

Tennessee Nutrition & Consumer Education Program Executive Summary

Improving Lives of Food Stamp Families

Program Year 2006-2007

State of Affairs

The Tennessee Department of Human Services reports that 881,063 individuals in our state are receiving Food Stamps (August 2007). Average Food Stamp benefits per person in Tennessee are \$93.44 per month. Currently, Tennessee ranks 9th in the country in total households receiving Food Stamp benefits (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fspmmain.htm>).



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 2007, Tennessee conducted a \$5.4 million nutrition education program in 91 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 91 county nutrition coalitions.

Economic Impact

TNCEP returns benefits of \$52 million in reduced long-term health care costs for \$5.4 million spent in FY 2007.

Program Participants Are Making a Change

- 83 percent are now reading food labels to help select the most nutritious food.
- 87 percent are now planning meals ahead of time.
- 85 percent have improved their food preparation skills.
- 87 percent are now selecting a diet based on the Dietary Guidelines.
- 79 percent are now managing their family resources to ensure adequate provision of food.
- 85 percent are now washing their hands more often before and after food handling.
- 81 percent have increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- 72 percent have increased their consumption of whole grains.
- 66 percent have decreased their consumption of high-fat foods.

TNCEP Connects Statewide

- Through matching partner participation, 65,701 hours were contributed to TNCEP by 4,336 partner educators. The cost benefit to our program was \$1,672,902.
- Through non-matching, volunteer, private program support in communities, more than 4,130 hours were contributed to TNCEP by 428 volunteers. The cost benefit to our program was \$73,210.
- County coalition members represent a variety of community people. During the 2006-2007 program year, 1,445 coalition members were involved in county-level education. These coalition members represented 334 local and state government agencies and officials, educators, community organizations, businesses, Extension faculty and more than 126 Food Stamp recipients.

"I have been purchasing whole-grain bread after the discussion on grains."

Mother

"Students are bringing healthier snacks to school."

Teacher

"My child is helping me select fruits and vegetables at the grocery stores by explaining these are the Food Groupies from class."

Head Start Parent

"We have the Food Pyramid on the wall next to the tables where we eat and we discuss it daily."

Teacher

Education

- Extension faculty, county coalition members and program partners conducted 13,911 teaching sessions. As a result of these classes, 263,645 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, childcare centers, family resource centers and public housing sites.
- Twenty counties conducted educational programming for families at DHS office facilities.
- Thirty-three counties provided educational experiences for families receiving assistance at commodity distribution sites.
- Through social marketing and mass media, 1,734,164 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 educational effort.
- Extension specialists maintain links for nutrition and health-related subjects 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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Visit the UT Extension Web site at
<http://www.utextension.utk.edu/>



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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.

