

## **Plan for Food Stamp Nutrition Education in Florence, Forest and Vilas Counties during fiscal year 2008**

### **Overview of the Florence, Forest and Vilas Counties Nutrition Education Program**

The Tri-County Nutrition Education Program in Vilas, Florence and Forest Counties began in 1997 when County Extension Committees supported the Family Living Agent to develop a program collaboratively with agencies in the counties to address the needs of their food stamp populations. Unemployment, underemployment and seasonal employment associated with a tourist and logging based economy in the three counties results in families needing food stamps at various times throughout the year to feed their families. The Nutrition Education Program provides these recipients with educational information so they can make transformational change to feed their families nourishing foods, to use safe food handling practices, and manage their food dollars to assure there is food for their families. In two of the three counties there are Indian Reservations which have high incidence of Diabetes. Thus we emphasize nutrition education for children and adults to reduce their risk for Type 2 Diabetes. We also reach the broader audience of food stamp eligible older adults, youth, single adults, and families through short-term educational programs in a variety of community settings. Nutrition educators are active on School Wellness Committees to address food security and dietary quality issues. Stakeholders are informed about programming efforts through reports provided on a quarterly basis and presented to Extension committees as well as agency department heads and school administration.

### **Characteristics of the low income residents in Florence, Forest and Vilas Counties**

#### Demographics of the Counties

Florence County –population 5088; 98.2% white, 0.2% black,0.4% American Indian, 0.3% Asian,0.1 some other race

Forest County- population 10,024; 85.9% white, 1.2% black, 11.3% American Indian, 0.2% Asian, 0.2 some other race

Vilas County – population 21033; 89.7% white, 0.2% Black, 9.1% American Indian, 0.2% Asian, 0.2 some other race

#### Food Insecurity in the Counties

Florence County poverty rate is 9.13%, the rate among children is 11.8%; 8 % (405) of the population receive food stamps; WIC serves 191 participants annually of which 29% are food insecure. In a recent research project to find out the food security status of local families with school age children 13% of families responding were classified as food insecure with 6% of those families experiencing hunger in the past year. Florence Schools have shown an increase in students receiving free and reduced lunch. Their poverty rate has also risen one percent since the 2000 census.

Forest County poverty rate is 13.1%, the rate among children is 16.9 %; 7.7% (773) of the population receives food stamps; WIC serves 633 participants annually of which 43% are food insecure. In a recent research project to find out the food security status of local families survey results show that 18% of school age children families responding are classified as food insecure with 9% of those families experiencing hunger in the past year.

Vilas County poverty rate is 8%, the rate among children is 11.5 %; 5.3% (1,108) of the population receive food stamps; WIC serves 730 participants annually of which 37% are food insecure. In a recent research project to find out the food security status of local school age families survey results from Vilas county schools show that 18% of families responding are classified as food insecure with 6% of those families experiencing hunger in the past year. This same project was conducted at the school located on the Lac du Flambeau reservation and the results show that 24% of the families responding are classified as food insecure with 12% of those families experiencing hunger in the past year. Research shows that food insecurity among children is linked to a variety of problems, such as lower test scores, increased absences and more frequent behavioral and health problems.

### **Nutrition and nutrition education needs of Food Stamp Program recipients and other low-income residents of Florence, Forest and Vilas Counties**

Vilas and Forest counties have about 10% Native American population. The method used to determine the nutritional needs of the Native American populations was the “Trends in Wisconsin Indian Health” study which was done in 1995, sponsored by the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council and funded by the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Health. The leading cause of death among Wisconsin Native Americans was heart disease, followed by cancer, stroke, and diabetes. A health status survey of the Chippewa in 1990 found that 11% of men and 17% of women reported that they had diabetes. Native Americans are more than twice as likely to have diabetes as whites. The programming we do will focus on nutritional/lifestyle changes that would reduce the risk factors for those diseases.

The Vilas County Community Health Improvement Plan states that in 2000, the Vilas County hospitalization rate for CHD was 13 per 1,000 people, which is over double the State rate and almost twice the Northern Region rate. The hospitalization rate for diabetes was 1.8 per 1,000 people in 2000, which is above both the state and northern region rates. According to the American Diabetes Association, “about 90% of all people with newly diagnosed type 2 diabetes are overweight.” For overweight or obese individuals who have not been diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, decreasing body weight can prevent the development of type 2 diabetes. Vilas Public health has a priority to address the issue of Overweight, Obesity, and Lack of Physical Activity across all age groups in the county. One of their goals is to increase nutrition education and promote a healthy diet for adults and children. We will collaborate with them on the goal yet be specific to the intended audience of our grant.

