

Tennessee Nutrition & Consumer Education Program Executive Summary

Improving Lives of Food Stamp Families

Program Year 2004-2005

State of Affairs

The Tennessee Department of Human Services reports that 873,330 individuals in our state are receiving Food Stamps (January 2006). Average Food Stamp benefits per person in the state of Tennessee is \$93.21 per month. Currently, we rank 11th in the country in total households receiving Food Stamp benefits (http://www.frac.org/html/federal_food_programs/FSP/Participation_Rates_04.html).



Stretching dollars at the store.

Extension Response

The goal of the Tennessee Nutrition and Consumer Education Program (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 2005, Tennessee conducted a \$4 million nutrition education program in 92 counties. Half the funding was contracted through the Tennessee Department of Human Services and the USDA Food Stamp Program. The other half was matched through in-kind contributions by University of Tennessee Extension and the 92 county nutrition coalitions.

Economic Impact

TNCEP returns benefits of \$34 Million in reduced long term health care costs for \$4 Million spent in FY04.

Program Participants are Making a Change

- 91% report they are now washing their hands more often before and after food handling.
- 87% are managing their family resources to ensure adequate provision of food.
- 81% report they are running out of food less often.
- 65% report they are now selecting a diet based on the Food Guide Pyramid.
- 63% are now reading food labels to help select the most nutritious food.
- 61% say they have decreased their consumption of high-fat foods.
- 60% say they have increased their consumption of whole grains.
- 60% say they have increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables.

TNCEP Connects Statewide

- Through matching partner participation, 37,782 hours were contributed to TNCEP by 1,378 partner educators. The cost benefit to our program was \$924,834.
- Through non-matching volunteer private program support in communities, more than 5,384 hours were contributed to TNCEP by 334 volunteers. The cost benefit to our program was \$93,931.
- County coalition members represent a variety of community people. During the 2004-2005 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 110 Food Stamp recipients.

“Do you remember when I told you I had never ate an apple before, well you were right. We buy apples every week and I get to pick them out. I’ve tried four kinds.”

-Elementary School Student

“She wasn’t drinking milk at all. Now she will at least drink the strawberry milk.”

-Elementary School Mother

“She wants to eat more fruits and less cookies now, THANKS!”

-Elementary School Mother

Education

- Extension faculty, county coalition members, and program partners conducted 8,061 teaching sessions. As a result of these classes, 241,778 contacts were made with Food Stamp eligibles/recipients.
- Educational programming occurred in places frequented by Food Stamp recipients. These learning environments included schools, community centers, department of human service offices, health departments, child care centers, family resource centers, and public housing sites.
- Thirty-seven 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, 2,081,281 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.
- Extension specialists maintain links for nutrition and health-related subject matters as part of the Extension Web site. Topics pertinent to TNCEP audiences are identified to assist educators accessing research-based nutrition and health information and resources.

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Programs in agriculture and natural resources, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and resource development. University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture, U. S. Department of Agriculture and county governments cooperating. UT Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

