

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

Overview of Food Stamp Nutrition Education in Waukesha County

A 1994 study conducted by the Waukesha County Nutrition Task Force determined food insecurity was a problem for many county residents. Nutrition education was identified as a priority program need that could be addressed to reduce hunger and food insecurity. UW-Extension was asked to deliver this education. The resulting Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) in Waukesha County provides both the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program (FSNEP) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). The two phases of the WNEP program enable research-based nutrition, food safety and money for food education to be provided to a broader food stamp eligible audience. The original Task Force evolved into the Waukesha County Nutrition Coalition and serves in an advisory capacity to WNEP. In the early years of the program, FSNEP focused on learn-while-you-wait education with adults at food pantries. Over time, programming has moved toward classes for all age groups offered through partnerships with agencies working with a similar food stamp eligible audience. Still, the learn-while-you-wait teaching method is sometimes the most appropriate method for some sites and offers a short introduction to a nutrition topic. This short lesson may evolve into a one-on-one or group lesson at another time for greater impact. Currently, 35% of our learners are reached through the learn-while-you-wait method.

Characteristics of the low income residents in Waukesha County

Demographics of Waukesha County

Waukesha County, located adjacent to Milwaukee County, can be described as substantially urban. The estimated population for 2006 is 379,577, which is a 5.2% increase over 2000. The 2000 census indicates minorities make up 4.2% of the total population. The largest ethnicity in the county is Hispanic or Latino with 9503 individuals (2.6%). The city of Waukesha's Hispanic/Latino population is 8.6% (5563) of the total (64,825). The Hispanic community however, estimates the population to be much higher. Three camps in rural Waukesha County employ Hispanic migrant farmers in the summer.

According to the 2000 census, residents age 65 and over make up 12% of the county's population with 8.8% having incomes below 150% of the poverty level. The elderly population increased from 1990 - 2000 at a rate of 45%, growing much faster than the state rate of 7.9%. Waukesha County Senior Services projects by 2010, the older adult population of 60+ will increase by another 30% above the 2000 figures. Estimates for 2005, indicate 17% of the county's senior population are age 85 and over. Projections for 2010 estimate the age 85+ population in Waukesha County to increase by 52% over 2000 Census data. Research shows the incidence of poverty increases, as the population grows older.

In 2000, Waukesha County had 100,502 total family households, 35% with their own children under 18. Single women head 5.3% of family households, putting them at increased risk for poverty and food insecurity. Disabilities affect 10.8% (39,098) of the population. Approximately 8% (28,861) of the county and 15% (9385) of the city of Waukesha's population is below 185% of the poverty line. The per capita income was \$29,164 in 2000. The majority of low-income residents live in either the city of Waukesha or the communities of Menomonee Falls, Butler, Sussex, Muskego and Mukwonago.

Food Insecurity in Waukesha County

All 35 Waukesha County Nutrition Coalition member agencies serving the low-income population report seeing increased need and client numbers. There are 14 community food pantries in the county and many more small pantries associated with faith based or other organizations. In November 2006, the Waukesha Food Pantry documented serving 6034 individuals, representing a 9% increase over 2005, a 16% increase over November 2003. In August 2006, the Waukesha County Backpack Coalition distributed over 1700 backpacks filled with school supplies to low-income children referred through various social service organizations, representing a 21% increase over distribution in 2002. In 2005, Food Share benefits were distributed to 9483 recipients, a 153% increase over 1999. WIC served 4326 clients in 2005 an 8% increase over 1999. It is estimated that WIC is serving only 61% of eligible clients. In 2001, 43% of WIC participants were identified as food insecure and 21% were identified as hungry. Four elementary schools are now above 50% free or reduced price lunch participation and another is close behind at 48%. The percentage of average daily participation in free or reduced price school lunch for 2005 has increased by 68% since 1999. Over 6,200 children are approved for this program.

