

## **Plan for Food Stamp Nutrition Education in Burnett County during fiscal year 2008**

### **Overview of the Burnett County Nutrition Education Program**

Burnett County WNEP began in 1998. The WNEP program was combined with Douglas County as a 2-county project with a 50% educator hired in Burnett County. In 2005, this configuration was changed again to a single county Burnett County program.

Burnett County WNEP has strong partnerships with the WIC Program, Northwest Passage and two of the three school districts. It has strengthened partnerships with Mina Copeland Head Start this past year. New partnerships are being formed--Diversified Services, Inc. (Catholic Charities/Burnett County sponsored organization which employs mentally and physically challenged adults), Burnett County Alternative Learning Center (high school learning center) and St. Croix Tribal Head Start. Burnett County WNEP continues to do youth programming in classrooms and after-school with more focus on ways to connect with the parents through Kindergarten round-ups and more multi-session teachings in the schools. Newsletters for families with children and day care providers are provided monthly in Burnett County.

### **Characteristics of the low income residents in Burnett County**

#### Demographics of Burnett County

Burnett County has a poverty rate of 5.7% for families, 11.6% for children, 8.8% for individuals and 7.5% for the elderly population. Nearly 27% of the county population is below 185% of the poverty line. The Siren School District has a higher than county average poverty rate of 10.3% for families. Webster and Grantsburg School Districts have a poverty rate of 7.9-10.2% for families. Burnett County is 93% White, 4.5% Native American, 0.8% Hispanic, and 0.4% Black, according to the 2000 Census figures. The medium household income for Burnett County families was \$34,218 ranking 58<sup>th</sup> of 72 Wisconsin counties.

#### Food Insecurity in Burnett County

Food insecurity in Burnett County is a concern. The percent of the Burnett County population receiving food stamps in 2005 was 11.7% with a county ranking 10<sup>th</sup> of 72 counties in Wisconsin. In Burnett County 55% percent of school lunch sites are high poverty with nearly half (49.8%) of Burnett County children in school approved for free and reduced lunch. This is an increase of 15.4% between 1999 and 2005. Community awareness and support of the food insecurity problem is high among certain sectors in Burnett County. Burnett County has multiple food pantries to supplement Food Stamp participation. Burnett County has the WIC Farmers' Market Program which strengthens food security and increases dietary quality in the WIC Program audience. The FoodShare program just began in Burnett County in March 2006. Ruby's Pantry (food distribution program) is attempting to develop a Burnett County site by the end of 2007.

### **Nutrition and nutrition education needs of Food Stamp Program recipients and other low-income residents of Burnett County**

The above demographics indicate we are in the right places for programming. School classrooms, WIC and After-School programming in the Webster and Siren Schools show a high rate of free-reduced lunch children that matches the high poverty rates.

Burnett County partners from Head Start, school districts, the Alternative Learning Center, Diversified Services, Inc., and the WIC Program indicate they want nutrition and physical activity topics. Several partners are concerned with the overweight/obesity issue of their clients, as well as the quality of their diets. This is possibly due to limited income and poor skills to plan and prepare nutritious meals. The Head Start and schools mention food safety as a topic they want reinforced. The Webster 2<sup>nd</sup> grade curriculum included WNEP education specifically for 2007-08 school year. The Burnett County Nutrition Education Program is active in the Burnett County Nutrition Coalition and the Wellness Committees in the Siren, Webster and Grantsburg school districts.

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

**In School:** Siren and Webster School Districts will receive classroom programming on dietary quality, physical activity and food safety topics. The programs will occur in grades preK-6. Northwest Passage is a residential childcare center for teenage boys that will receive programming on dietary quality, physical activity and cooking experiences in a series of four lessons to two different groups. Alternative Learning Center will receive programming on dietary quality, physical activity, Money for Food lessons and cooking experiences.

**After School:** Siren School District will receive after-school programming on dietary quality, physical activity, food safety and cooking experiences.

**Preschoolers:** Burnett County Head Starts will receive programming on food safety and Tickle Your Appetite curriculum at the Mina Copeland Head Start Center in Siren and the St. Croix Tribal Head Start Center in Hertel.

**Parents:** Burnett County Head Starts will have an opportunity to attend a series of classes on dietary quality and resource management topics using a variety of lessons.

**WIC:** Burnett County WIC Program will receive programming on various nutrition and physical activity topics on voucher pick-up days and clinic days in Siren and Grantsburg. All of the programs will be learn-while-you-wait and are interactive. WIC Farmers' Market will receive programming on dietary quality topics related to fruit and vegetable consumption. Food samples and recipes using garden produce will be shared at the Farmers' Market. The WIC director partners with WNEP during this time to make contact with as many WIC clients as possible.

**Disabled:** Diversified Services, Inc. is a manufacturing business which employs physically and mentally challenged adults. This business is supported by public and private funds. Lessons will be provided during the work day using the EFNEP publications.

**Food Pantries:** Indianhead Community Action Agency clients visiting the food pantry receive a flyer/newsletter in food bags with commodity recipes and nutrition information.

### **Food Security Programming Efforts Planned**

A poverty simulation in Burnett County is tentatively planned for the fall of 2007. The Burnett County Nutrition Coalition, County Board supervisors, County employees and members of our Community Partner Advisory Group (CPAG) will be invited to this poverty simulation.