

Plan for Food Stamp Nutrition Education in Barron and Dunn Counties during fiscal year 2008

Overview of the Barron and Dunn Counties Nutrition Education Program

Barron and Dunn Counties began their Nutrition Education Program in FY 1996. County Extension Education Committees from both counties approved offering this program after establishing need through local strategic planning processes. In addition, agencies working with limited resource people (i.e., Head Start, WIC, Health Department, Human Services and Elderly Nutrition program staff) requested WNEP assistance. These groups identified their client's needs as the need for assistance in these areas: general budgeting to meet food security, food purchasing, food preparation, food safety and food management. As W-2 came into being, the program was offered at their site and classes were offered to their participants. They continue in regular workshop series offered four times a year in Dunn County. The program has expanded into some of the schools and has been regularly scheduled in after school programs in Dunn County since 2002 and in Barron County in 2004. The goal of this program is to increase the likelihood of healthy food choices by all Food Stamp eligible participants in an effort to promote and safeguard their health and well being. Agency members provide input through requests of education on specific topics in the above areas in the yearly planning process through individual meetings and work in Emergency Food and Shelter collaborative.

Characteristics of the low income residents in Barron and Dunn Counties

Demographics of Barron and Dunn Counties

Barron County, population (44,963) is 98% Caucasian and 1% (430) Hispanic. Dunn County, population (39,858), is 96% Caucasian and 4% Asian. Of Barron's 17,851 total households, 5.4 percent (959) are female headed with children. Of Dunn's 14,337 households, 4.6 percent (666) were female headed with children. 28 percent and 21 percent of households (Barron and Dunn, respectively) have individuals 65 and older.

Median household income for 1999 was \$37,275 in Barron and \$38,753 in Dunn. Six percent of the families in both counties were in poverty in 1999 including 13% of those with children under 5 years in Barron and 13% in Dunn. In female-headed families with children under 5, 39% in Barron and 54% in Dunn were in poverty. In 2000, 16% Barron County and 13% Dunn County non-elderly adults had a disability and many use food pantries as disability prevents many from working.

Unemployment in Barron County for 2005 was 5.2%, higher than the state 4.7% rate and 4.3% in Dunn County. Barron County individual poverty rate of 8.82 percent and elderly poverty rate of 9.87 percent are higher than the state (8.66 percent and 7.43 percent, respectively). Child poverty rate of 10.18 percent is slightly lower than the state (10.78 percent). Dunn County individual poverty rate was 12.91 percent, child poverty rate was 11.58 percent and elderly poverty rate was 8.5 percent. 2002 estimates show 9.3 percent and 9.9 percent (Barron/Dunn, respectively) in poverty with 10.2 percent and 11.6 percent (Barron/Dunn, respectively) of children through age 17 in poverty. This would indicate an improvement from several years before but food insecurity indicators show another picture. Unemployment has also increased in those years.

The start of the 21st century finds many low-income individuals struggling to feed their families and themselves. Many hard working families are struggling in part, because of their poverty level wages which do not lift even a 40-hour a week full-time year-round worker to the poverty line. In Wisconsin 22 percent (more than 1 in 5 workers had poverty wage jobs. In Barron County and Dunn County, 23.5 percent and 24.2 percent (respectively) of renters pay at least 35 percent of income in rent. In Barron and Dunn Counties, 10.9 percent and 10.7 percent (respectively) of home owners spend 35 percent or more of income on housing costs.

Indicators of Food Insecurity in Barron and Dunn Counties

For calendar year 2005, there were 5202 food stamp recipients in Barron County, with 2006 being children. In 2005, 11.6 percent of Barron and 10.2 percent Dunn County residents received food stamps during the year compared to 10.3 percent of Wisconsin residents. There were 133.28 of Barron participants per 100 poor persons on food stamps. In Dunn County there were 4083 food stamp recipients in 2005 with 1940 being children. In 2005, there were 86.08 participants per 100 poor persons in the food stamp program in Dunn County, much lower than the 102.36 per 100 for the state.

Among WIC clients, 35 percent are food insecure and 13 percent experience hunger in Dunn County. For Barron County 33 percent WIC clients are food insecure and 15 percent experience hunger. These are below the 44 percent state food insecurity rate and 19 percent state hunger rate among WIC clients.

