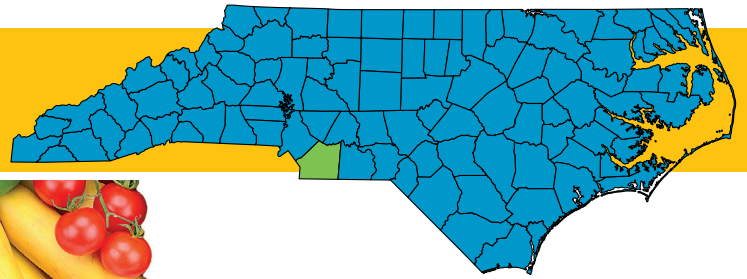




EFNEP
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION
EDUCATION PROGRAM



2016 NC Cooperative Extension Union County Report

North Carolina's Challenges

- In North Carolina, **1 in 4** children live in poverty.
- North Carolina's adult obesity rate is currently **30%**.
- **15.2%** of 2- to 4-year-olds from low-income families are obese. This makes us the **7th** most obese state.
- North Carolina has the **18th** highest rate of diabetes and the **11th** highest rate of hypertension.

Supporting North Carolina's Families with Greatest Needs Since 1969

EFNEP helps address the challenges limited resource families face when introducing healthy changes through nutrition education, cooking classes, physical activity strategies, and shopping on a limited budget. EFNEP provides:

- Peer-to-peer, hands-on education in the community
- Healthy, low-cost recipes
- Simple strategies to help families move more together



EFNEP Reaches Diverse Audiences in Union County

In 2016: **135** families enrolled in EFNEP

96% of EFNEP participants enrolled in one or more food assistance programs.

WHAT IS EFNEP?

EFNEP serves limited-resource families with young children, school-age youth, and pregnant teens through a series of lessons offered by paraprofessionals and volunteers, many of whom are indigenous to the population. In 2016, EFNEP served 45 counties in North Carolina. Participants learned how to:

- Make wise food choices
- Increase daily physical activity
- Manage food resources
- Practice food safety

EFNEP Makes a Real Difference in Union County



99% of EFNEP participants improved dietary intake.



73% now practice daily physical activity.



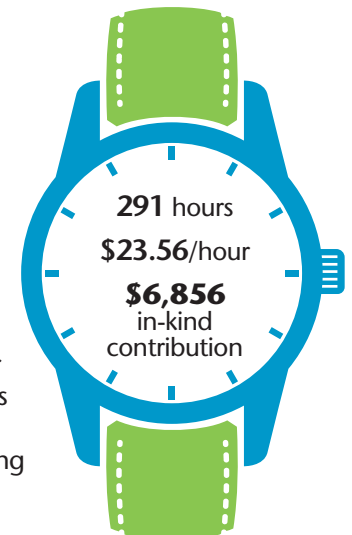
98% practice better food resource management.



92% have improved their food safety habits.

Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2016, **15** adults and youth donated time to EFNEP, making a difference in their own communities and contributing to EFNEP's ongoing success.



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Union County
EFNEP programs obtained

\$14,890

in funding and support
from local efforts.

EFNEP SUCCESS



Participant Reduces Risk of Diabetes After EFNEP

Within six weeks of implementing changes learned through EFNEP, a pre-diabetic participant began seeing a noticeable improvement in her health. Her blood sugar levels had returned to normal. They went from 140mg/dl before to 121mg/dl after practicing the healthy lifestyle behaviors EFNEP taught. She also lost weight—six pounds! She noticed her energy level had increased. She credited EFNEP for her feeling better physically and, in turn, raising her self-esteem to a level where she confidently applied for and accepted a part-time job. Now she continues to practice healthy lifestyle behaviors by participating in a walking group at work and practicing the MyPlate concepts learned in EFNEP when preparing meals at home. Her fear of becoming diabetic has been greatly reduced because of EFNEP.



EFNEP Opens Door to Farmers Market for Low-Income Participants

Within the past several years, federal food programs like SNAP and WIC have provided their clients with vouchers to use when shopping at their local farmers markets. However, even when vouchers are provided, limited income families hesitate to shop at farmers markets. They may feel unfamiliar with the setting or not feel confident in how to select and prepare the many varieties of fruits and vegetables offered.

To help participants utilize this valuable resource, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program in Union County conducts a farmers market tour for its participants as part of their EFNEP lesson series. Many participants receive SNAP and WIC benefits. The series and tour is designed to help limited income families feel more comfortable and confident with their farmers market shopping experience. Lessons introduce participants to the varieties of fruits and vegetables frequently found at their local farmers market. It also facilitates discussions and hands-on cooking experiences in which participants learn the nutritional benefits, how to safely store fresh produce, and ways to prepare and serve the many varieties available.

For the lesson just prior to the tour, the EFNEP program assistant selected a spaghetti squash, an in-season vegetable, to include as the base for a vegetable stir-fry recipe that would be used as the food preparation activity. During the lesson, participants shared they had not tried spaghetti squash previously. They learned the nutritional value of the squash and tips for selecting, storing, and preparing it.

While several participants prepped, cooked, and scraped the spaghetti squash, the remainder of the class began to stir-fry red bell peppers, green onions, and carrots. The program assistant summed up the experience the group shared by saying, “Oh, my goodness!! It was delicious!! We all loved it!”

At the beginning of the EFNEP series, none of the participants attending had tried spaghetti squash. By the end of the lesson, 100% said they planned to buy one at the local farmers market. One participant added that she was going to buy all the vegetables needed to make the same stir-fry recipe for a special lunch she was planning with neighbors. She looked forward to introducing something new and tasty to her guests.

This is just one example of how participating in EFNEP, and a subsequent farmers market tour instills confidence and inspires participants to experience new food shopping, preparation and tasting experiences—experiences that relate directly to a family’s better health.

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