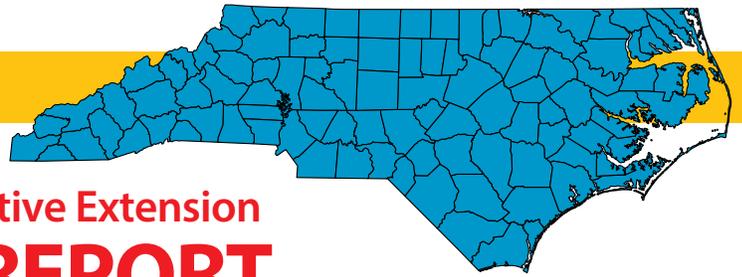




NC Cooperative Extension 2021 REPORT

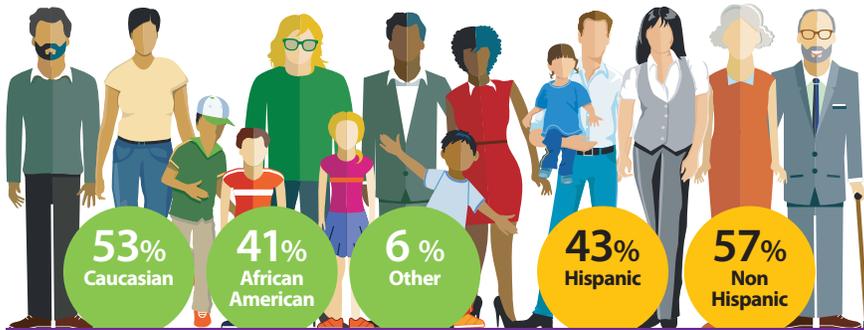


North Carolina

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



North Carolina EFNEP Reaches Diverse Audiences

In 2021:

1,233 families enrolled in EFNEP.

9,032 youth participated in 4-H EFNEP.

84% of EFNEP participants were enrolled in one or more food assistance programs.

North Carolina EFNEP programs obtained over **\$808,383** in funding and support from local efforts.

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 2020, 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

- 97%** of EFNEP participants improved dietary intake.
- 85%** now practice daily physical activity.
- 96%** practice better food resource management.
- 91%** have improved their food safety habits.

Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2021, **900** adults and youth donated time to EFNEP, making a difference in their own communities and contributing to EFNEP's ongoing success.



EFNEP SUCCESS



Swapping Sugar-Sweetened Drinks for Healthier Options

While programming in Ashe County Schools, EFNEP emphasized to youth participants the importance of limiting added sugars to no more than 10% of their daily caloric needs.

Youth participants were challenged to replace sugar-sweetened beverages with low-fat milk or water at mealtime. This simple goal encouraged nutrient-dense options and reduced the consumption of sugary beverages that have little to no nutrients. The EFNEP educator taught students how to compare nutrients in beverages and other foods by reading the nutrient facts label. They compared the labels on milk, water, juice, and sports drinks.

By the end of the challenge, about 85% of students reported that they drank low-fat milk or water with dinner and thought they could continue this healthy behavior.

Following a healthy diet throughout a lifetime has a profound impact on a person's health. Creating new habits that will keep youth mindful of making healthy choices will help to prevent chronic diseases later in life.



EFNEP Demonstrates that Healthy Food Can Be Affordable

For low-income families in Bertie County, money for healthy food is often diverted to cover rent, medication, utilities, and clothing, making "dollar menu" options seem like the best deal. EFNEP teaches these families how to make healthy choices with the money and benefits they have available. EFNEP typically conducts food tastings and demonstrations allowing participants to gain knowledge and confidence when preparing new foods.

Due to the pandemic, many classes were held online, eliminating the ability to conduct food demonstrations and tastings. The EFNEP educator understood the importance of this component and secured funds through a grant, allowing participants to purchase recipe items to join a virtual cooking class and experiment with new foods.

One individual shared how grateful she was to receive the extra help in order to try the new recipes. She had learned the importance of choosing healthy food during the classes and wanted to make a change in her life, but until that point, didn't know where to start. The classes taught her basic recipes that could be customized to fit her family's preferences. Previously she thought that healthy eating was too expensive and impossible to achieve.

Passionate EFNEP educators teach participants that making an investment in their health now will reap many rewards later in life by preventing or delaying chronic disease. With the help of partners who recognize and support wellness as a valuable asset, EFNEP educators are poised to create a culture of health in their communities.



Jumping for Joy

The Chowan County EFNEP educator has made it her mission to help kids find joy in movement. In addition to talking about physical activity during each lesson, she also makes sure the kids have an opportunity to try different forms of movement. During the classes, the educator offers a chance for kids to participate in familiar activities, but she also challenges them to try unfamiliar activities, like yoga. The playful names of yoga poses such as "downward dog," "cat-cow," and "happy baby" bring excitement and encourage the kids to challenge themselves to move in new ways.

In addition, over 400 elementary school children received jump ropes to support and encourage physical activity. Many children wrote about sharing their jump rope with siblings, cousins, and friends. One child said, "I love my jump rope. I play with it every day!"

Their words serve as a reminder that once a spark for activity has been lit, youthful energy can sustain the momentum and encourage healthy life-long behaviors. By the end of the EFNEP series, the EFNEP Web-based Nutrition Education Evaluation Reporting System (WebNEERS) showed that 72 percent of youth increased their daily physical activity.



EFNEP Helps Families Improve Food Safety Practices at Home

EFNEP understands that not all kitchens may be equipped to implement proper food safety practices. One of the benefits of taking an EFNEP class in Northampton County is that participants who complete the program receive skill builders related to the lessons to help them implement healthy practices at home.

"Food safety was one of my favorite lessons taught during the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program classes," stated one mom of four small children.

She also learned about using a meat thermometer to ensure food is cooked to the appropriate temperature and how to use a cutting board safely. She received both a thermometer and a cutting board by attending the EFNEP classes, which turned out to be helpful since she did not have them at home. She stated, "This program has helped me form safe habits and skills that I didn't have before the class..."

The EFNEP classes not only helped her learn and understand the importance of safe practices in the kitchen but also equipped her with the tools to be able to implement them. EFNEP in Northampton County has been able to help provide many families with the tools they need to practice safe food handling.

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