From Roots to Branches: Growth of National Nutrition Education over 50 Years

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EFNEP: At the Nexus of Poverty, Nutrition, and Health

Number in Poverty and Poverty Rate: 1959 to 2017

- Number in poverty: 39.7 million
- Poverty rate: 12.3 percent

Note: The data for 2013 and beyond reflect the implementation of the redesigned income questions. The data points are placed at the midpoints of the respective years. For information on recessions, see Appendix A. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see <www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/techdocs/cpsmar18.pdf>.

How has EFNEP Reached This 50-Year Milestone?

• Sound Legislation and Policies

• Commitment to Evaluation and Evolution

• Effective Federal/University Extension/Partner Structure

• Values-Driven: People, Methods, and Science
Sound Legislation and Policies

• Paraprofessional peer educators as primary educators

• Bi-partisan support, yet near level funding (reduced constant dollars)

• Results driven and stakeholder awareness – able to share more than need
Commitment to Evaluation and Evolution

• Attention to program integrity – reach, quality, accuracy, and effectiveness

• Results driven – use of data at every level to plan, evaluate, report, and demonstrate change; and to adapt as needed

• Nimble – constantly improve; anticipate and implement change
Being Nimble – Influenced by and Responsive To Context of People’s Lives
Other Changes...

- Evolving definition of nutrition education
- Poverty Demographics
- Physical Activity Environment
- University Organizational Structures and Outreach
- Food Environment
- Other public and private nutrition education programs
- National nutrition and health priorities
Effective Federal, University Extension, and Partner Structure

• Centralized leadership and oversight; local flexibility and accountability

• Ongoing training to support quality teaching

• Coordination, collaboration, and community engagement
Values-Driven: People, Methods, and Science

- Honor and listen to the “community”
- Cultural competence
- Respect for those who are part of EFNEP at every level
- Learner-centered; hand-on, interactive learning
- Dosage needed for optimal outcomes
- Practical application of the evidence – embracing program implementation research
EFNEP – It’s About The Outcomes
More than 90% of adult participants report improved diets

Recently developed and audience-tested indicators continue to show specific improvements by adults and youth
EFNEP COLLABORATION
“When A Plan Comes Together”

In 2006, the Budget and Advocacy Committee and the Farm Bill Committee added $400,000.00 to the 2006 Farm Bill for 1890 LGUs participation in EFNEP. How did this happen? Who was instrumental? Who are the ultimate winners?

What was needed?
- Additional funding from Congress for Nutrition Education (EFNEP)
  - Funding had decreased for EFNEP nutrition education, however, the need was ever present. Therefore, more funding and partners were needed to meet this growing need.

Why should additional funds be added?
- There was a compelling need for more money.
  - Obesity rates were increasing along with the rates of disease and death that could be attributed to diet and health. Also, the economic costs associated with these increasing rates could not be ignored.
- EFNEP had a successful model for nutrition education with proven successes.
EFNEP COLLABORATION
“When A Plan Comes Together”

Who were the Champions?
• Key champions for the effort:
  • 1862 & 1890 Administrators
  • Program Leadership at the National Institute for Food and Agriculture (NIFA)
  • The Board on Human Sciences
  • Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP)
  • The Congressional Board of Advocacy Committee
  • The Farm Bill Committee

How was it done?
• 1890s were already positioned to undertake the effort – *little planning time needed*
  • Clientele
  • Curriculum
  • Trained staff
• Meetings, Meetings, Meetings – *great minds working together for the greater cause*
• Champions mobilized – *strength in numbers*
EFNEP COLLABORATION
“When A Plan Comes Together”

Takeaways & Successes

• Initially $400,000 was added to the Farm Bill, but ultimately new language was added that indicated each 1890 would receive at least $100,000 a year.

• The Champions worked synergistically for the betterment of the whole.

• The champions saw poverty as being about the people and did not merely focus on who was delivering the services.

• There was commitment from all involved.

