

Tennessee Nutrition & Consumer Education Program

Executive Summary

Improving Lives of Food Stamp Families

Program Year 2002-2003

Background

The Tennessee Department of Human Services reports that 754,188 individuals in Tennessee are receiving Food Stamps (June 2003), which is a 25.82 percent increase from June 2002. The number of households receiving Food Stamps has increased 27.71 percent to 327,054 households. The average benefit per person in the state of Tennessee is \$76.85 per month. Currently, Tennessee ranks 9th in the country in total households receiving Food Stamp benefits (USDA Web site <http://www.fns.usda.gov>).

Tennessee families receiving Food Stamps report a lack of knowledge in the area of cooking, food purchasing, managing food dollars, and identifying alternatives to purchasing fast foods and pre-prepared foods. During the 2003 fiscal year, 95 counties utilized local Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program (TNCEP) coalitions to design and deliver

Goals

The goal of TNCEP is to help Food Stamp individuals and families gain the knowledge and skills needed to reduce the risk of inadequate nutrition while becoming empowered to move toward self-sufficiency. This goal will be accomplished by helping families effectively use Food Stamps and related resources.

During 2003, Tennessee conducted a \$7.8 million nutrition education program in 95 counties. Half the funding was contracted through the Tennessee Department of Human Services and USDA Food Stamp Program. The other half was matched through in-kind contributions by The University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service and the 95 county nutrition coalitions.



Families First participants in Hardeman County decide which cereal is more nutritious and which is the best buy during a grocery store tour.

Program Participants are Making a Change

- 86.8% report they are running out of food less often.
- 65.2% report they are washing their hands more often before and after food handling.
- 58.9% reported they are now selecting a diet based on the Food Guide Pyramid.
- 52.5% say they have increased consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and/or dairy products.
- 75.2% have improved their food preparation skills.
- 67.3% are making changes in their diets to reduce risk factors for diet-related diseases.
- 84.4% are reading food labels to help select the most nutritious food.

Partnerships & Volunteers

- Through matching partner participation, 95,782 hours were contributed to TNCEP by 5,092 educators. The cost benefit to our program is \$2,332,151.

- Through non-matching volunteer, private program support in communities, more than 4,776 hours were contributed to TNCEP by 679 volunteers. The cost benefit to our program is \$80,609.

- TNCEP trained 58,832 volunteer nutrition educators in 1,269 train-the-trainer sessions. Community personnel, including classroom teachers, day care providers, and school food service workers, participated in these educational sessions. These volunteers conducted an average of four community-based nutrition education programs each for individuals or small groups.

Learning Environment	Contacts Made
Schools	334,399
Church/Fellowship	28,811
DHS Offices	26,027
Nutrition/Health Fairs	17,122
Senior Citizen Centers	15,652
Health Departments	12,121
Extension Offices	9,921
Family Resource Centers	6,748
Child Care Centers	6,410
Community Centers	5,648
Grocery Stores	5,264
Public Housing	3,281
Camps	3,163

- Specific efforts were made to reach every Tennessee household receiving Food Stamps. Two strategies for reaching families were to provide news stories to local newspaper vendors and radio stations.

- In addition to local media coverage, nine cable television outlets and 40 radio networks across the state aired TNCEP news stories through Extension’s UT Connections Program and the nationally syndicated Ag Day Program. Four stories were released through the UT Hotline and Radiosource.net.

- Extension specialists maintain links for nutrition and health-related subject matters as part of the UTAES Extension Web site. Topics pertinent to TNCEP audiences are identified to assist educators accessing research-based nutrition and health information and resources. TNCEP’s Web site is <http://fcs.tennessee.edu/tncep/>.

Education

- Extension faculty, county coalition members, and program partners conducted 18,284 teaching sessions. As a result of these classes, 42,226 contacts were made with Food Stamp eligible recipients.

- Educational programming occurred in places frequented by Food Stamp recipients.

- Forty-nine counties conducted educational programming as a part of the “Tennessee Welfare-to-Work Families First” program.

