

Plan for Food Stamp Nutrition Education in Adams County during fiscal year 2008

Overview of the Adams County Nutrition Education Program

Adams County Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) provides education and resources about dietary quality, balancing food and physical activity, food safety and budgeting for food dollars to low-income families as a strategy for helping clients transform their lives. WNEP in Adams County began as part of a three County cluster in 1995 and two years later became a separate unit. Initially, program focus was on walk-by displays at sites where low income families received services but since then the program has evolved into a direct instruction program since long-term contacts allow the program to identify and track measurable changes.

Characteristics of low-income residents in Adams County

Primary audiences in need of services in Adams County are varied. One audience is low-income seniors and adults with disabilities living independently. Seniors are at risk in this Naturally Occurring Retirement Community (NORC). Although the senior poverty population appears to have decreased due to more seniors retiring to the area, the poverty level has remained stable. Of the senior population, 8.47% appear to be eligible for food share, but only 2.9% are receiving services. Youth attending schools as identified by 50% or more free and reduced lunch statistics are a second category of low-income residents. Six of seven schools in the Adams-Friendship School District meet 50% or more free and reduced eligibility.

Other qualified school groups where families meet food stamp eligibility, along with those who have children at programs like Women Infants and Children (WIC) where 1058 individuals received services in 2006 (524/month) and HeadStart. At present, food stamp case eligibility has decreased slightly to 1711 (2006 data) from 1730 (2005 data). Average new requests for assistance are 40 per month.

Demographics of Adams County

Adams County has a population of 20,828. The population is primarily white with a small percentage of minorities. Household size according to 2000 census data is averaged at 2.3 persons. 69% of all households are described as family households. Non-family households or households that contain more than one family or individuals from different families have increased by 91% in the past 10 years. Of the County households, 23% have a person with an identified disability. 56% of the population is in the labor force while 19.6% of the population is over 65 years of age. 21% consists of persons less than 18 years of age. Median income of a full-time year-around male worker is \$32,149 while a full-time female year-around workers lag at \$21,907.

Food Insecurity in Adams County

Food security indicators show that poverty is becoming more widespread. Food stamp eligibility has increased to 2691 (2006 data) individuals in Adams County. One determinant of low-income status is use of energy assistance. In fiscal year 2007, 1999 families out of 5464 (37%) Adams County families applied for energy assistance. Of those that applied, 1060 were granted assistance. Another indicator of low-income status is use of Women, Infants and Children (WIC) services. 1058 individuals received services in 2006 (524/month). Of those who receive WIC

services, 31% of the households still report themselves as food insecure, unsure if they have enough food to last through the month without hunger, and 13% describe themselves as food insecure with hunger.

A third indicator is the use of free and reduced meals. According to school food service -63% of all meals served at school go to free and reduced status children (n=764 free and reduced lunch recipients). During the summer, an average of 525 children per day received meals at 9 sites thus ensuring that a high percentage of children are receiving at least one nutritious meal daily.

In 2004, a food security survey of elementary school families in Adams Friendship School District using USDA Food Security Scale questions showed that while 81% of the families had at least one working individual (at least 72% reporting one full-time worker in the household), an average of 61% reported income below 185% of the poverty rate. In 2005 the same food security survey was done in the Wisconsin Dells school district, a district that includes families from Adams County. Results demonstrated even more food insecurity in Adams County. Families in the Wisconsin Dells area show that although 79% of families had at least one working individual, an average of 40% reported income below 185% of the poverty rate.

Over the past year, 4057 families (an average of 338 families per month) used a food pantry in Adams County. An additional 200 families used a mobile pantry and 1676 Wisconsin Dells families accessed the food pantry throughout the year. In addition, this year 2197 free meals were served to families at a school site on 29 nights in the Adams Friendship School District (average participation was 76 families per event).

Nutrition and nutrition education needs of Food Stamp Program recipients and eligible residents of Adams County

Based on a UW-Extension needs assessment done with Adams County residents in 2004, educational needs include (ranked from high to low priority) budgeting for food dollars, dietary quality, concern about youth obesity and risk for becoming overweight and food safety. In addition, with the change to MyPyramid, it is important to continue to educate food share eligible families about new dietary and physical activity recommendations.

