

IMPACT



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The Extension Nutrition Program's Improves Nutrition Knowledge of North Idaho's Low-Income Families

The Situation

It is estimated that 11% of the households in the U.S. are food insecure, and Idaho is above the national average at 13%. USDA estimates that during the years of 1999-2001 that 16.3% of Idahoans lived in food-insecure households and had to reduce the quality of their diets.



Food stamps provide critical support for millions of low-income people. However, there is no legislative mandate to teach families how to link food security with healthy eating habits. Nutrition education can be used as a strategy to improve the lives and overall health of food stamp families.

Our Response

Food Stamp Nutrition Education, known in Idaho as the Extension Nutrition Program (ENP), is a community-based education program that teaches limited resource individuals how to stretch their food dollars to provide healthy, low-cost meals for their families. The District 1 ENP program encompasses the 10 northern counties in Idaho.

In FY 2005 ENP embarked on a new project and refocused its efforts to provide educational lessons to agency sites that serve low-income families. In-home visits are still offered to families; however, group lessons were initiated to serve a greater number of food stamp families with the many benefits of ENP.

Program Outcomes

District 1 ENP Nutrition Advisors made contact with 1,163 clients during group lessons in FY 2005. Nutrition Advisors can choose from 16 different lessons covering the areas food resource management, nutrition and food safety.

Knowledge gain and planned behavior changes were measured using surveys and testing of group participants. Data showed the following:

- 131 clients participated in the MyPyramid lesson with 93% of them correctly answering questions about the lesson; 67% of clients planned to

increase the variety of food in their diets by choosing foods from all 5 food groups.

- 56 clients participated in the Meal Planning lesson with 95% of them correctly answering questions about the lesson; 73% of clients planned to use leftover foods to save time and money later in the week.
- 40 clients participated in the Safe Food Handling lesson with 100% of them correctly answering questions about the lesson; 63% of clients planned to thoroughly cook meat, poultry and fish.
- 33 clients participated in the Making the Most of Your Food Dollar lesson with 100% of them correctly answering questions about the lesson; 64% of clients plan to compare prices to find the best buy as their new behavior.
- 31 clients participated in the Eating Light and Right lesson with 100% of them correctly answering questions about the lesson; 55% of clients plan to eat smaller portions of food to control calories and fat as their new behavior.
- 25 clients participated in the Label Reading lesson with 92% of them correctly answering questions about the lesson; 84% of clients plan to use the food label to make more nutritious food choices as their new behavior.

The Future

District 1 ENP will continue to serve all 10 north Idaho counties with educational programming in nutrition, food safety, and food resource management for all food stamp recipients using group lessons and one-on-one counseling in clients' homes. District 1 ENP will also continue to maintain strong partnerships with advisory board members and other agencies serving low-income populations.

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For More Information

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