

IMPACT



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Extension Nutrition Program Helps Food Stamp Families Plan Healthy Behavior Changes

The Situation

The Food Stamp Program was established to improve the nutrition of people in low-income households. It does that by increasing their food-buying power, so they are able to purchase the amount of food their household needs. Food stamps often make the difference between hunger and food security. However, there is no legislative mandate to teach food stamp 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.



housing locations, mental health agencies, and qualifying elementary schools across District 1. In-home visits are also offered to families.

Program Outcomes

In 2006, ENP Nutrition Advisors taught 754 group or one-on-one education lessons to 1,433 adults and 3,480 children. Planned behavior changes of adults and

youth are as follows:

Adults:

- 173 clients participated in the MyPyramid lesson with 55% of clients planning to increase the variety of food in their diets by choosing foods from all 5 food groups; 94% reported they learned something new.
- 78 clients participated in the Safe Food Handling lesson with 55% of clients planning to no longer thaw meat at room temperature; 96% reported they learned something new.
- 66 clients participated in the Making the Most of Your Food Dollar lesson with 41% of clients planning to shop with a grocery list; 91% reported they learned something new.
- 61 clients participated in the Meat & Bean Group lesson with 36% of clients planning to serve one meatless meal a week; 93% reported they learned something new.
- 40 clients participated in the Label Reading lesson with 40% of clients planning to use the

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.

Group lessons have been taught at work first agencies, Head Start, Even Start, transitional

- food label to make more nutritious food choices; 88% reported they learned something new.
- 36 clients participated in the Eating Light and Right lesson with 44% of clients planning to eat smaller portions of food to control calories and fat; 81% reported they learned something new.
 - 30 clients participated in the Meal Planning lesson with 70% of clients planning to include all 5 food groups in their meal plans; 94% reported they learned something new.

Children:

- 705 youth participated in the *Hand Washing Education* lesson with 49% choosing to wash their hands after playing with pets as their top priority.
- 341 youth participated in the *Got Calcium* lesson with 40% choosing to do more weight bearing activities.
- 283 youth participated in the *How Things Grow* lesson with 28% choosing to help their parents buy more fruits and vegetables when at the grocery store.
- 247 youth participated in the *Eat 5 A Day the Color Way* lesson with 50% choosing to eat fruits and vegetables as their afterschool and bedtime snack.

The Future

In 2007, District 1 ENP will serve 9 counties in north Idaho 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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