

Plan for Food Stamp Nutrition Education in Langlade and Oneida Counties during fiscal year 2008

Overview of Food Stamp Nutrition Education in Langlade and Oneida Counties

The Langlade/Oneida County WNEP began in 1994. Lincoln County joined the project in 1996. The 3-county project continued until 2002 when it returned to a two-county project. The program remained fairly consistent until 2004 when programming changed to encompass an increased awareness of food insecurity. WNEP expanded its food insecurity efforts through the creation of a 5 county hunger awareness coalition (Hope for the Hungry). In 2006, five elementary schools closed in Oneida County and students were reorganized into the three remaining schools. Initially several of these schools no longer qualified for WNEP services, but the schools now qualify due to increasing poverty rates. WNEP continues to receive an increasing number of requests for programming in both counties.

Characteristics of the low income residents in Langlade and Oneida Counties

Demographics of the Counties

The population in Langlade County (20,735) and Oneida County (36,994) is 98% white. While Langlade County is more agricultural, both counties continue to experience a loss in manufacturing and better paying jobs. Both counties contain large elderly populations (over 22%), and both counties have a large percentage of non-elderly, disabled residents: 17% in Langlade and over 22% in Oneida County. This percentage is the 5th highest in the state. Unemployment in Langlade County (5.9%) was 9th highest in the state for 2005. Median household income dropped to almost the lowest in the state-- 66th out of 72 counties. In fact, the median income of female full-time year round workers was 4th lowest in the state. In addition, the number of home delivered meals for seniors in 2000 (10, 283) was 5th highest in the state. Almost 23% of renters in both counties pay at least 35% of their income in rent (18th highest in the state). In Oneida County, over 22% of non-elderly adults were disabled. This represents the 5th highest number in the state.

Food Insecurity in the Counties

From 2003 to 2005, there was a 27% increase in the number of food stamp recipients in Langlade County. The percentage of population receiving food stamps (13.5%) was 7th highest in the state. The percentage of children receiving food stamps was more than 24%. In 2005, 56% of schools participating in school lunch were "high poverty" (11th highest in the state), and almost 41% of children were approved for free or reduced price lunch.

In 2002, almost 40% of WIC households were food insecure (unable to obtain enough nutritious food) and almost 24% of the population lived below 185% of poverty. In 2005, 9.3% of Oneida County and more than 17% of Oneida county children received food stamps. In addition, 31% of schools participating in school lunch programs were classified as "high poverty."

Nutrition and nutrition education needs of Food Stamp Program recipients and other low-income residents of Langlade and Oneida Counties

Food security continues to be the greatest identified need in Langlade and Oneida Counties. This past year, Rhinelander Area Food Pantry served 29% more adults, 19% more families, 13% more

children, and 20% more food (from 193,959 to 262,111 pounds) than in 2005. WNEP will continue to help communities develop additional food resources.

In addition to food security, other nutrition needs were determined by input from: agency partners, County Board members, WIC directors, health departments, school officials, and aging services. All surveyed partners identified a need for education related to reducing obesity and increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. In addition, agency partners indicated elderly clients needed to reduce sodium consumption, and both WIC and elderly populations needed to increase their dietary fiber and physical activity.

The needs of Food Share (food stamp) recipients were self-identified and also reported by food pantry managers. Recipients indicated they lack the food preparation skills needed to fully utilize products obtained from the pantry and garden. This year Master Gardeners and other volunteers will expand the community garden to provide pantries and senior residents with more fresh vegetables. A demonstration garden site will be created where seniors will learn how to harvest and cook vegetables with fresh herbs. Cooking classes and food demonstrations will be conducted at pantries and the garden to increase fresh vegetable consumption and encourage healthful preparation of nutritious, low cost foods.

Educational Projects planned for FY08

In School: Several classroom visits will be provided to local schools at multiple grade levels. Youth ages 6-17 will learn about food safety, improving dietary quality and increasing physical activity. Lessons will also be provided at alternative schools in both counties. Take-home educational materials will be provided for students and families. Menu-backs will also be provided as a new educational tool.