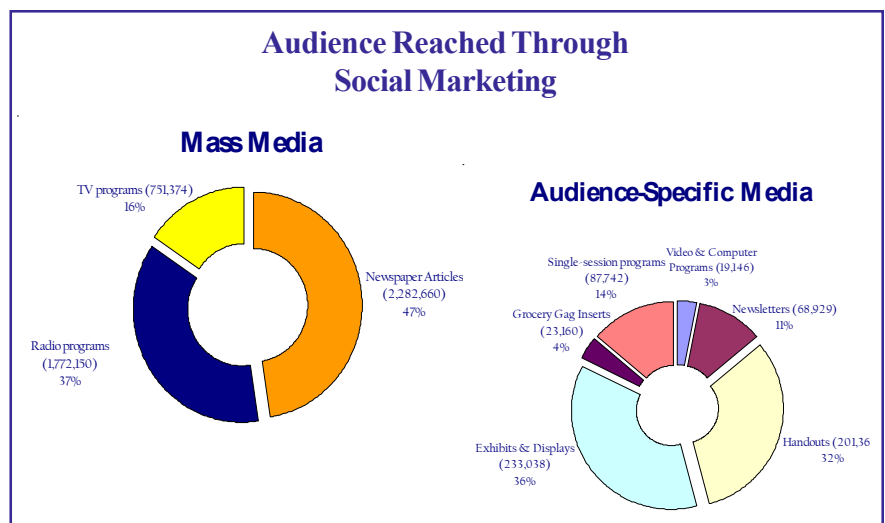
- Twenty-three counties provided educational experience for families receiving assistance at Commodity Distribution sites.

- Through social marketing and mass media, 5,439,559 indirect contacts were made with Tennesseans. While all contacts made through these point-of-delivery methods were not Food Stamp recipients, they were the targeted audience of this education effort.

Program Evaluation

- County Best Practices served as a purposeful sample for evaluating program impact. Data was collected in a variety of ways, including pre/post tests, observation, and phone or face-to-face surveys. Impact results were reported 3 - 12 months after the interventions.

- Evaluation results indicate TNCEP education programming is making a change in knowledge level, skills gained, attitudes toward foods, and behavior.



Curricula & Training

- Training workshops for Program Assistants were conducted in each district, providing face-to-face basic nutrition classes. Additionally, subject-matter training was available for Program Assistants.

- Statewide training was conducted addressing issues related to increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables.

- Coalition development training was conducted for every county coalition.

- District inservices were conducted for Extension faculty and program partners in 78 counties to develop learning centers for implementing the “Breakfast Bunch” curriculum, designed to teach nutrition education to youth in grades K through 4. Ten counties conducted county train-the-trainer inservices for Program partners to implement the centers.

- A bilingual Head Start Pilot Project was conducted in four counties to teach migrant workers and their children. The “Breakfast Bunch” curriculum was adapted for the project.

- A “Breakfast Bunch” train-the-trainer video and training guide was developed for districts and counties to use in Make-and-Take workshops.

- TNCEP Celebration is an annual, two-day event showcasing programming excellence. More than 304 Extension staff and program partners participated to learn more about successful county programs, nutrition education strategies, food safety training, and coalition development.

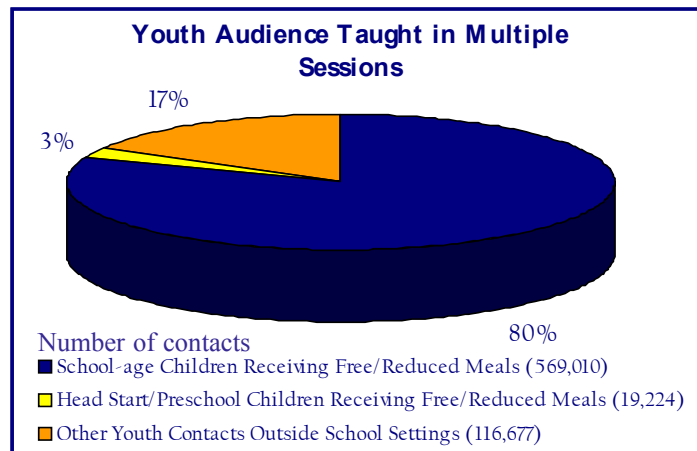
- Fast Lane Grilling video series was completed and distributed statewide. Recipes and food safety tips were included in accompanying publications.

The video was showcased, and a train-the-trainer session was conducted for Extension Staff and coalition members at TNCEP Celebration.

- Poverty simulations were conducted for program partners, community leaders, and agencies with shared program goals. These workshops allowed 578 individuals in 12 sessions to experience and address issues relating to families with limited resources.

