

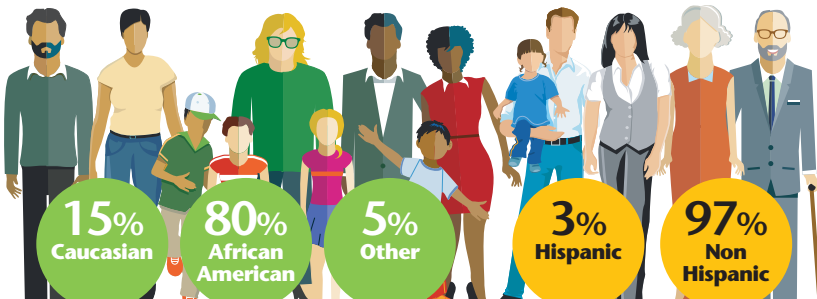
NC Cooperative Extension 2019 REPORT

Mecklenburg 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 Mecklenburg County

In 2019: **106** families enrolled in EFNEP

61% 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 Mecklenburg County

- 95%** of EFNEP participants improved dietary intake.
- 84%** now practice daily physical activity.
- 92%** practice better food resource management.
- 85%** 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, **8** adults and youth donated time to EFNEP, making a difference in their own communities and contributing to EFNEP's ongoing success.



2019 NC Cooperative Extension Mecklenburg County Report

Mecklenburg County
EFNEP programs obtained

\$817

in funding and support
from local efforts.

EFNEP SUCCESS



EFNEP's Faithful Families Participant Gives Testimony

"I was in the nutrition class that the EFNEP Educator taught at my church. I am a diabetic and a cancer survivor of many years. I have been looking for simple ways to eat better and ways to do it on my tight budget. Because I am a lot older than the educator, I first thought, what can this young lady teach me that I don't already know? But I was pleasantly surprised. She gently asked our class just to choose one thing from each lesson to change about our diet and cooking habits and try to practice it all year.

I also cook for my grandchildren a lot. I have been finding it hard to teach them to eat healthier. In the nutrition class, I learned how to read the Nutrition Facts label and the ingredient label in order to determine which breakfast cereals and snacks were healthier and lower in sugar and fat. I also got quick and healthy recipes for lunches and dinners. I can now feed my grandchildren foods that are better for their health in the long run. I have cut back on the amount of fruit drinks and sugary cereals and snacks that we eat. And we have been enjoying the changes that I have made.

The educator also mentioned in class that we have to be examples for our children. So, I have changed some of the foods I eat. I don't want my grandchildren to have the health issues that I have had to deal with. I learned that I can add applesauce as a sweetener instead of so much sugar. And I got a recipe for making my own salt-free seasoning. I rarely add salt to my meals now. I really enjoyed this nutrition class and was sad to see it end."



Participant's Daughter Shares EFNEP's Impact on Her Life

Several factors can influence a limited income family's ability to consume a healthy diet. One of the most common is the lack of confidence in the kitchen. A poor knowledge of basic nutrition and inadequate cooking skills can negatively affect the selection and preparation of healthy foods.

Because research shows that classes which teach how to select and prepare nutritionally healthy foods on a restricted budget could enhance dietary intake, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) in Mecklenburg county partnered with Hope Haven, a recovery center, to teach a 10-lesson series. Participants learned how to plan meals, shop smart, and keep foods safe as these skills also play an important part in providing healthy meals for their families. A hands-on food preparation activity allowed participants to prepare recipes that contained fresh produce and other nutritional foods. Their in-class EFNEP experiences gave each participant the confidence needed to plan, prepare and serve a variety of foods for their families at home. It didn't take long before the EFNEP participants were using the smart shopping skills learned to select more fruits and vegetables and fewer processed foods.

The daughter of a participant had this to say: *"I ran into Ms. Washington, (the EFNEP Educator) last Sunday at a church service. She was visiting my church for the first time. I went up to her after church and reminded Ms. Washington who I was. When I was 18, I would sometimes attend the EFNEP nutrition classes with my mother. I learned so much about nutrition and exercising. I didn't know the importance of eating fruits and vegetables every day. I used to eat a lot of processed foods and drink sugary drinks. I was so surprised to find out about all the health benefits of fruits and vegetables and how many calories are in sugary drinks. My mother passed away recently and I am thankful she made me go to class with her. Now, I eat vegetables and fruits at least two to three times a day, and I try my best to stay away from sugary drinks. I also try to teach my younger brother and sisters what I learned in the EFNEP classes. I recently enrolled in college, and I am majoring in Foods and Nutrition. Thanks, Ms. Washington for caring enough to come to the housing complex and teach us. It made me so happy to see you again."*

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