Florence County data shows 9% of adults have Type 2 diabetes, and they are 25% above the state rate for age adjusted heart disease deaths. Only 45% of adults report being physically active and overall 36 % of men and 30% of women are overweight. 8% of students reported drinking 2 or more soda per day. Making healthy food choices and being physically active reduces one’s risk for diabetes. This is the message we intend to share with our targeted audience. The director of the Office on Aging has emphasized a need for families receiving home delivered meals to have a clear understanding of food safety.

Forest County is 33% above the state’s rate of heart disease deaths and hospitalizations for diabetes and stroke. Again, making healthy food choices and being physically active will be the message we will deliver to our targeted audiences in the county. Since the Sokaogon Chippewa

reservation is located in Forest County we will work with that community to address these issues as well.

### **Educational Projects planned for FY08**

**In School:** Classroom instruction will be done in grades Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade in both Forest and Vilas counties. Florence County has grades PK through first grade that qualify for our programming. In Forest and Vilas County we will have a Native American emphasis to the new MyPyramid information. Florence County will present MyPyramid in a more traditional manner.

**After School/Summer School:** A summer program for youth in Florence County will be held over a four-week period meeting twice a week. This program will emphasize experiential learning activities which include preparing fresh vegetables from gardens they developed with help of Master Gardeners. They will learn some basic cooking skills as well.

**Preschoolers:** Nutrition education programming will be offered to preschoolers at HeadStart programs, and appropriate day care providers.

**Parents:** Nutrition education programming will be offered to parents on the Sokaogon Chippewa Reservation through individual counseling with families. In Florence County parents will receive nutrition education at playgroups and other group settings.

**WIC:** Nutrition education programming will happen monthly at the WIC clinics in all three counties for pregnant women and mothers of young children.

**Health Clinics:** Nutrition education programming will be offered to Native American parents at the Sokaogon Chippewa Reservation Health Clinic through individual counseling. Emphasis will be on understanding MyPyramid thus developing healthy eating habits and physical activity to reduce risk factors for Type 2 diabetes. We will also be at immunization clinics in both Florence and Vilas counties with emphasis on the new MyPyramid and developing healthy eating habits and physical activity.

**Senior Dining:** In both Vilas and Forest counties nutrition education will take place at senior congregate meal sites. Emphasis will be on understanding food safety issues and sound dietary habits through understanding the new MyPyramid and dietary guidelines.

**Food Pantries:** Nutrition education will be available at the food pantry in Florence County monthly. Emphasis will be on how to use/cook the foods given out through commodities. In Vilas County monthly brochures covering various nutrition topics will be given to each recipient. If time permits some food demonstration will occur.

**Home Visits:** Home visits will be occurring in both Florence and Vilas counties. In Florence it will be in collaboration with the Office on Aging and emphasis will be on food safety, dietary quality, and label reading. Vilas County will receive referrals from both social services and commission on aging to address assessed needs relating to nutrition and stretching food dollars. These will be for our targeted population only; each lesson will be tailored to the needs of that individual or family.

## **Food Security Programming Efforts Planned**

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

We plan to continue to use the “Hunger Close to Home” materials to share with civic groups, churches, and the media. We will continue to work with our grocery stores as they offer programs that provide support for food for pantries in the areas. “Hope for the Hungry” is a coalition made up of five counties including Florence, Forest, and Vilas. Work to raise awareness is part of the mission of that organization which WNEP is an active participant.

### Plans to increase involvement of community groups in efforts to address food insecurity

“Hope for the Hungry” five county coalition continues to assess where they might increase involvement in community. Each January they decide areas that they want to work on throughout the year. Vilas County will be working closely with their Rotary club which wants to address poverty in the area, we will be holding listening sessions with pantry recipients to discuss opportunities to support families and work with Rotary teams to develop support for limited resource families. Representatives from “Hope for the Hungry” are planning on attending the State Hunger Summit scheduled for October 4, 2007.