

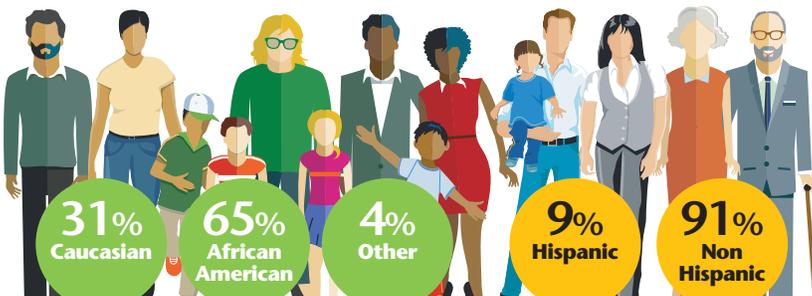
NC Cooperative Extension 2019 REPORT

Union 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 Union County

In 2019: **132** families enrolled in EFNEP

94% 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 Union County

 **96%** of EFNEP participants improved dietary intake.

 **86%** now practice daily physical activity.

 **87%** practice better food resource management.

 **96%** 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, **12** 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

\$17,392

in funding and support
from local efforts.

EFNEP SUCCESS

EFNEP Participant Shares Food Safety Education with Church Hospitality Committee

Prior to enrolling in EFNEP, participants typically checked their meat for doneness by pricking and poking it with a fork. When the fork showed no signs of blood the meat was assumed to be done. According to research conducted by the US Dept. of Agriculture, one out of every four hamburgers turns brown in the middle before it has reached a safe internal cooking temperature.

Early in the EFNEP series, participants learn the importance and proper use of meat thermometers. Through hands-on food preparation, they apply these skills in class and receive a personal meat thermometer to use at home.

As a result of taking the EFNEP classes, a program participant was able to share her knowledge of food safety with her church hospitality committee and prevent the spread of food borne illness. The participant arrived at the church function prepared to help cook fried chicken and make collard greens for an estimated 150 members and guests. During the process, she noticed several food safety errors about to occur, as they had in the past. Now that she had food safety knowledge, she took the opportunity to educate the other committee members. The participant secured six additional thermometers for this large project.

Thermometers were used to assure the chicken remained hot during serving. Because the cooks had thermometers, they were no longer piercing the chicken with the same fork used for raw chicken to check for doneness.

As a result of the EFNEP participant sharing her food safety knowledge with church hospitality committee members, the church had the EFNEP Educator conduct a "Fix it Safe" workshop for its members to spread awareness of the importance of food safety.



Nutrition Literacy for Healthy Minds and Healthy Bodies

Research shows that people who eat more fruits and vegetables have a reduced chance of developing chronic illnesses. EFNEP entry surveys show that most families do not consume the recommended daily serving of fruits and vegetables. The EFNEP Educator also found that while teaching a lesson on reading Nutrition Fact labels, most participants were not aware of how to correctly interpret the labels and apply the information to their unique dietary concerns. The EFNEP Educator saw this as an opportunity to partner with the Union County Library to offer an opportunity for parents and their children to have an experience that combined literacy with nutrition.

Staff from the Union County Public Library presented morning story time for the children. The delightful stories had themes that centered around food and nutrition. The goal of the partnership was to encourage families to experience cooking together, read and interpret product labels, try a variety of fruits and vegetables, and enjoy the adventures of reading to develop healthy minds and bodies in addition to exposing more families to local foods and the county farmers' market.

Research shows that on average, it takes nine different occasions to encourage a child to try a new food. When children grow it or cook it, they are more likely to eat it. According to the *Journal of Pediatric Nurses* (April/June 2016), the World Health Organization's Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity, one of the tactics proposed to combat the problem of obesity in children is to promote nutrition literacy.

During the course of the classes, one parent found that her child, who previously would not eat any vegetables, now enjoyed corn, tomatoes, and lima beans in the EFNEP "Hearty Vegetable Salad" recipe. This was also a recipe that he took pride in preparing himself for the family meal at home.

Another participant discovered that her lack of understanding the nutrition fact labels contributed to her inability to control her sodium intake. Upon entering the classes, she had experienced swelling in her feet. Although she purchased snacks lower in sodium, she did not follow the suggested serving size, often eating the whole bag in one serving. Additionally, she was not aware of the Federal Dietary Guidelines for the daily recommended amount of sodium intake. As a result of following the complete nutrition fact guidelines, and replacing some snacks with fresh fruits and vegetables, her swelling completely disappeared.

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