

NUTRITION PROGRAM FACTS: FOOD STAMP NUTRITION EDUCATION

US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Food Stamp Program

As the cornerstone of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition assistance programs, the Food Stamp Program (FSP) plays a vital role in helping to improve nutrition in the Nation, particularly among low-income individuals.

During Fiscal Year 2005, an average of 25.7 million people living in 11.2 million households received food stamps in the United States.

- 50% children
- 42% non-elderly adults
- 8% elderly (60 years and older).

Encouraging Healthy Food Choices

Under current regulations (7 CFR 272.2), States have the option of providing nutrition education to food stamp recipients as part of their program operations. While optional, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) actively encourages States to provide nutrition education for food stamp participants and eligibles.

The goal of Food Stamp Nutrition Education is to improve the likelihood that persons eligible for the FSP will make healthy food choices within a limited budget and choose physically active lifestyles consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid.



State Food Stamp Nutrition Education Plans

- Participating State agencies submit an annual Nutrition Education Plan to FNS. This Plan outlines the State's activities and budget for the following year.
- USDA reimburses the State for 50% of the allowable administrative costs deemed reasonable and necessary to operate Food Stamp Nutrition Education activities.
- The number of State agencies with approved Nutrition Education Plans increased from 7 in 1992 to 52 State agencies in 2007 (Figure A).
- Federal funds approved for Food Stamp Nutrition Education also grew from \$661,000 in 1992 to over \$270 million in 2007. This amount represents half of States' total

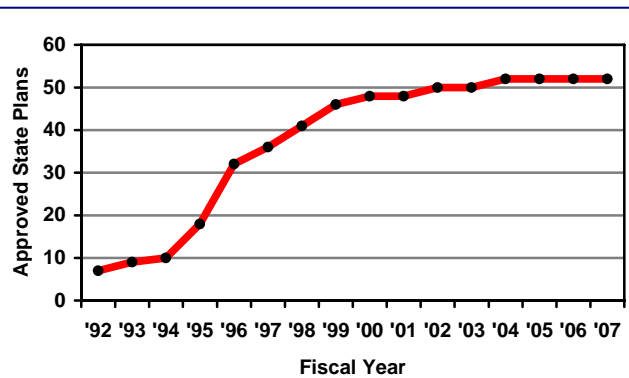


Figure A. The number of State agencies with an approved plan for Food Stamp Nutrition Education by Fiscal Year.

approved funds for Food Stamp Nutrition Education.



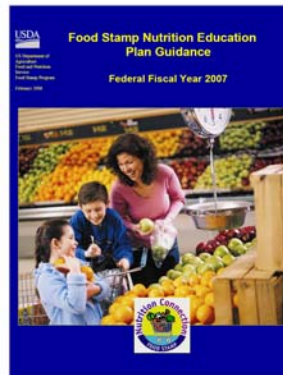
State Guidance

FNS provides guidance to States that encourages the use of the most effective nutrition education tools and strategies available. The guidance also helps States develop a clear, comprehensive document for implementing their State plan.

FNS encourages States to focus on the following Key FSNE Behavioral Outcomes when assessing needs, developing objectives and outcomes:

- Eat Fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk products every day
- Be physically active every day as part of a healthy lifestyle
- Balance caloric intake from food and beverages with calories expended

In particular, FNS encourages interventions in the above areas that focus on:



*A copy of the Plan Guidance is available online at:
<http://foodstamp.nal.usda.gov>*

- fruit and vegetable consumption among low-income groups;
- interventions and activities that promote a healthy weight;
- partnerships and collaborations that include other FNS programs in the planning and delivery of nutrition education;
- activities that take place in the Food Stamp Program office.

In Your Community

States provide a variety of Food Stamp Nutrition Education initiatives and target Food Stamp Program participants of all ages. Activities range from social marketing campaigns to the provision of a comprehensive curriculum of nutrition education classes.

The Cooperative Extension System (CES) is the predominant State sponsoring agency that is contracted to provide Food Stamp Nutrition Education. However, state nutrition education networks, public health departments, welfare agencies and other university academic centers are also sponsoring agencies.



Contact your local Food Stamp Program office for information on Food Stamp Nutrition Education activities in your area. Links to the Web sites of State Food Stamp Nutrition Education providers are available on the Food Stamp Nutrition Connection Web site at:
www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp/Stategates/index.html