



Helping Thousands **Make Healthier Choices**

Low-income families tend to compromise when it comes to food, says Joyce McDowell, leader of community nutrition projects for Ohio State University Extension.

“They might choose carbohydrate-rich foods instead of focusing on nutrient density — ‘cheap and filling,’” McDowell says. “But we know that when people eat right and are more active, they’re going to be healthier, especially in terms of cancer, heart disease, and diabetes.”

That’s where FNP (the Family Nutrition Program) and EFNEP (the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) come in. These federally funded programs reach thousands of low-income Ohioans on nutrition, food safety, and thrifty food shopping.

- **FNP** — This OSU Extension program receives \$2.7 million a year in matching funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service, targeting adults and families eligible to receive food stamps. Currently, FNP is offered in 66 counties.

“Most of our programs are offered through WIC (Women, Infants, and Children program), food pantries, senior centers, Head Start, Job and Family Services,

homeless shelters, public housing — we partner with everyone,” says Ana Claudia Zubieta, director of Ohio FNP.

The program is flexible depending on participants’ needs. Leaders can offer a single hour-long program or a series of programs over several weeks. The staple ingredient is reliable, research-based information: “If you educate people, you empower them to make good decisions,” Zubieta says.

And they do. Results from 27,000 evaluations from the first nine months of the 2006–07 fiscal year showed positive behavior changes across all categories, from using a meat thermometer to planning meals to eating more fruits and vegetables.

- **EFNEP** — OSU Extension receives \$2.2 million a year from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for EFNEP. The target participant is a homemaker with children living at 185 percent of poverty or less. In the 2005–06 fiscal year, EFNEP

reached 5,500 Ohio families; 90 percent of participants graduated from the six-lesson EFNEP curriculum. Nearly 80 percent improved their nutrition practices, such as using the “Nutrition Facts” labels; and 74 percent improved in managing resources, such as shopping with a list or planning meals in advance.

Mark Hayden, EFNEP program assistant in Hamilton County, sees results in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood he lives and teaches in. “A lot of things that we take for granted, many participants have never tried before,” Hayden says. For example, he often cooks a pot of rice during class just to contradict the common conception that rice is difficult to cook. “Simple, basic things are what I concentrate on.”

Hayden was delighted that three of the six women honored as the year’s “Successful Women in Over-the-Rhine” were recent EFNEP graduates, and two others were directors of programs that partner with EFNEP to offer the classes.

“It shows what a huge impact EFNEP has on that neighborhood,” Hayden says.



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Strengthening Families and Communities

Ohio State University Extension teaches people how to apply science in their daily lives in order to make informed choices about everything from finances to healthy living to food safety.



OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

We connect with people in all stages of life, from young children to older adults. We work with families and children, farmers and business owners, community leaders and elected officials to build better lives, better businesses, and better communities to make Ohio great. OSU Extension delivers targeted, relevant, research-backed information and programs to meet the needs of Ohioans at a local level and address emerging issues.

OSU Extension receives no funding through Ohio State University's state support or tuition. It is funded through a line item in the State of Ohio's budget, and receives support from counties and from the federal government.

Agbiosciences

We work with farmers to strengthen their businesses, adopt new technology, and improve efficiency while protecting the environment.

Health and Nutrition

We teach nutrition, food safety, and other life choice skills to help Ohioans live healthy lives.

Home and Family

We build strong families by offering programs and information to all Ohioans on childcare, parenting, family life, adult development and aging, and balancing life, jobs, and families. We also teach people to manage money and prepare for retirement.

4-H Youth Development

Our 4-H program is part of a community of young people across America who learn about leadership, citizenship, and life skills. More than 300,000 young people, aged 5 to 19, experience hands-on learning in this OSU Extension effort through clubs, camps, and after-school programs in urban, suburban, and rural communities statewide.

Lawn and Garden

Using us as a resource, homeowners enhance the value of their homes and communities, and we train Master Gardener volunteers to apply and share research-based yard and garden information.

Natural Resources and Environment

We protect Ohio's natural environment by working with landowners in managing woodlands and preserving streams and other water resources, such as Lake Erie.

Commercial Horticulture

We grow Ohio's important green industry by creating jobs, improving workforce skills, and enriching the knowledge of professionals in turfgrass management, landscaping, and nursery companies.

Business and Economics

Our job readiness training improves the skill level of potential employees and works with communities to attract new businesses and encourage retention and expansion among current employers.

Community

We enhance communities and neighborhoods by partnering with businesses, current and emerging community leaders, and elected and appointed officials. We inform residents, leaders, and entrepreneurs regarding local development issues and increase the knowledge base for individual and community decisions.