• Just because there is struggle doesn’t mean it’s not worth the fight.
Legislative Events That Have Shaped EFNEP
1968
President Johnson authorized $10 million for a nutrition education program

Funded the first national nutrition education program that matured into today’s Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP).
1977
Food Stamp Act

Law that extended the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program to reach Food Stamp Program (FSP) participants.
1977

Food and Agriculture Act

This legislation directed EFNEP to provide employment and training for professionals and paraprofessionals for direct nutrition education of low-income families.
Legislation that specifies that ‘to the maximum extent practicable, EFNEP paraprofessional aides shall be hired from the indigenous target population’.
1990 National Nutrition Monitoring & Related Research Act

Law directing USDA and DHHS to review and publish the Dietary Guidelines for Americans every five years.
2000 Public Law 106-580
Amendment to the Food Stamp Act of 1977

This legislation directed State Agencies to encourage FSP participants to participate in EFNEP.

Also made EFNEP institutions eligible for competitive grants to enhance nutrition education for FSP participants.
2008
Food, Conservation, and Energy
Act (Farm Bill)

Increased the authority for EFNEP to $90 million.
And provided the opportunity for 1862 and 1890 land-grant institutions
to receive funds appropriated for EFNEP.
2018 Agriculture Improvement Act (Farm Bill)

This legislation directs the Administrator of the Food and Nutrition Service, in consultation with the Director of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture to submit a report that evaluates coordination between nutrition education programs and the use of funds on nutrition education programs.
Setting the Stage for EFNEP: The 1960s

1962

1964: LBJ Declares War on Poverty

Hunger USA (Citizens Board)
Birth of the “Expanded Program”

- Built off paraprofessional education pilots’ successes
- USDA convinced President Johnson to allocate $10 million in Section 32 funding for a national pilot in November 1968 (FY 1969)
- Fully funded by Smith-Lever in November 1969
Late 60s/Early 70s: Alleviating Hunger For All

• 1969: White House Conference – variety of stakeholders included professional, academic, and community members

“The most critical audience, the hard-to-reach poor and near-poor, requires person to person intensive education efforts.... Nonprofessional personnel well trained and supervised by a professional staff can and are filling this need at less cost and in many instances with greater empathy.”
1960s & 1970s

Also, A Time for Change!
EFNEP Added a Little Color to Cooperative Extension!
In More than One Way!!!

2019 EFNEP National Conference
Late 70s: Shift to a Disease Prevention Focus

February 1977: Dietary Goals for the United States

December 1977: Dietary Goals for the United States, 2nd ed.

The Goals Suggest the Following Changes in Food Selection and Preparation:

1. Increase consumption of fruits and vegetables and whole grains. (See pages 17-26.)
2. Decrease consumption of refined and other processed sugars and foods high in such sugars. (See pages 33, 34.)
3. Decrease consumption of foods high in total fat, and partially replace saturated fats, whether obtained from animal or vegetable sources, with poly-unsaturated fats. (See pages 43-48.)
4. Decrease consumption of animal fat, and choose meats, poultry and fish which will reduce saturated fat intake. (See pages xxxix-xl, 43-48, and use particularly, tables 11-13, pp. 45-48.)
5. Except for young children, substitute low-fat and non-fat milk for whole milk, and low-fat dairy products for high fat dairy products. (See pages 43-48.)
6. Decrease consumption of butterfat, eggs and other high cholesterol sources. Some consideration should be given to easing the cholesterol goal for pre-menopausal women, young children and the elderly in order to obtain the nutritional benefits of eggs in the diet. (See pages xxxvii-xxxix for more details concerning eggs and cholesterol, pp. 43-48.)
7. Decrease consumption of salt and foods high in salt content. (See page 51 and Appendix E.)
Many scientists say the American diet is contributing to some of the chronic diseases that hit people in later life. And that cutting down on calories, fat (especially animal and other saturated fats), cholesterol, sugar, and salt and eating more whole grains, fruits, and vegetables are positive steps toward reducing heart disease, certain cancers, and strokes.

