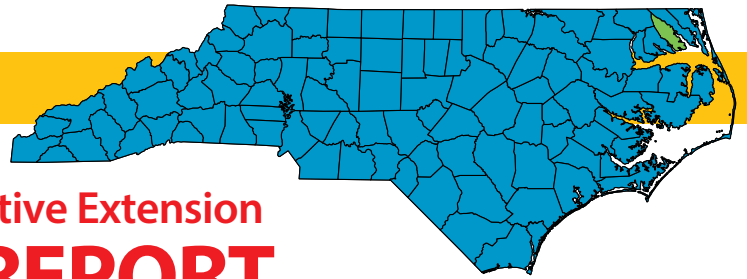




NC Cooperative Extension 2021 REPORT

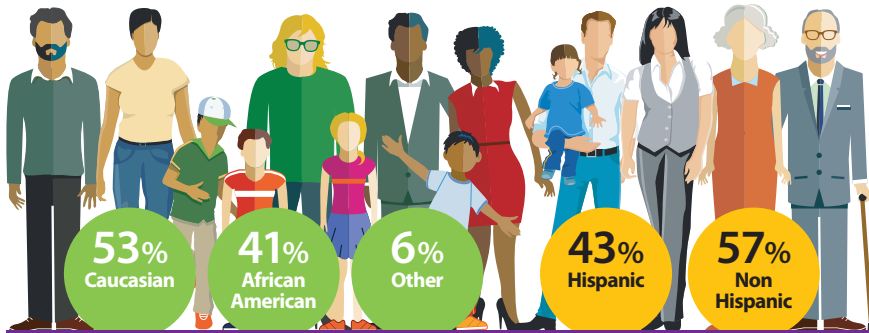


North Carolina

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 2021, EFNEP served 42 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.



2021 NC Cooperative Extension Chowan and Perquimans Counties Report

EFNEP used multiple strategies to get needed nutrition and food safety information to low-income audiences throughout the pandemic. In Chowan and Perquimans Counties, 533 individuals were reached through direct programming.

Chowan and Perquimans Counties EFNEP programs obtained **\$17,930** in funding and support from local efforts.

EFNEP SUCCESS



Jumping for Joy

EFNEP offers an evidence-based solution to reduce the health risks of overweight and obesity. Teaching young children the basic concepts of making healthy food choices and incorporating regular physical activity is very important, especially for those who lack role models for these behaviors.

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 move in new ways.

During the program, **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% of youth increased their daily physical activity.**



Exposing the Deleterious Effects of Hunger

Food-insecure households experience high levels of stress, which is an especially taxing environment for young children who may be dealing with developmental delays, poor behavior, or lower academic scores as a result of inadequate nourishment. Rural

areas are among those hardest hit by hunger. Feeding America reports that “86% of the counties with the highest percentage of children at risk for food insecurity are rural.” Safety-net provisions existing through school systems for the delivery of free or low-cost breakfast and lunch offer a reprieve for children with the guarantee of nutritious food on school days. Unfortunately, mandated school closures during the pandemic challenged food delivery systems and disrupted reliable food access for those most in need.

Thankfully, EFNEP is positioned to address food insecurity in disadvantaged areas and rose to the challenge during the pandemic. As EFNEP educators actively seek out the highest-need families to provide education and resources, they are intimately familiar with the disparities in their communities. One youth EFNEP educator was faced with the challenge of offering food tasting opportunities for a virtual third-grade class in a particularly underprivileged, rural county. Knowing the importance of a healthy snack to these children, the nutrition educator packaged up individual bags so the students could still enjoy the recipe. The educator partnered with her local 4-H agent to deliver the food to the school because pandemic restrictions prevented her from going to the school in person. The classroom teacher distributed the food to each child and sent a message to the EFNEP educator thanking her for finding a way to provide healthy food to her classroom. She shared feedback from the students about how they planned to share the recipes with their families. The teacher also noted that **when her students have enough food to eat, they come to school ready to learn.** They exhibit improved classroom behavior, are able to focus on their lessons, and are absent less often.

The overarching message is that adequate nutrition not only improves health outcomes for kids in the long term, it also improves their school performance in the short term. As our next generation of leaders, kids deserve every opportunity to live up to their potential. This includes having enough to eat.

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