About EFNEP

Mission

EFNEP's mission is to improve the health and knowledge of limited resource youth and families with young children through practical lessons on basic nutrition and healthy lifestyles, resource management and food safety.

What is EFNEP?

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a federally funded program offered to limited resource youth and families with young children through the Cooperative Extension Service in every state and U.S. territory. EFNEP works to be efficient, creative, accountable, and is very committed to those it serves. The program is the people, the product is education, and the goal is helping people improve their nutrition health. EFNEP makes a real difference in the lives of its participants and their families. Today the need for EFNEP continues as the number of low income people increases. EFNEP helps families & communities save dollars, by improving diets and reducing the risk factors associated with chronic diseases.

A Virginia study revealed that for every $1 spent in EFNEP, $10.64 is saved in health care costs. Another study in Tennessee, found that for every $1 spent to implement EFNEP, $2.48 is saved in food cost. The program focuses on helping families and youth improve behaviors in the following areas: Dietary Intake as recommended by the Dietary Guidelines and MyPlate, Food Resource Management skills and practices, Nutrition Practices and Food Safety practices. Participants increase their ability to select and buy food that meets the nutritional needs of their families and gain new skills in food preparation, food storage, and food safety. They learn to better manage their food budgets -including the use of SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) and WIC vouchers.

School-aged youth increase their knowledge of human nutrition and their ability to choose low-cost healthy snacks.

History of EFNEP

During the 1960’s there was recognition of the link between poverty and malnutrition and the fact many Americans were not only poor but were suffering from hunger and malnutrition. Cooperative Extension was aware that available educational programs and resources were not reaching segments of the population, including low-income groups. Studies showed that isolation, lack of
transportation, poor self-concept and rejection by others were barriers to learning. Pilot studies in several states helped identify effective approaches for contacting, teaching and maintaining education programs with people who lived in poverty. Recommendations based on results of these pilot studies were the basis for initiating the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in 1969.

The unique feature of EFNEP was the method of program delivery, that is the employment of paraprofessionals, Extension EFNEP Program Assistants (PA’s), who were indigenous to the areas in which they would work. Extension professionals would hire, train and supervise the PA’s as they worked individually or in small groups of limited resource families.

Beginning in July 1969, EFNEP was funded by earmarked Smith-Lever 3(d) funds. Initially, the emphasis was on working with adults and families with young children.

One year later, Congress stipulated that 15-20% of EFNEP funds would be used to support a youth component (4-H EFNEP) with emphasis on urban youth. The objectives include contributing to the personal development of youth through nutrition and contributing to improvement of diets and nutritional status of the total family through educational programs for youth.

Introduction

Since its inception, EFNEP has helped more than 26 million limited-income people make improvements in their diets. Community-based nutrition education paraprofessionals are the eyes, hands and heart of EFNEP. They work out of their homes at the grassroots levels. They teach, care and go the extra mile, delivering nutrition information to an ethnically diverse population. Their dedication, compassion and commitment have not only helped clients improve their nutrition health, but gain self esteem, leave welfare, find better jobs, earn high school and even college degrees.

In 2010, EFNEP reached 137,814 adults and 463,530 youth directly and nearly 400,000 family members indirectly. EFNEP leads to improved diets and improved food related behavior among adult and youth program participants.

Where do EFNEP Program Assistants fit in?

EFNEP Program Assistants follow a research-based learning model that allows them to effectively reach and educate program participants. Program Assistants are:

- members of the communities they support;
• trained/supervised by the University of Hawaii at Manoa;
• skilled in using hands-on, interactive teaching methods;
• committed to delivering sound instruction;
• able to influence changes in behavior and impact the lives of those they teach; and
• dedicated to reaching diverse, low-income populations.

WHO ARE YOUR CLIENTS?  EFNEP Target Audience

Audience Defined
The general definition of the EFNEP audience is people whose income falls under the federal poverty guidelines. The level of income used to determine EFNEP eligibility changes annually as a result of fluctuations in the cost of living, as measured by the Consumer Price Index. The Department of Health and Human Services information on the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines is an appropriate source to use in identifying the low-income audience.

### 2012 Poverty Guidelines for Hawaii

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Persons in family</th>
<th>Poverty guideline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$12,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17,410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>21,960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>26,510</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>31,060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>35,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>40,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>44,710</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For families with more than 8 persons, add $4,550 for each additional person.

**SOURCE:** Federal Register, Vol. 77, No. 17, January 26, 2012, pp. 4034-4035
EFNEP brings together federal, state, and local resources to target two primary audiences: low-income adults with young children and low-income youth.

**Adult Audiences**

Adult EFNEP audiences are participants who:
- are pregnant or have children,
- are responsible for planning and preparing the family’s food and
- have low income.

When determining whether or not a potential participant qualifies for enrollment in EFNEP, the person’s income must be considered. A person qualifies for participation in the EFNEP if their income is 185% or less of the federal poverty guidelines. For example, a three-member family meets the income criteria for participation in EFNEP if their annual household income is less than $21,320. Potential EFNEP participants are asked their yearly household income within a certain dollar range in item number 16 on the Client Record #1. As long as the potential participant checks an income range that is at or below the 185% federal poverty guideline for their family size, they meet the EFNEP income eligibility requirement. Furthermore, potential participants are asked in item number 17 of the Client Record #1 if they participate in any federal assistance programs. If the answer is "yes" to any of those listed (including “other”), the person automatically qualifies for EFNEP. This is due to the fact that all the federal assistance programs listed on the EFNEP Adult Enrollment Form also use the Federal Poverty Guidelines to determine enrollment.

If the answer to item number 17 is “no” to all the possibilities, be sure to check if their income meets the income eligibility criteria. If they meet the income eligibility criteria, be sure to inform participants of federal nutrition assistance programs for which they may qualify. If a potential participant is not enrolled in any federal nutrition assistance programs and does not meet the income eligibility criteria, it may still be appropriate for them to remain in the class. They should not, however, be enrolled in the EFNEP program, but may benefit from the education with the other class members and can be recorded as volunteers. If the participant meets income eligibility criteria but is not pregnant or does not have children, they can be recorded as SNAP-Ed participants.

Note: A group should be recruited to have participants who meet EFNEP eligibility requirements rather than those who do not.

**Youth Audiences**

Potential EFNEP youth participants may be defined by the following characteristics:
- Youth of 4-H age (5-19 years of age) from EFNEP families.
- Youth living in “low-income” geographic areas (for example, housing developments, low-income areas of cities or low-income rural areas).
- Youth receiving free or reduced-price lunch.
- Youth from families receiving Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA).
- Youth from families enrolled in other low-income programs.