Over 45 percent and 22 percent (Barron/Dunn, respectively) County schools participating in the school lunch program are high poverty as compared to 30 percent for Wisconsin. In Barron County, 35.1 percent of children are approved for free or reduced price lunch and in Dunn County, 31.8 percent of children qualify. Over 66 percent of Barron and 56 percent Dunn County children approved for free or reduced price meals attend schools with breakfast, representing an increase in access to breakfast from the previous year. One summer meal program was initiated in 2004 for school aged children in Barron County reaching 22 youth. Two rural schools in the Barron district, Almena and Ridgeland have over 50 percent students on free and reduced lunch and one Rice Lake elementary school on the south side also has over 50 percent of students qualifying for food assistance as well as some grade levels in the Chetek District. River Heights elementary in Menomonie qualifies in this area, is a SAGE school and has high Asian population.

The nutrition education needs of limited-income audiences in Barron and Dunn Counties

According to the Wisconsin Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, western Wisconsin, including Barron and Dunn Counties, had 37 percent overweight adults but not obese and 22 percent obese based on body mass index. The Pediatric Nutrition Survey of 2001 among low-income WIC enrolled 2-4 year-olds, there were 13.8 percent and 9.5 percent (Barron/Dunn, respectively) overweight children. The prevalence of obesity is significantly higher among adults with the least education and incomes. For example, 1/3 of adults with less than a high school diploma were obese in 1999-2001, compared with about 1/7 of adults with a graduate degree. Overweight and obesity are major economic burdens for Wisconsin, in addition to affecting quality of life and personal health.

According to the Wisconsin Behavioral Risk Survey, only 14 percent of adults exercise 20 minutes or more at 50 percent of aerobic capacity 3 or more times per week in western Wisconsin, including Barron and Dunn Counties. According to the 2002 survey, 20 percent of adults reported no leisure time physical activity during the past month. Inactivity rates in the U.S. are higher for individuals in poverty. For example, adults who had incomes four times the poverty level or more were about twice as likely as adults with incomes below the poverty level to engage in regular physical activity.

Many hard working families are struggling to feed their families, in part, because of their poverty level wages or unemployment. Poverty wages are defined as wages that would not lift even a 40-hour a week full-time, year-round worker to the poverty line. It would take more than \$8.12 an hour to be above poverty wages for a family of four. In Wisconsin, 21 percent (1 in 5 workers) of workers had poverty-wage jobs in 1971 as compared to 22 percent in 1999. Staff at the Job Center continue to see need among their clients for education in food resource management, food shopping practices and community resources.

Education Projects planned for FY08

School Day: Series of lessons, some single-session groups to youth ages 5 to 11 years focusing on parts of the MyPyramid and food safety. Series of lessons to migrant children during the summer focusing of MyPyramid and food safety.

After School: Series of lessons, to youth 5-11 and to youth 12-17 Focus in Chetek on food safety and preparing healthy snacks.

Job Centers: Series of lessons, to adults at W-2 Job Center on food resource management. Learn-while-you-wait at W-2 Job Center and food stamp office on food labels, new dietary guidelines, whole grains, calcium/physical activity, rice, cruciferous vegetables and apples.

WIC: Learn-while-you-wait lessons on food labels, new dietary guidelines, whole grains, calcium/physical activity, rice, cruciferous vegetables and apples.

Health Clinics: Learn-while-you-wait lessons on food labels, new dietary guidelines, whole grains, calcium/physical activity, rice, cruciferous vegetables and apples.

Senior Dining: Multi-session groups on food labels, new dietary guidelines, whole grains, calcium/physical activity, rice, cruciferous vegetables and apples.

Food Pantries: Learn-while-you-wait lessons on food labels, new dietary guidelines, whole grains, calcium/physical activity, rice, cruciferous vegetables and apples.

Food Security Programming Efforts Planned

Methods or activities planned to raise awareness of hunger/food insecurity

Emergency Food and Shelter will again work to host one or two poverty simulations. Our intended audience will be UW-Stout family financial management resource class and members of the general public and agency volunteers.

Methods planned to compile data and assess status of food security

We use information collected annually by our food pantry for a report of impact to United Way. They survey participants over a 2-month time frame. Emergency Food and Shelter reviews the information which is shared through newsletters.