

# Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

## ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF EXTENSION EDUCATION

### A GROWING AND COSTLY ISSUE

- The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 20% of Texas families with related children under age 18 live in poverty, compared to the national average of 12%.
- Poor health disproportionately affects low-income and minority populations in the United States.
- Understanding the nutritional needs of families planning and preparing nutritious meals and snacks, smart shopping on a limited budget, and food-safety skills are all required to combat poor health, poor nutrition habits, and obesity in low-income families.

### AGRILIFE EXTENSION'S RESPONSE

- The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is a nationally recognized program funded by the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture.
- The program began in 1969 to help low-income families and youth acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for nutritionally sound diets.
- Trained EFNEP educators teach basic nutrition, food safety, shopping, and food-preparation skills using hands-on, practical, easy-to-understand materials.
- The program is located in 11 counties, which together represent approximately 55% of the state's population.
- In 2024, approximately 3,586 adult participants completed and graduated from the eight-week course. Overall, EFNEP reached more than 6,400 Texas families and 50,470 limited-resource youth.

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### ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- Program evaluations found that 70 percent of participants showed improvement in one or more physical activity practices, while more than 92 percent of participants showed improvement in one or more areas of food resource management and food safety. Ninety-seven percent of participants reported improvement in diet quality related to eating more fruits, vegetables and decreased consumption of sugar sweetened drinks.
- Based on responses from a random sample of 1,370 participants, the average monthly savings on grocery expenditures was \$65 per month. The estimated savings for all EFNEP graduates' families was \$234,500 monthly, or \$2.8 million annually.
- Broader benefits of the program are a reduced risk of chronic disease and foodborne illness, reduced indigent health care costs, and improved quality of life. These benefits are a result of participants' improved dietary intake, increased physical activity, and enhanced food-safety practices in the home.