Adams County nutrition education program has identified through past strategic planning and through program participation, key audiences for 2008. Adams NEP will continue to focus on three primary audiences for service: low-income seniors and adults with disabilities living independently, youth attending schools as identified by 50% free and reduced lunch statistics and other qualified school groups where families meet food stamp eligibility, along with those who have children enrolled in programs such as Women Infants and Children (WIC) and HeadStart.

Educational Projects planned for FY08

School Day: Adams County WNEP will reach groups of students at schools with the population a students having more than 50% free and reduced lunch qualifiers with information about basic food safety including hand washing, dietary quality and balancing food with physical activity.

After School Programs: Adams County WNEP will provide small-group education at 21st Century learning communities where more than 50% of students are free and reduced lunch

recipients. Education at these programs will focus on dietary quality and balancing food with physical activity. In addition, families will be reached during evening family programs with information about food safety, dietary quality and balancing food with physical activity. Summer school will also be a place to better promote dietary quality and balancing food with physical activity.

WIC: Adams County WNEP will provide individual "Learn While You Wait" displays on topics appropriate for pregnant women and mothers with young children. These displays will emphasize the use of the WIC food package to stretch food dollars. A secondary focus will be on encouraging parents and adults to model and encourage physical activity as a balance for dietary intake other topics to be covered include Raising Healthy Eaters, use of garden produce and other related topics.

HeadStart: Adams County WNEP will provide a series of three puppet shows two young children on hand washing, eating a variety of food, and balancing food with physical activity. In addition to these programs materials with more in-depth information about dietary quality, physical activity and topics of concern to parents of young children will be provided apparent support programs.

Family Resource Center: Adams County WNEP will provide puppet shows for children on hand washing and eating a variety of food. In addition, parent programs on feeding young children, infants, and toddlers will be provided for early head start parents at the family resource Center.

Gardens: Adams County has many vegetable producers will provide fresh produce for the food pantry. At garden sites, food stamp eligible families will learn about preparation of produce that they may receive at a food pantry or that they may grow in their own garden. And additional emphasis will be on food preservation for dietary quality and as a food budgeting strategy. Education format will be small groups or classrooms.

Health Clinics: Adams County WNEP will provide education at immunization clinics in Adams County for food share eligible clients on food safety, dietary quality and the relationship between food and physical activity. Individuals will learn in one-on-one or parent and child interactions.

Senior Dining: WNEP will provide education and at three senior nutrition sites with over 50% of the participants eligible for food share. Emphasis of programming will be on dietary quality, physical activity and food safety. Information will be provided to participants are resources for stretching food dollars. Presentations will be done in large group format while Flyers will be sent to Meals on Wheels participants.

Food Pantry: WNEP will provide education at the Adams County food pantry sites on use of commodities and foods available at the food pantry to improve dietary quality and combining available foods with food share to stretch food budgeting resources. Individuals will learn in one-on-one or small group format.

Adult Education: WNEP will provide adult education at probation and parole for no custodial parents with needs for education about dietary quality and feeding young children. Education will also be provided for individuals with need of food budgeting management skills. This education will be done in small group format. Mid-State Technical College's returning adult students will also be recipients of information about dietary quality, balancing food and physical activity and budget management through group sessions. Another site for distributing information will be Hope House, a shelter our reach for abused women and their children. This distribution will be one-on-one to protect privacy and ensure security for the clients.

Disabled Adults: Adams County WNEP will provide education for food stamp eligible clients who live independently about dietary quality in colluding food preparation, food budget management, food safety and balancing food with physical activity at sites where clients gather. Information will also be provided for high school special needs students who will be living independently in the near future. Format for education will be small-group.

Food security programming efforts planned

Methods planned to raise awareness of hunger/food insecurity

Adams County will continue to use materials from the food security assessment to further identify and collaborate on issues related to food security.

Methods planned to compile data and assess status of food security

The food security assessment tool will be shared with appropriate agencies to identify strategies for increasing food security.

Plans to increase involvement of community groups in efforts to address food security

Adams County WNEP will continue to work with the hunger task force to address issues of concern such as improving school meal program enrollment and use of community resources for food and food education. WNEP will also collaborate with the Adams County food share program to find out the percentage of food stamp recipients using and receiving assistance from WNEP. The "Wisconsin Connections" will continue to be distributed to sites and agencies where low income individuals can receive information about resources that help stretch food dollars.