



# 2018 NC Cooperative Extension Congressional District 7 Report

## North Carolina's Challenges

- In North Carolina, **1 in 5** children live in poverty.
- North Carolina's adult obesity rate is currently **32%**.
- **15.2%** of 2- to 4-year-olds from low-income families are obese. This makes us the **16th** most obese state.
- North Carolina has the **15th** 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 District 7

In 2018: **490** families enrolled in EFNEP  
**2,555** participated in 4-H EFNEP  
**57%** 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 District 7

- 91%** of EFNEP participants improved dietary intake.
- 80%** now practice daily physical activity.
- 89%** practice better food resource management.
- 71%** have improved their food safety habits.

## Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2018, **212** 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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**Congressional District 7  
EFNEP programs  
obtained over**

**\$101,628**

**in funding and support  
from local efforts.**

## EFNEP SUCCESS



### Young Mom Improves Cooking Skills and Makes Healthier Meals

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partnered with Smart Start ESL families in Brunswick County to offer a series of classes.

Many of the young moms felt overwhelmed at meal preparation for their families. With all of the day-to-day tasks, just getting a meal on the table was their priority (even if it wasn't healthy). Many of them lacked basic cooking skills and didn't understand that having a plan in place would save them time and money.

One participant stated that at the beginning of the EFNEP series, meal preparation was a challenge. She was always trying to figure out what she would cook, expressing that it seemed to be an "all-day" job. This participant put into practice what she learned through EFNEP. She reported she is now able to cook healthy meals for her family in less than 30 minutes using the EFNEP recipes. With the extra time, she is able to help her older children with homework and spend more leisure time with her family.



### EFNEP Student Convinces Foster Mom to Give the Program a Try

A fifth grader enrolled in EFNEP at a local elementary school in Duplin County shared with the EFNEP Educator that she wanted her foster mom and siblings to know as much about healthy eating as she was learning through the in-school series offered by EFNEP. The EFNEP Educator met with the student and her family and reviewed the recommendations for healthy eating the student had been learning in school. Together, the student, her foster mother and siblings, and the EFNEP Educator reviewed recipes from the EFNEP cookbook, and talked about using the recipes to plan family meals. The mother explained that she found it hard to prepare foods for her four foster children. She continued to explain that all of her children were picky eaters and highly selective when it came to mealtime. The EFNEP Educator encouraged the mom to involve the children in mealtime planning and preparation.

Following their time together, the foster parent reported that she and her family were now planning, preparing, and eating healthy family meals together as a family. After almost three months of doing this, it is becoming a norm within their household.



### Taking Healthy to a Higher Level

The EFNEP Educator in Sampson County partnered with a local church to conduct an EFNEP *Faithful Families* series. Two weeks following the series, the lay leader kicked off a healthy walking challenge and 10 of the EFNEP *Faithful Families* participants took the challenge. Walking maps were developed and tips given for increasing physical activity.

In addition, the church made several changes to encourage healthy eating and physical activity for the entire community. A "health corner" was established to share colorful flyers highlighting the benefits of eating more fruits and vegetables. The faith community adopted a healthy meeting policy where fresh fruit and whole grain options are offered as part of any community meal and less healthy options are cut into smaller portions. The faith community also chose to include a larger beverage dispenser for offering infused water at every gathering to encourage water instead of sugary beverages. As a result, the lay leader reported that all ages have begun to seek out the fruit infused water.

In their food pantry, they have increased the number of fresh vegetables and fruits available to food pantry recipients while teaching nutrition principles and how simple cooking healthy can be. They also display healthy lifestyle messages in meeting rooms, hallways and in the kitchen of the pantry.



### EFNEP Mom Learns the Importance of Nutrition Facts!

One Wayne County mom participating in EFNEP was especially interested in learning more about how to read food labels, having recently been diagnosed as prediabetic. Her doctor encouraged her to select healthier options but she really didn't know how to do so. She admitted that she never knew what the labels meant and much of the information on food packages was confusing.

Following one class, the mother was excited to tell the EFNEP Educator that she made a conscious effort to read the labels on food packages before purchasing them. She selected healthier foods with fewer calories. The mom could hardly wait to share how proud she was of herself at being knowledgeable enough to make the healthier selections. She understands that she will need to continue with these and other efforts to see a difference in her health status. She hopes to receive a good report on her next doctor's visit thanks to the education received from the EFNEP.

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