Other scientists believe just as strongly that the evidence doesn’t support such conclusions. So the choice is yours. You can make changes in the way you eat—or not.

The information in this Guide is offered to make it easier for you to follow a balanced diet, if you want to. The problem has been that it isn’t always easy to do what you want to do nutritionally.
By the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* 1\textsuperscript{st} (and later) additions, scientists had come to consensus
EFNEP Fell Into Step

• 1981: *Eating Right is Basic* curriculum is developed by Michigan State University for use with EFNEP/Food Stamps pilots

• Picked up by many states and became essentially a national curricula

• Updated three times in 1984, 1995, and 2007

[hopefully picture of an educator using the flip chart]
Late 80s and 90s

• ↑ number of nutrition education graduate programs... and graduates
  RESULT = More curriculum development
• ↑ belief that dietary fat was the enemy
• Development of the Partnership for Food Safety Education and its campaign
EFNEP’s 1-on-1 education limited the number of families that could be reached;

High crime rates in many low-income areas put educators’ safety at risk. Working in pairs helped but resulted in fewer families served.

Going into people’s homes often caused educational interruptions.

Working in homes often resulted in service > 2 years due to personal relationships formed or because it was easier to keep someone in the program than to recruit someone new (or) to use the new friend for recruitment assistance.
Marilyn Herman, former Wisconsin Family Living Educator who administered EFNEP, wrote the 1st FSNE grant when EFNEP funds were reduced in Brown County.
Shift Towards More Practice-Based and Evidence-Based Curricula
2000s Got EFNEP Moving!

2005: Dietary Guidelines
- Had separate Physical Activity goals for first time
- “Unlike in previous Dietary Guidelines, an evidence-based approach was used to develop the key messages.” J Am Diet Assoc. 2005;105:1418-1424
Today

WEB ONEERS

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program
Food & Physical Activity Questionnaire
EFNEP represents the nexus between research and practice

50 years of EFNEP = 50 years of research
1,130 articles • 841 excluded after reviewing titles and abstracts

289 articles • 139 excluded (MS thesis, PhD dissertations excluded; research not related to EFNEP)

150 articles included in this prelim. analysis

• Search terms:
  • “extension”
  • “nutrition”
  • “food”

• 1970 – 1979: 7
• 1980 – 1989: 9
• 1990 – 1999: 13
• 2000 – 2009: 47
• 2010 – 2018: 74
EFNEP Research over the Decades

- Nutrition
- Food Safety
- Food Resource Management (also including food security)
- Physical Activity
- Quality of Life

Topics:
- 1990s – Foodborne illness outbreaks
- 2001 – Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Prevent Overweight and Obesity
- 2010-2018

Bar charts and pie charts showing research trends over different decades.
EFNEP Research over the Decades

1983 – EFNEP encouraged to develop “innovative program delivery methods”

Program Design
Educator Characteristics
Evaluation

Program Delivery
Educator Training

1970-1979
1980-1989
1990-1999
2000 – 2009
2010-2018

Domains
EFNEP Research over the Decades

EFNEP Audiences

- Adult
- Youth
- Both

- 1970-1979: 7
- 1980-1989: 8
- 1990-1999: 10
- 2000-2009: 43
- 2010-2018: 46

- 1970-1979: 0
- 1980-1989: 1
- 1990-1999: 1
- 2000-2009: 3
- 2010-2018: 17
BEST PRACTICES IN NUTRITION EDUCATION FOR LOW-INCOME AUDIENCES
Beginning of EFNEP Research

1960s

1969: Establishment of EFNEP and Inception of JNEB (vitamins and minerals article)

1970s

1971: ENEP evaluated (JNEB; V Wang, P Ephross, U of Maryland)
- Assessed homemakers’ changes in nutritional practices

1972: Formally recognized as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program
EFNEP Research over the Decades

1970s

Program delivery
Dosage of program to maximize benefits
Evaluation
Impact on EFNEP participants
Educator characteristics
Qualities that characterize successful EFNEP paraprofessionals