After School: Nutrition and food safety education will be taught through youth cooking classes at the Boys and Girls Club and community gardens. Recipes and other take-home materials will be provided.

Parents: Parents will be taught how to prepare and preserve fresh food from the garden during classes held at the pantries and community gardens.

WIC: Displays or single topic notebooks will be used for Learn While You Wait nutrition education.

Gardens: Fresh vegetables will enhance food security; Youth and adults will learn proper harvesting, preparation, storage and preservation techniques during on-site bi-weekly education sessions. Recipes and information on using fresh vegetables will be provided. One-time group lessons will be presented.

Health Clinics: WNEP will provide nutrition education and materials to Lantlode County families referred by the local hospital.

Adult Groups: Adult education programs will be taught in a drug and alcohol recovery center where residents share cooking facilities. One-time group instruction will focus on food safety and nutrition education with appropriate accompanying materials.

Disabled: Disabled adults will be taught in residences and the garden in both one-time and multi-session group classes. Food preparation classes and educational materials will be presented.

Senior Dining: WNEP will teach dietary quality, food safety and food resource management classes at nutrition sites. Food samples, cooking demonstrations and educational materials will be provided.

Food pantries: WNEP will provide “Learn While You Wait” lessons regarding the use of commodity and other foods provided by pantries. Education will be linked to fresh produce from the community garden. Topics will include the roles of fruits and veggies in diet, food resource management and shopping behavior. Nutritional tip sheets, recipes and resource information will be given to all clients including those who are homebound.

Home Visits: Nutrition education classes will be provided along with appropriate educational materials to families referred by various agencies.

Food Security Programing Efforts Planned

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

Contact media for all special events (grants, gifts, fund-raising events) at the pantry.

Promote numerous food activities (tasting trials, “make it, take it” herb container gardens) to pantry clients and residents. All activities will feature hunger awareness/food insecurity education component.

- Participate in community events such as the Garden Walk and explain importance of a community garden to food insecure families during walk-throughs.
- Create displays for events such as the annual Home and Garden show and Health Awareness Day. Food and monetary donations will go to the pantry. A media campaign will be developed to stress the importance of making food or dollar donations during the Feinstein matching grant period.
- Promote the pantry and garden and recognize volunteers and donors in newspaper, radio and television ads
- Continue attending pantry, garden and community meetings; conduct interviews with food pantry managers and other volunteers; conduct listening sessions to identify barriers encountered by those living in poverty
- Develop a hunger/food insecurity segment to be included in an Oneida County poverty video
- Continue public appearances, press releases, and food drives
- Implement an educational campaign to help the community better understand the importance of donating healthful, appropriate food to the pantry.

Methods planned to compile data and assess status of food security

WNEP designed an Excel spreadsheet and report form that provides pantries with a clear picture of what is happening to their low-income families throughout the year. Categories include

demographics such as the number of new families using the pantry, employment status, income, family size, number of households with no income, and additional services accessed by pantry users (including FoodShare and WIC). With this information the pantry can provide the community with accurate, up-to-date information which is utilized by the media to promote hunger awareness. The information also helps gain support for the pantry during fund-raising drives.

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

The main community garden is located at a low-income senior housing unit across the street from the Department on Aging. This year the garden will double in size. A demonstration garden that will be accessible for the elderly, physically challenged and youth will be created. Emphasis will be placed on increasing physical activity through gardening. Once the new area is established, we will seek groups to “adopt a plot” and assist with growing the vegetables. McNaughton Correctional Center will build the raised bed gardens for the elderly. Area Eagle Scouts will build climbing structures for the garden and help spread compost, and the Girl Scouts will continue to raise awareness through a public service campaign on hunger. Poverty information will also be presented at the schools. WNEP will serve on the Healthy People-Healthy Oneida County Nutrition and Physical Activity committee to ensure low income individuals and families are included in all planning and events. WNEP will continue to collaborate with Howard Young Medical Center to ensure Lakeland Food Pantry is meeting local needs. WNEP will continue to support the following groups in food collection and fund-raising efforts: churches and youth groups, community college, theatre groups, local musicians, retail stores, Post Office, clubs, medical and financial institutions, businesses, organizations, manufacturers, and unions.