In 2005, Hebron House of Hospitality, operating three homeless shelters for families and single women in Waukesha, served 404 individuals (42% were children). Ninety-nine percent of their guests are below the poverty level with 94% of them being the “working poor”. In 2005, 324 unduplicated families (182% increase over 2001) and 1,048 unduplicated single adults were unable to be served by Hebron House because their shelters were full. In 2006, the Salvation Army men’s shelter housed 30% more men over last year and was close to reaching an unsafe number. All shelters in the county report the length of stay for families or individuals has increased significantly over the past several years due to economic downtrends and the challenge of obtaining affordable housing in the county.

Housing costs are high in Waukesha County, making it very difficult for low-income families to manage and have enough money for food. The Self-Sufficiency Standard lists 2004 housing costs for an adult with two small children at \$861. The County’s self-sufficiency wage is the highest in the state at \$21.72 per hour.

Nutrition and nutrition education needs of Food Stamp Program recipients and other low-income residents in Waukesha County

In 2006, the Waukesha County Health Department along with several other community partners, initiated a Community Health Survey, gathering information on the health practices and health related behavioral risks of residents. Four hundred phone interviews were completed through a scientific selection process so that the survey would be representative of all adults 18 years and older. Fifty-nine percent of respondents reported being overweight. This is slightly below the state’s average of 61%, but it is significantly higher than the Healthy People 2010 goal of 40%. Twenty-six percent reported high blood pressure and 26% reported having high blood cholesterol in the past 3 years, both up from 15% in 1997. Survey results stated, respondents with a household income of \$30,000 or less were more likely to report these conditions. Only twenty-eight percent reported eating 3 servings of vegetables per day and 34% stated they do not get any regular exercise. Department of Senior Service’s 2006 Nutrition Risk Screening data on 555 home delivered meal clients found 82.7% to be at high nutrition risk, scoring an average of 11.2.

In 2003, Waukesha County reported an average of 250 deaths per 100,000 due to coronary heart disease and stroke, far above the Healthy People 2010 goal.

The incidence of overweight/obesity is an increasing problem and growing trend reported by experts at the national level and locally by Head Start, school nurses and other agencies working with low-income children in Waukesha County. Of the 1697 WIC children seen in 2004, 16% of the two year olds, and 26% of 3 year olds and four year olds were overweight or at risk for overweight. This is a significant increase over 2001. Studies show about 60% of overweight children ages 5 - 10 years already have elevated blood pressure, cholesterol, or insulin levels that increase their risk of developing chronic diseases, as they grow older. To address the growing concern of these chronic diseases, low-income residents of all ages need education and motivation to eat a healthy diet lower in fats/sugars and rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains along with getting more physical activity.

Educational Projects planned for FY08

In School: Educational programming for school age youth (6-11 & 12-17 years) in classrooms during the school day. Three one-hour lessons in each classroom at elementary schools, emphasizing healthy eating, MyPyramid, hand washing and physical activity will be provided throughout the year. Newsletters expanding on the classroom topic will be sent home to families. Two-hour lessons are provided for 3 classes, monthly at two sites having “at risk” teens (Ethan Allen, Lakewood School). A series of 4 – 6 one-hour lessons are provided for three other “at risk” teen classes in partnership with the Waukesha School District. Teen lessons focus on making healthy food choices, MyPyramid, preparing foods safely, hand washing, physical activity and stretching the food dollar.

After School/Summer School: Educational programming for school age youth (6 -11 years) at three after school programs, youth (6 – 17 years) at summer programs in partnership with the Waukesha School District and the City of Waukesha Recreation Department, “at risk” teens in an Independent Living Skills class and the Enlight program. Group lessons will focus on hand washing, MyPyramid, making healthy food choices and increasing physical activity. Nutrition education activities will also be provided at parent events organized by the After School Program.

Preschoolers: Three lessons per classroom will be provided for Head Start children over the school year and monthly lessons are provided to children at a low-income day care. Lessons focus on hand washing, healthy eating and physical activity. A newsletter expanding on the classroom topic will be sent home to families.