1980s

Program design
Education guided by the Theory of Reasoned Action
Evaluation
One-year follow-up study of EFNEP participants
Behavioral outcomes via one-on-one education
Examination of EFNEP’s benefits beyond nutrition (educational advancement, quality of life, movement to new and improved housing)
EFNEP Research over the Decades

1990s

Program delivery and design

Client behavior assessment to guide programming
- Risk of osteoporosis among EFNEP participants
- Comparison of EFNEP participant’s dietary quality to homeless individuals
- Motivators for participating in nutrition education
- Exclusive breastfeeding practices among Hispanic subgroups

Coordinated, large-scale, multi-level community-based effort (rural Arkansas delta)

Effect of hybrid group and telephone follow-up lessons on attrition

Group versus individual programs
EFNEP Research over the Decades

1990s

Educator characteristics
Worksite wellness for EFNEP nutrition aides
Evaluation
Breastfeeding support
EFNEP Research over the Decades

2000s

Program delivery and design

Client behavior assessment to guide programming

- Food safety knowledge and behavior among EFNEP participants
- Food security assessment of participants through EFNEP educators
- Assessment of shopping characteristics and relationship to dietary quality
- Barriers to participation, challenges in reaching and recruiting
- Assessment of adequate tools for cooking
EFNEP Research over the Decades

2000s

Program delivery and design
Design of interventions

- Guided goal setting
- Improving social interaction
- Addressing the healthy home food environment
- Focus on obesity
- New programs that included physical activity
- Use of emerging technology (video lessons)
- Supplemental topics – field gleaning
EFNEP Research over the Decades

2000s

**Educator characteristics**

**Evaluation**

- Assessment methods – developing and/or testing different methods to assess behavior and behavior change
  - selection of specific questions
  - sensitivity testing of food behavior checklist questions
  - readability
  - developing and testing of a bilingual interactive online dietary assessment qualitative tools

- Randomized control trials

- Eating Smart Being Active

- Cost-benefit analyses

Data and Program Integrity
EFNEP Research over the Decades

2010s

Program delivery and design
- Client behavior assessment *to guide programming*
  - Social media use
- Curricula
  - Healthy Baby, Healthy Me food safety curriculum
  - Formative evaluation for ESBA
  - Nutrition content of EFNEP curricula
  - Content analysis of EFNEP curricula
  - Program for nutrition education and parenting
  - Blended delivery method (distance education)
  - Use of goal attainment

- Program integrity/quality assurance (implementation fidelity) (also more focus on educator characteristics)
EFNEP Research over the Decades

2010s

**Educator characteristics**
- Perceptions of access to farmers markets
- Impact of EFNEP on quality of life of Educators
- Online nutrition certification program for EFNEP educators
- Job satisfaction and retention of community nutrition educators

**Evaluation**
- Instrumentation – reliability, validity
- Randomized control trials
- Cost-effectiveness analyses
- Characteristics of EFNEP graduates
- Long-term impacts of EFNEP, including quality of life

Sustainability and Public Value
EFNEP Research Aligns with Dissemination and Implementation Science Frameworks

- Characteristics of participants, characteristics of para-professionals
- Inner setting (culture of organization)
- Intervention characteristics
- Outer setting (policy, systems, and environments)
- Process (executing, planning, reflecting, evaluating)
- Implementation outcomes
- Participant outcomes

Reference: Consolidated Framework for Implementation Research
https://cfirguide.org/constructs/
EFNEP represents the nexus between research and practice

50 years of research on EFNEP reflects:

• the adaptability of EFNEP programs and staff to meet (changing) needs of participants and stakeholders

• the opportunities that EFNEP has afforded for robust research to be conducted

• the importance of EFNEP in shaping nutrition education “best practices” (and vice versa) and dissemination and implementation science frameworks

• the bread and depth of insight on low-income audiences and communities (to serve researchers and practitioners beyond EFNEP)
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