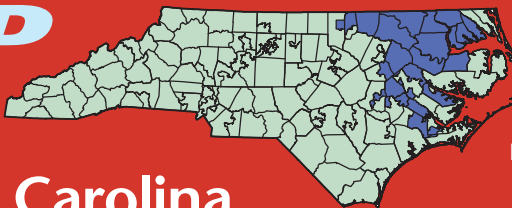




# EFNEP



Serving Bertie, Carteret, Chowan, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Hertford, Lenoir, Martin, Northampton, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Warren, Washington and Wayne counties

## 2008 North Carolina Congressional District 1 Report

### EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (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. Using “hands-on” experiences, participants are taught to: make wise choices with their food dollars, improve eating habits, and practice food safety principles.

EFNEP is offered through North Carolina Cooperative Extension as a part of university outreach at NC State University and NC A&T State University. In 2008, North Carolina EFNEP served 45 counties.

EFNEP’s mission is to assist families and youth with limited resources in making simple changes in eating behaviors and daily physical activity so that, over time, healthy choices become healthy habits.

### Supporting North Carolina’s Families with Greatest Needs Since 1969

EFNEP helps families and youth with limited resources—those most at risk to suffer from hunger, food insecurity and the inability to connect with available support systems. EFNEP offers practical nutrition information, food preparation, food resource management and food safety education in settings convenient for the participants. EFNEP graduates reflect significant, lasting improvement in eating behaviors and healthy food habits.

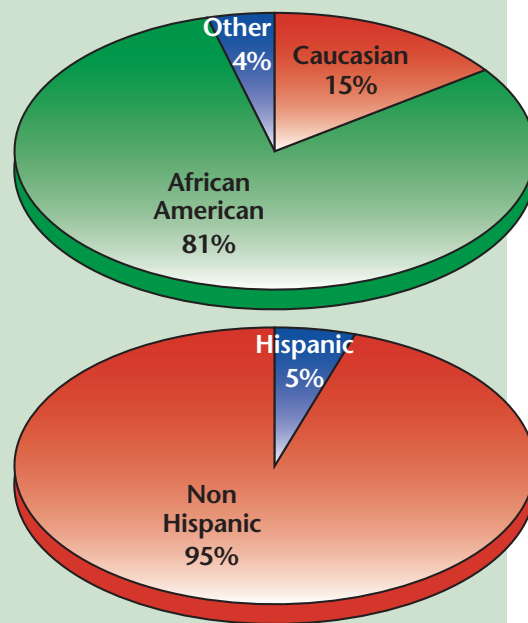
### Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2008, 799 adults and youth donated 11,440 hours on behalf of EFNEP. At a rate of \$19.51 per hour this is equivalent to \$223,194. Volunteers make a difference in their own communities, and contribute to EFNEP’s ongoing success.

### North Carolina EFNEP Reaches Diverse Audiences

In 2008,

- 800 families enrolled in EFNEP
- 5048 participated in 4-H EFNEP
- 54% of EFNEP participants were also WIC participants
- 93% of EFNEP participants enrolled in one or more food assistance programs.



The 1st Congressional District EFNEP program obtained over \$61,003 in funding and support from local efforts.

## EFNEP Makes a Real Difference for Limited Resource Adults

Participants completing the series of lessons improved nutrition, food behavior and food safety practices. As a result of participation in EFNEP:

- 82% improved in one or more food safety practices
- 94% improved in one or more nutrition practices
- 74% used food labels more often to make food choices
- 91% improved in one or more food resource management practices
- 41% of participants increased the amount of physical activity
- 99% of participants improved their diet
  - 69% increased fruit consumption
  - 56% increased vegetable consumption
  - 60% increased consumption of calcium-rich foods

Recent research shows the positive effects of families eating together. In North Carolina, we track meals eaten together as an indicator of participant families' well being. In 2008 clients were asked "How often do you eat meals or snacks with one or more family members?" After EFNEP participation, 54% of families more often ate together. EFNEP makes a difference in families!

## EFNEP Makes a Real Difference for Limited Resource Youth

Through a series of classes, 4-H EFNEP participants learn basic nutrition, the importance of daily physical activity, how to make healthy food choices, and food safety in preparation and storage. Evaluation data shows the following:

- 74% of the youth reported eating a variety of foods
- 79% increased their knowledge of human nutrition
- 84% increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods
- 46% improved practices in food preparation and safety

A participant in the Lenoir County Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) credits the program with helping her learn new knowledge and skills that resulted in significant personal health improvements. During one of the final classes, this participant shared that since beginning the class she has lowered her blood pressure, lost 5 pounds and increased her daily physical activity. She shared with other participants in the class that her doctor wanted to know what she had been doing to make these changes in her health. When he learned of the changes she had made as a result of what she learned in EFNEP, he told her to keep going to class and to continue with her new healthy lifestyle even after the classes were finished. The participant stated she was committed to the changes she had made because she feels better and looks better and wants to be healthy for the rest of her life.

Research shows that consuming foods high in fat is a leading cause of obesity in children. North Carolina continues to see an increase in the number of children who are over weight or at risk of becoming overweight. Many children do not consume enough fruits and vegetables. The 4-H Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (4-H EFNEP) of NC Cooperative Extension, Pasquotank County Center collaborated with the kindergarten and fourth grade classes of Central Elementary School to provide the Professor Popcorn curriculum. The program provided basic nutrition education, hands-on learning activities, food preparation and physical activity for a series of six weeks. Youth in the program prepared and tried various types of raw fruits and vegetables including carrots, broccoli, and cucumbers. Many of the children had never eaten these vegetables raw or tried the small packs of raw vegetables offered during lunch. Following the series and the hands-on food preparation activities that accompanied the lessons, teachers reported that the children were trying these foods in the lunchroom and not throwing them away. They were even bringing them from home as snacks rather than other high fat foods and cookies. 4-H EFNEP has helped the children in this school enjoy eating fresh fruits and vegetables and move toward consuming healthier foods.

According to a study by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, African American teens are twice as likely to deliver low birth-weight babies and 1.5 times more likely to have premature babies than are white teen mothers. The toll of caring for premature babies in North Carolina during 2003 was more than \$18 billion dollars, according to March of Dimes officials. Low birth-weight babies have twice as many doctor visits in the first year than healthy weight babies and the mothers miss two times as many days from work. Greene County ranks 55th in the state for pregnant teens of all races, despite its small population. North Carolina Cooperative Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) targeting first time pregnant and parenting teens, began classes at Greene County's Adolescent Parenting Program (APP) in the fall of 2007. Students learned valuable lessons on nutrition in pregnancy, the value of breastfeeding, introducing solids to infants and making healthy choices for themselves and their children from Shirley Howard, Extension EFNEP Program Assistant. Participants were surprised to learn how small a newborn's stomach is and the potential choking hazard for introducing solids before the baby is developmentally ready. Students reported choosing more healthy foods for themselves and their infants following the EFNEP classes.