- A Comprehensive School Health Pilot was conducted in one Smoky Mountain District county. Inservice training was held for teachers in grades 6-8 to implement “Take Charge of Your Health” curricula.

- TNCEP programming was showcased through an interactive education session at USDA Southeast Region \$6 Million Dollar Conference in Charleston, SC.

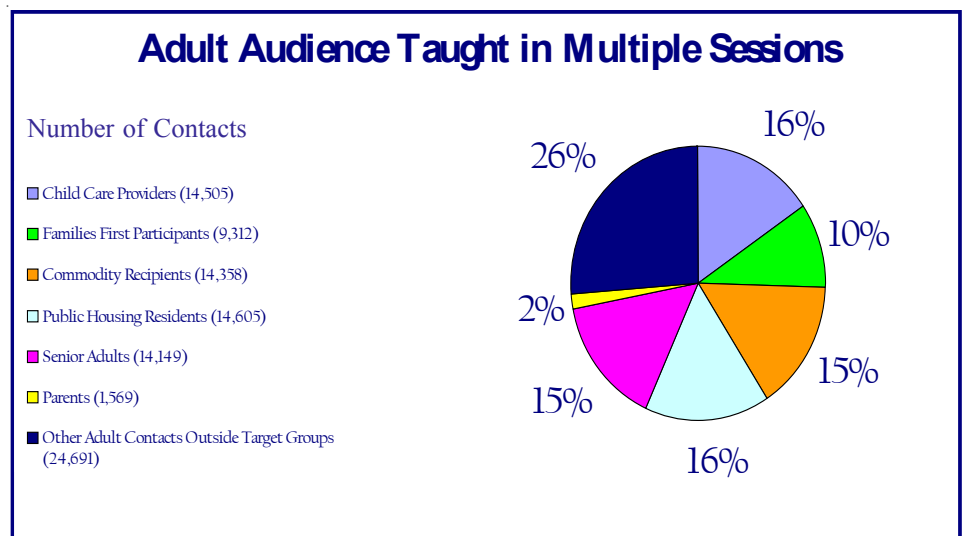


Outreach

- USDA’s “Food Stamps Make America Stronger” packets were distributed to each county.

- “Feeding Your Family” booklets containing nutrition education and Food Stamp access education information were compiled for statewide distribution.

- Nutrition education teaching tools and education materials were placed in 82 county DHS offices.



Faculty and Community Involvement

The Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program was planned, developed, and taught through the work of county-based nutrition education coalitions and is supported by University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension Service (UTAES) specialists and faculty. Approved nutrition curricula and programming are provided through UTAES faculty, who are actively involved with each coalition.

Extension faculty have made a commitment to the program in 95 counties. TNCEP is currently reaching Tennessee families through in-depth programming in 94 percent of Tennessee counties. Through social marketing efforts, all Tennessee counties were reached indirectly with awareness-level programming.

County coalition members represent a variety of community people. During the 2002-2003 program year, 1,448 coalition members were involved in county-level education. These coalition members represented 237 local and state government agencies and officials, educators, community organizations, businesses, Extension faculty, and more than 140 Food Stamp recipients. Coalitions appoint a chairperson and secretary, but operate as a council of equals.

*"I learned that when I eat healthier foods, I feel better. I tried it, and it works!" --
3rd grade student*



Hands-on demonstrations and classes are the key to successful TNCEP programs.

Implications for the Future

In addition to effective nutrition educational programming, TNCEP coalitions are doing the following:

- Developing a county infrastructure that is reducing duplication of services from government agencies
- Creating a culture of local community "ownership" for nutrition issues of Food Stamp Recipients
- Taking responsibility to solve community nutrition and consumer education problems

Food Stamp recipients who are serving as nutrition coalition members and those being trained as trainers of others are developing citizenship skills that help them positively influence others. Recipients are seeing their ideas become reality through the programs related to nutrition and consumer education. Tennessee Food Stamp families understand more about nutrition and are healthier for it.

This project funded under agreement with the Department of Human Services and USDA Food Stamp Program

Improving Lives of Food Stamp Families

The Agricultural Extension Service offers its programs to all eligible persons regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, disability, or veteran status and is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

The University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and county governments cooperating in furtherance of Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914.

Agricultural Extension Service, Charles L. Norman, Dean



Tennessee Department of Human Services and USDA Food Stamp Program

