

FY05 WNEP Plan for Fond du Lac and Green Lake Counties

Brief description of the Fond du Lac/Green Lake Counties Nutrition Education Program:

The Fond du Lac/Green Lake unit began in Fond du Lac County in 1991 in response to agency requests for help with clients who had limited skills in food shopping and food preparation. In 1997 the adjacent county, Green Lake, was added to the unit. This permits educational contacts with Green Lake's sparse population without added administrative costs.

Characteristics (demographics) of the low income residents of Fond du Lac/Green Lake Counties:

Green Lake is a rural county with a population of 19,000 and no major urban center. In addition to farm households, there are six towns and villages. The largest of these is the city of Green Lake with 1,000 residents. Green Lake is primarily one race--98% white, down from 99% white a few years ago. Five percent of the population received food stamps in 2002.

Fond du Lac County has a population of 97,296. The urban center and hub of services is the city of Fond du Lac with a population of 42,000. The population is 96% white. The percentage of individuals in poverty in 2002 was 5.85. Forty percent of the WIC households reported food insecurity in 2002, and an additional 18% of the WIC households reported food insecurity with hunger. There are seven school districts in the county; eighteen percent of the children in these schools are approved for free or reduced price lunches. Fond du Lac County has seven food pantries.

Documentation from the Fond du Lac County Department of Social Services shows increased use of public assistance programs in the past two years. From 2001 to 2003 the number of people using food stamps changed from 856 to 1,280, a 49% increase. Comparable increases also occurred with medical assistance and Food Stamp Employment and Training.

Nutrition and nutrition education needs of the low income residents of Fond du Lac/Green Lake Counties:

The Fond du Lac County Community Health Survey, completed in the fall of 2003, contains specific information related to nutrition and health concerns. In this random household survey it was found that households reporting an annual income below \$30,000 were more likely to report someone in the house with fair or poor health, engaging in physical activity less often, less likely to eat 2 or more servings of fruits and 3 or more servings of vegetables each day compared to households reporting incomes higher than \$30,000. Responses to a question on number of times the respondents ate fast food meals indicates 37% of the overall population eats a fast food meal a few times each week.

Agency staff in both counties report concerns about poor management of money for food, reluctance to use commodity foods related to not knowing what to do with the food and observations of eating high fat, low nutrition snacks. Regular consumption of soda was specifically cited as "constant."

Program Plans related to Food Security Programming Efforts

Plans to increase awareness of hunger/food insecurity

WNEP in Fond du Lac participates in the county Food Provider Network. The mission of this collaboration is to coordinate resources through communication. The localized publication, "Hunger Close to Home," will be distributed and discussed with the Food Provider Network, Children's Services Network, County Board members, and partner agencies. In partnership with the county Family Living Educator, and the Dept of Social Services, WNEP team teaches one day workshops on understanding poverty based on the research of "A Framework for Understanding Poverty." The audiences are county agency and government staff, volunteers and county policy makers.

Plans to assess status of food security in county or counties

We plan to implement the Wisconsin Food Security Survey in four schools-two in each county. Results are to be shared with Food Provider Network, Children's Services Network, county policy makers and others in WNEP.

Educational Projects

Fond du Lac/Green Lake Counties will be participating in the following statewide projects during FY05:

- Educational programming for school age youth (5 to 11 years) at after school or summer programs
- Educational programming for adults at TANF, W-2, Job Centers, Food Stamp offices or similar locations
- Educational programming for pregnant women or mothers of young children at WIC clinics
- Educational programming for preschool children and their families (parents and caregivers) at Head Start or similar locations
- Educational programming for families at Family Resource Centers or similar facilities
- Educational programming for low income adults who are residing in temporary or transitional facilities after being released from jail
- Educational programming for persons at emergency food pantries and free meal sites
- Educational programming in collaboration with school or community gardens
- Educational programming for adults who are residing in temporary shelters or transitional housing
- Educational programming for adults participating in AODA or similar recovery/treatment programs
- Educational programming for families or individuals in their homes
- Collaborative efforts with local partner agencies (e.g. Hunger Prevention Councils) to address food insecurity, including activities to raise awareness and assess the status of food insecurity, and to engage in community activities that reduce hunger