of contemporary technology with paraprofessional face-to-face interactions to ensure that program fidelity, integrity, quality, and success are maintained or improved.
    - ▪ State program leadership and supervisors are responsible and have final approval of methods and content used within their respective states.
    - ▪ State program leadership and supervisors are responsible for determining and monitoring appropriateness of program time spent in person and virtually.
    - ▪ Supervisors should observe and monitor peer educator interactions and use of technology to ensure compliance with NIFA and university policies, and with content, time spent, resources used, audience, and other program elements.
    - ▪ Systems are to be established to record completion of hours participants spend receiving information through technology.

- • Evaluation and Reporting (under development)
  - o Programming must continue to demonstrate high levels of change by participants. If behavior change indicators drop by 3-5% in a single year or incrementally over several years, action should be taken to assess the cause, make corrections, and provide additional training. If behavior change indicators drop by more than 5% in a single year, universities should consider using lower level implementation strategies or returning to 100% direct teaching until a potentially more effective contemporary technology plan can be developed.
  - o Outcomes will be measured using existing WebNEERS data collection methods. New methods will be developed, as needed, including the specification of subgroup codes and filters to designate participants receiving technologically enhanced lessons. Universities are encouraged to use existing WebNEERS filters and subgroups options and to report on enhanced use of contemporary technology in their annual updates, as appropriate to their plans, until new processes are in place.
  - o Formative and process evaluations of using contemporary technology methods will be important to capture to help inform national program development and reporting. End goals would be:
    - ▪ Increase recruitment or graduation (primary goal, essential; outcome)
    - ▪ Positive health behavior change (primary goal, essential; outcome) (secondary goal to increase self-efficacy, not essential; outcome)
    - ▪ Facilitate participant social support networks after graduation (secondary goal, not essential; outcome)
    - ▪ Engage/learner-centered learning environment (process)
    - ▪ Reach EFNEP audiences that are underserved or hard to reach (process)
    - ▪ Develop social support and empower participants (process)

Specific requirements for blended learning approaches
- This strategy maintains EFNEP's peer educator, interactive/learner-centered, food experiences, social support, and trusted relationship approach. It *MUST* include a combination of in-person and virtual learning experiences with the emphasis on in-person.
  - Dosage – up to four hours AND no more than one third of lessons can be delivered through technology
  - Online learning should supplement face-to-face lessons and increase dosage when possible
- Outcomes should be equal or better than all in-person outcomes, as measured by existing evaluation protocols (WebNEERS). Online learning evaluation should also include progress towards end goals, such as increased enrollment, increased dosage, and/or increased graduation rates.
- Content and activities must align with the USDA/DHHS Dietary Guidelines, HHS Physical Activity Guidelines and USDA's Food Guidance System (MyPlate and similar resources). Technological approaches should enhance or align with evidence-based curricula used for face-to-face programming.
- Technology based lessons should follow evidenced based practices when available, and should align with the work of EFNEP's technology workgroup, when not available.
- Required lesson components for technology based approaches include:
  - Educational content to meet learning objectives;
  - Recipe;
  - Physical activity;
  - Learner centered application using adult learning theory and principles;
  - Educational content that addresses one or more of the core areas of EFNEP – Diet Quality and Physical Activity, Food Resource Management, Food Safety, and Food Security;
  - Paraprofessional interaction, through content delivery, video chat or chat box; and
  - Differentiation from other online nutrition education (ex: WIC or SNAP-Ed).
  - Interaction with other participants is recommended, but not required.

IV.   Acknowledgments
Special thanks is given to two national EFNEP workgroups – the Social Media Workgroup and Technology Initiative Workgroup, who joined forces to inform the development of these policy resources. These workgroups have combined into the EFNEP Technology Workgroup.

As resources allow, research in using contemporary technology in EFNEP will continue. The EFNEP Technology Workgroup will continue to research, assess, plan, develop, implement, and evaluate contemporary technology strategies that can be integrated with the peer-to-peer hands-on teaching and role-modeling that maintains program integrity and that results in outcomes that are as good as or better than current programming.

APPENDICES

I.   Examples, Including References (To be updated periodically)

Note: the mention of specific technologies and social media channels are given as examples. They do not represent endorsements or recommendations.

Before Enrollment
- Use of social media to enhance EFNEP recruitment efforts
  - Targeted recruitment on social media channels (example: Facebook). EFNEP funds cannot be used for paid targeting
    - Lohse B. *Facebook is an effective strategy to recruit low-income women to online nutrition education.* J Nutr Educ Behav. 2013 Jan-Feb;45(1):69-76. doi: 10.1016/j.jneb.2012.06.006.
  - Recruitment posts/event postings on social media channels by paraprofessionals for upcoming classes
  - Referrals to an EFNEP online network, including:
    - Reviews of programs by previous participants
    - Sharing EFNEP posts by participants
    - Direct messaging with persons interested in EFNEP
- Flyers and/or electronic newsletters with links to:
  - Past participant reviews
  - Success stories
  - Class previews (examples: videos and podcasts)

During Enrollment
- <u>Enhancement Strategies in or out of Class</u>
  - Videos
  - Online games, quizzes, and challenges
  - Blog posts on lesson topics with discussion encouraged in the comments
  - Behavior change strategies practiced at home and results posted to closed social media channels
  - Apps on nutrition, physical activity, food resource management, food safety, and food security topics
  - Discussions using closed social media platforms
  - Interactive polls and activities during classes
  - Nutrition messages through text messages or electronic newsletters

- <u>Engagement Strategies in or out of Class</u>
  - Texting/email between classes
  - Discussions using closed social media platforms
  - Digital meal planning and physical activity tools and apps
  - Recipes and cooking demonstration videos
  - SuperTracker and group challenges to improve nutrition and physical activity practices

- <u>Make-up Online Lessons</u> - If involving Blended learning, requires pre-approval from National Office
  - Same educational online format as Blended learning (see below)
  - Same attention to EFNEP integrity and programming protocol as paraprofessional face-to-face teaching

- <u>Blended Online Learning</u> **-** needs to meet additional criteria to assure EFNEP integrity (see parameters, noted above); requires pre-approval from the National Office

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- Online Lesson Format Example
  - Watch video
    - Watch recorded lesson of the paraprofessional teaching the class
    - Watch a suitable video from another approved source
    - Watch a series of videos that emphasize educational message (nutrition content, recipe demonstration, or how someone else implemented change)
  - Interact with peers
    - Post photo of prepared recipe to EFNEP social media, such as Instagram, Snapchat, or Facebook, using hashtags, direct messaging, or other labels
    - Ask questions or dialogue using social media platforms, such as Facebook groups, blog commenting, chat rooms or forums (example: Reddit), "streaming" platforms (examples: Skype, Zoom, Google Hangouts, and Facebook Live)
  - Interact with paraprofessional instructor
    - Chat using video chat platform (examples: Google Hangout, Facebook Messenger, and Zoom)
    - Text messages
    - Live instant messages
    - App function (example: http://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2016/07/20/virtualinterns)
  - Web-based module
    - Interactive web module
    - Recorded presentation

Following Enrollment
- Examples pending

II. Additional Reading
- http://www.joe.org/joe/2016august/iw3.php (See References list)
- https://nifa.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource/Best%20Practices%20in%20Nutrition%20Education%20for%20Low-Income%20Audiences.pdf

III. Sample Documents (pending)
- Media release document
- Opt in form(s)
- Liability notification form(s)