

# Food and Nutrition Education in Communities

**Cornell Cooperative Extension of New York State**

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The United States Census Bureau estimates 15% of the residents within our state are living in poverty, currently \$20,650 for a family of four. Low income is associated with numerous health problems, including obesity, chronic disease, and poor pregnancy outcomes. Positive changes in these practices are integral to avoiding the negative consequences of these health conditions. Our Nutrition Education Programs provide knowledge and skill development in:

- Nutrition Practices/Food Selection
- Food Safety
- Food Resource Management
- Physical Activity

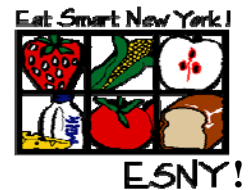
Cornell Cooperative Extension programs provide nutrition education to the New York State limited-resource populations. Program examples include:

- Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program and
- Food Stamp Nutrition Education



The **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)** is hosted at land-grant universities in every state and in U.S. territories. In New York State, Cornell Cooperative Extension sponsors the program. EFNEP targets families with children at 185% or less of the federal poverty level.

Food Stamp Nutrition Education, known in New York State as **Eat Smart New York! (ESNY!)**, is administered through the USDA Food and Nutrition Service and the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. ESNY! targets food stamp recipients.



Cornell Cooperative Extension educators in 53 counties and five NYC boroughs oversee the work of 272 paraprofessionals who teach limited-resource individuals about food and nutrition practices. These paraprofessionals usually live in the communities where they work and recruit families and receive referrals from neighborhood contacts and community agencies.

A nutrition study at Cornell University assessed the food security of 16,146 participants in a multi-ethnic, low-income population over three years. Food security is the certain ability to acquire enough sufficient, safe, and nutritious food, in socially acceptable ways, for an active, healthy life. The study found that EFNEP participants who completed six or more lessons experienced significantly greater food security than those who dropped out of the program early. In fact, the more lessons attended, the more their reported food security improved.

A cost effectiveness study of the New York State EFNEP indicated a health benefit of \$9.58 for every \$1.00 spent using a societal willingness to pay approach. This benefit is estimated to be as great as many health care interventions.

Adults enrolled in nutrition education are provided lessons in a series, delivered over time, allowing participants the opportunity to develop skills, increase knowledge and incorporate changes into their daily lives. Youth receive nutrition education designed to increase their awareness of healthy eating and the benefits of being physically active. Seventy-five percent of adults completed the lesson series.

**Evaluation findings demonstrate that these programs are effective at:**

- ❖ Motivating people to adopt healthy eating and lifestyle behaviors
- ❖ Enhancing practices related to thrifty shopping and preparation of nutritious foods
- ❖ Ensuring that individuals and families have enough to eat without resorting to emergency food assistance.
- ❖ Retention studies document that desirable practices continue at least one year after graduation.

**Partnerships/Collaborations:**

Collaborations with community partners help us reach participants more effectively.

**Nutrition Education through EFNEP and ESNY! during 2007.**

**Graduated participants report these improvements in their knowledge and skills:**

- 81% improved their Nutrition Practices  
(i.e. making health food choices, reading nutrition facts labels, drinking lower fat milk, etc.)
- 63% improved their Food Safety practices  
(i.e. thawing and storing foods properly)
- 76% improved their Food Resource Management skills  
(i.e. planning meals, comparing prices, using grocery lists, etc.)
- 41% improved their frequency of being Physically Active

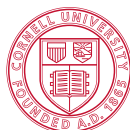
**2007 Enrollment**

**Adult**

	<u>N</u>	<u>%</u>	
Group	14,363	76	Participants engaged in 114,300 educational contacts. The average number of educational contacts provided to each participant was 7.5.
One-on-One	3,862	21	
Combination	<u>620</u>	<u>3</u>	
	18,845	100%	

**Youth**

678 groups                      Average group size was 17. Average number of lessons provided to each youth was 6.



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