Parents: 1 – 2 hour single session group lessons will be provided for parents of Head Start children, and parents at various shelters. Lessons focus on making healthy food choices, MyPyramid, balancing food and activity, stretching the food dollar, food safety, and Stepping Up to a Healthy Lifestyle.

Job Center: Weekly, single session classes emphasizing knowing and managing resources, Money for Food, making healthy food choices, MyPyramid and physical activity, will be provided for adults at the Waukesha County Workforce Development Center.

WIC: Short 15-minute classes will be provided for pregnant women or parents of young children at WIC clinics. Topics will include choosing healthy meals and snacks for the family,

MyPyramid, preparing foods safely, increasing fruits, vegetables and whole grains in the diet, increasing physical activity and stretching the food dollar.

Gardens: Nutrition education lessons in collaboration with a Horticulture Educator will be provided at school, neighborhood or community gardens settings for youth and adult participants. Topics will include increasing fruits and vegetables in the diets, preparing foods safely, making healthy food choices, MyPyramid, and increasing physical activity.

Health Clinics: Learn-while-you-wait lessons will be provided to families at immunization clinics. Topics will include choosing healthy meals and snacks, MyPyramid, money for food techniques, preparing meals safely, increasing fruits, vegetables and whole grains in the diets, and increasing physical activity.

Disabled Adults: Monthly single session lessons will be provided for disabled, chronically mentally ill or adults in treatment centers or group homes. Lessons will focus on preparing foods safely, money for food strategies, making healthy food choices, MyPyramid and increasing physical activity.

Senior Dining: Six, single session lessons will be provided at 12 sites over the year. Topics will include making healthy food choices, MyPyramid, increasing fruits, vegetables and whole grains in the diet, healthy eating for diabetics, increasing physical activity, money for food techniques, and preparing and storing meals and snacks safely.

Food Pantries: Learn-while-you-wait sessions will be provided at the (city of) Waukesha and the Menomonee Falls Food Pantry. Monthly nutrition topic fact sheets and bi-monthly Tip Sheet newsletter information will be provided to persons at the other 11 emergency food pantries. Monthly learn-while-you-wait sessions are provided at 2 free meal sites. Topics will include choosing healthy meals and snacks, MyPyramid, money for food techniques, preparing and storing foods safely, increasing fruits, vegetables and whole grains in the diet, and increasing physical activity.

Other Adult Groups: A series of six classes will be provided each semester and during the summer session for Hispanic adults participating in ESL classes. Lessons will focus on managing resources, food budgeting skills, food safety, making healthy food choices, MyPyramid, increasing fruits, vegetables and whole grains in the diet, and physical activity. Lessons with a similar focus will also be provided for other adult groups in partnership with the Hispanic Health Resource Center and other partnering agencies.

Food Security Programming Efforts Planned

Methods planned to raise awareness of hunger/food insecurity in the community

WNEP continues to work with agencies of the Waukesha County Nutrition Coalition to raise awareness of hunger and food insecurity. Projects include: Poverty Simulations, Poverty presentations, Farmer's Market Garden Gleaning Program, Food Recovery Program, Adopt-a-Route, and others.

Methods planned to compile data and assess status of food security

A school-based food security project done in partnership with the Nutrition Coalition, is currently being worked on. Surveys have been distributed and collected from parents at 17 elementary schools in the city of Waukesha. Data from the project is currently being analyzed by state specialists and we anticipate having the results near the end of the school year. In addition, needs assessment data is collected from agencies at Nutrition Coalition meetings. Agencies

report on the economic climate affecting their ability to serve, emerging client needs, numbers of clients served, trends and client nutrition education needs.

Plans to increase involvement of community groups

Continue to work with agencies of the Nutrition Coalition on projects that are visible in the community, provide education and food insecurity awareness. Newsletter articles, impact sheets and presentations will be provided highlighting projects and other food insecurity issues.

Continue participation on the Hispanic Collaborative Network to assess needs, plan programs and continue building outreach into the Hispanic community.