

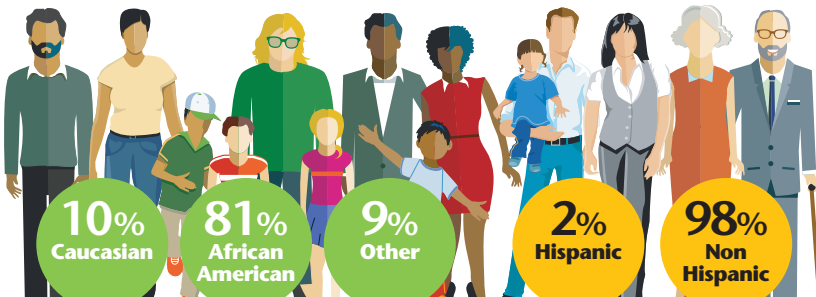
# NC Cooperative Extension 2019 REPORT

## Bertie County

### 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 Bertie County

In 2019: **93** families enrolled in EFNEP      **560** participated in 4-H EFNEP

**87%** 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 2019, 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 Bertie County

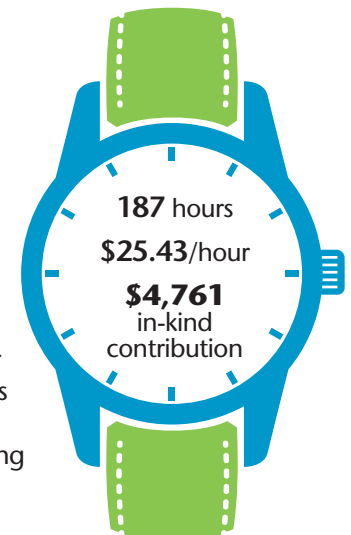
- 100%** of EFNEP participants improved dietary intake.
- 93%** now practice daily physical activity.
- 100%** practice better food resource management.
- 95%** have improved their food safety habits.

### 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.

### Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2019, **33** 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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Bertie County  
EFNEP programs obtained

\$22,700

in funding and support  
from local efforts.

## EFNEP SUCCESS



### First Grade Class Applies EFNEP Lessons in Cafeteria

As part of the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) youth classes in Bertie County, the EFNEP Educator teaches children about the importance of breakfast, eating foods from all food groups and she uses effective strategies to encourage youth to try new foods throughout the program.

During Windsor Elementary School's Breakfast Week promotion, a teacher of first grade students who had participated in EFNEP used these strategies to have her students give new foods a try. Each day of the week, the children ate breakfast foods for lunch. Many of the children had never eaten several of the foods they were being served, and they were hesitant to try them. The teacher reminded the children of the EFNEP Educator's rule for new foods, "Always Try Just One Bite." The teacher played one of the games the EFNEP Educator played during EFNEP lessons. As children tried a new food, they were asked to identify the food group from MyPlate to which the food they tried belonged. The teacher was so proud of her class because they placed each food in the correct food group. The teacher said, "The children even figured out grits were a grain." Several of her students tried grits for the first time as a result of using EFNEP strategies in the cafeteria.

Before participating in EFNEP, these children would have thrown the new foods away without even trying them. The teacher used EFNEP strategies to encourage her students to try new foods and it resulted in less food waste. Thanks to EFNEP and the teacher's support in putting EFNEP strategies into practice, it became a fun week of trying new foods.



### Fix It Safe for a Healthy Family

Low-income families often work long hours. While they desire the benefits of nutrition education, it is difficult to meet the needs of their families financially and participate in an educational program. Recognizing this need, the EFNEP Educator partnered with a local chicken processing plant to reach eligible families as part of the wellness plan for their employees.

A key lesson of interest to this group of participants was the "Fix It Safe" lesson, which emphasizes the four primary rules of food safety: Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill. During the lesson, the participants learned different ways to prepare, cook and store food correctly. The participants were shocked to learn how fast bacteria actually grow. The participants stated that they had always left meat out on the counter to thaw. After the "Fix It Safe" lesson, they would now thaw their meat in the refrigerator, a safe method to prevent harmful bacteria growth.

Additionally, participants stated that prior to EFNEP, they simply looked at the appearance of their meat to see if it was done. They had never used a food thermometer. They now know that the only safe way to check if a food is cooked and safe to eat is to use a food thermometer.

An estimated 48 million people get sick from a foodborne illness every year. Foodborne pathogens resulting from improper handling, cooking, or storage result in illness, hospitalization, and in some cases even death. For the employer, the loss in productivity due to employee absences also becomes a financial concern. By making these few changes of thawing meat in the refrigerator and using a food thermometer to see if the food is cooked to the proper temperature, this group of workers will help to keep food safe to eat for themselves and their families. By supporting EFNEP classes with their employees, this plant is promoting a healthier workforce.

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