

IMPACT



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Food Stamp Nutrition Education Prepares to Serve More Low-Income Families

The Situation

Food stamps are a critical support for millions of low-income people. Food stamps often make the difference between hunger and food security, and they help families avoid impossible choices between buying food and

paying rent and utilities, or between feeding their children and getting access to medical care, paying child care or school fees, or purchasing other necessities.

However, there is no legislative mandate to teach these families how to link food security with healthy eating habits. Nutrition education should be used as a strategy to improve the lives and overall health of food stamp families.



Our Response

Food Stamp Nutrition Education, known in Idaho as the Extension Nutrition Program (ENP), is a community-based education program that teaches limited resource individuals how to stretch their food dollars to provide healthy, low-cost meals for their families. The District 1 ENP program encompasses the 10 northern counties in Idaho. Nutrition Advisors, trained by UI Extension faculty, educate

families and individuals in basic nutrition, stretching their food dollar, food resource management, and food safety.

In-home visits have been the primary path in which educational lessons have been provided to low-income families since ENP's initiation in 1995. Today ENP is refocusing its efforts to provide educational lessons in all Food Stamp Offices in the 10 northern counties of Idaho. The goal of this effort is to serve a greater number of food stamp families with the many benefits ENP has to offer.

Program Outcomes

FY2004 data reported District 1 ENP Nutrition Advisors worked with 179 families with 49 graduates. Behavior changes include:

- 67% of families showed improvement in planning meal practices.
- 67% of families showed improvement in comparison shopping practices.
- 61% of families showed improvement in making a grocery list before grocery shopping.
- 67% of families showed improvement in choosing to eat a lower fat diet.
- 59% of families showed improvement in increasing their vegetable intake.
- 78% of families showed improvement in increasing their fruit intake.
- 55% of families showed improvement in keeping a written spending plan.

The Future

District 1 ENP will continue to serve all 10 northern Idaho counties with educational programming in nutrition, food safety, and food resource management for all food stamp recipients, as well as maintain strong partnerships with advisory board members and other agencies serving low-income populations.

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For More Information

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