

2010 ANNUAL REPORT

Cameron County

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program



Supporting Texas Families with Greatest Need Since 1969

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) helps young families and youth with limited resources—those most at risk to suffer from hunger, food insecurity and the inability to connect with available support systems. EFNEP offers practical lessons in basic nutrition, food preparation, food budget management and food safety in settings convenient for the participants. EFNEP also includes a walking program for adult participants. Program graduates reflect significant, lasting improvement in eating behaviors and healthy food habits.

Texas has a need for EFNEP—2009 data show that 19.8% of Texas families with children under the age of 18 were living below poverty level, compared to 16.6% of U.S. families.

EFNEP Reaches Diverse Audiences in Cameron County

In Cameron County, ethnically diverse EFNEP nutrition assistants reach youth and adult groups whose principal language may be English or Spanish.

In 2010,

- 1,198 families with 2,806 children enrolled in EFNEP.
- 3,507 youth contacts were made through the EFNEP youth program.
- 107 EFNEP participants were pregnant and/or nursing.
- 95% of families were at or below 100% of federal poverty level.
- 90% of families enrolled in one or more food assistance programs at entry.
- 97% of EFNEP adult participants were Hispanic/Latino.
- 1% of EFNEP adult participants were White, Non-Hispanic/Latino.

Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2010, 191 adult and youth volunteers donated 2,288 hours of work to EFNEP in Cameron County. At the Texas rate of \$20.85/hr, this volunteerism has a minimum dollar value of \$47,705. Many of these volunteers (20%) are past or present EFNEP participants. Volunteers make a difference in their own communities, and contribute to EFNEP's continued success.

In 2009, 40.4% of Cameron County youth lived in poverty.



EFNEP, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, provides food and nutrition education for limited resource families with young children through the Texas AgriLife Extension Service, with funding from USDA. In 2010, EFNEP programs assisted Texans in Bexar, Cameron, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, Hidalgo, Nueces, Tarrant, Travis, Webb, and Willacy Counties.

EFNEP nutrition assistants help low-income families and youth acquire the knowledge, skills, and changed behaviors necessary for nutritionally sound diets and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of total family diet and nutritional welfare. Cameron County EFNEP nutrition education assistants teach in homes, schools, churches and community agencies.

Participant Testimonials:

"First of all I want to thank the ladies and those whom made this program possible. Being a mother of three (12, 10, 7) has been an experience that no book could prepare me to be. But your program has educated me to be a much better mother to not only keep my children healthy, but me as well. I have learned things that I was not aware of. One thing I was not aware of was of the storage and shelf life of different products like dry beans, rice, and flour. There were things that I had forgotten and this course was very helpful to me. The recipes were not only good but my family really enjoyed them. I have added them to my recipe book that is my treasure book that I will pass down to my future grandkids. Thank you!"

TEXAS AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

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"...to assist families and youth with limited resources in making simple changes in eating behaviors so that over time, healthy choices become healthy habits."

EFNEP Makes a Real Difference

Adult Program:

Using "hands-on" experiences, EFNEP adult participants complete at least a six-lesson series on stretching food dollars, improving eating habits, and practicing food safety principles. As a result of participation in EFNEP the following food and nutrition behaviors were achieved:

- **98%** with positive change in any food group at program exit. Specifically, EFNEP participants consumed 0.8 more cups of fruit and vegetables and 0.7 additional cups of milk at completion, compared to entry.
- **83%** improved in one or more food resource management practices such as using a list to go grocery shopping.
- **92%** improved in one or more nutrition practices such as using the "Nutrition Facts" on food labels to make food choices.
- **62%** improved in one or more food safety practices such as thawing food safely.
- **26%** of program participants reported a positive change in physical activity. In fact, participants reported walking 10,247 miles during the 2009-10 reporting year. As a result of this physical activity, an estimated 22% of program participants could prevent the onset of diabetes over their lifetime through increased physical activity. Including the cost of lost wages and annual health care costs, the total potential economic impact for these participants is approximately \$2.5 million.

Youth Program:

The EFNEP-Youth program is directed toward low-income youth ages 6-12. These students participate in a series of fun and educational lessons on good nutrition and food safety as part of after school activities and summer programs. The following results show how youth participants' food behaviors improved after attending EFNEP classes.

- **89%** now eat a variety of foods.
- **98%** increased their knowledge of the essentials of human nutrition.
- **91%** increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods.
- **99%** improved practices in food preparation and safety.
- **97%** improved physical activity behavior or attitude.

Cost-Benefit of EFNEP

Studies have shown that for every \$1 spent on EFNEP, \$10 were estimated to be saved in health care costs and \$2 saved in food costs by participants. For Cameron County, this is \$4.3 million in estimated health care cost savings and almost \$858,336 in food costs.