



IMPACT 2026

Through Extension programs across the nation, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Educators provide a multitude of Educational opportunities to meet the needs of diverse audiences.

Food and Nutrition

Overview and Program Reach

Extension Family and Consumer Sciences professionals continue to address one of the most persistent challenges facing communities: helping individuals and families access safe, affordable, nutritious food while building the skills needed to make healthy choices. Across the Food and Nutrition reports submitted for 2025, programs were offered more than 5,400 times, included more than 4,000 lesson series, reached at least 135,000 direct participants, and engaged millions more through virtual and mass-reach efforts. Together, these efforts show how Extension improves health outcomes, strengthens food access systems, and equips people of all ages with practical skills they can use immediately.

Food Access Initiatives Strengthen Families and Local Food Systems

A major area of impact was food access and food security. Programs in **Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin** helped families obtain healthy foods while also strengthening local food systems. **Alabama's Healthy Food Pantry Program** implemented 136 policy, systems, and environmental changes across food pantries in 19 counties to support healthier choices for SNAP-eligible audiences. **Arizona's PLAZA Mobile Market** distributed more than 10,800 pounds of food and facilitated \$31,000 in nutrition assistance benefits. **Wisconsin's Big Apple Project** distributed 12,000 pounds of locally grown apples through food pantries, schools, and nonprofits. **Oregon's Veggie Rx: Nourishing Generations** provided weekly nutritious food to pregnant and postpartum families, improving food security and reducing stress. One participant shared, *"Our household really appreciated this resource! The food was always fresh and I felt like I was improving my health and my child's health with the food."*

Nutrition Education Reduces Chronic Disease Risk

Extension also helped participants reduce chronic disease risk through practical, behavior-focused nutrition education. **Kentucky** reported more than 39,000 direct participants and over 8.2 million virtual contacts through food and nutrition efforts, with 58% of evaluated participants indicating they intended to eat more fruits and vegetables. **Texas** reached thousands through *Cooking Well and Dinner Tonight*, where participants improved confidence in meal planning, recipe modification, and healthy food preparation. **Florida** and **Oklahoma** used *Med Instead of Meds* to teach Mediterranean-style eating as a realistic strategy for improving heart health, blood sugar management, and overall wellness. A Florida participant explained, *"I have lost 22 pounds since taking this class. I learned a lot, and as a result my blood work is much better. My A1C went from being diabetic to prediabetic."* **Kansas' Walk Kansas** complemented nutrition education with physical activity and healthy habit tracking, helping 86.7% of participants meet or exceed recommended activity guidelines.



Alabama's Healthy Food Pantry Program

Youth and Family Programs Build Lifelong Healthy Habits

Youth and family programming also produced meaningful outcomes. **Arkansas** EFNEP delivered 3,902 lessons to 4,015 adults, youth, and families, resulting in improved food skills, healthier eating, increased physical activity, and \$7,737 in food cost savings. An Arkansas participant said, *“The program has taught me quick, easy, and affordable recipes I can make for my grandchildren. I’ve learned important safety precautions and many practical tools in the kitchen, helping my family eat healthier and manage food more efficiently.”* **Idaho’s** Healthy Harvest reached more than 8,500 youth through repeated produce exposure and nutrition education, helping reduce food neophobia and increase willingness to try fruits and vegetables. **New Jersey’s** Kids Cooking Club taught youth kitchen safety, gardening, and cooking skills, with all participants trying a new food and expressing willingness to try more Jersey Fresh produce. **Colorado’s** 4-H Budget Bites helped youth build budgeting and cooking skills needed for independent living.



New Jersey’s Kids Cooking Club

Tailored Programs Reach Diverse and Underserved Audiences

Extension’s food and nutrition work also reached older adults and diverse audiences with tailored education. **New Mexico’s** food preservation programming taught families how to extend the shelf life of produce and reduce waste, directly supporting household food security. One participant noted, *“Having dried zucchini noodles to add to my soups and substitute for noodles will help my diet and my pocket book.”*

National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS) provides professional development for Extension professionals who improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities and provide education in the areas of: Childhood Obesity Prevention; Community Health and Wellness; Diabetes Prevention and Management; Financial Management; Food and Nutrition; Food Safety; Healthy Homes and the Environment; Improving Children’s Lives; and Protecting our Resources – Family Life.

Minnesota’s Hispanic/Latine Mediterranean diet study improved confidence and healthy eating practices through culturally tailored lessons families could share across generations.

Extension Food and Nutrition Work Creates Lasting Public Value

Taken together, these reports show that Food and Nutrition programming does far more than share recipes. Extension helps communities prevent chronic disease, stretch food dollars, improve food safety, increase access to healthy foods, and build stronger local food networks. Whether through a pantry partnership, a school garden, a mobile market, a cooking class, or a digital campaign, Extension translates research-based guidance into healthier daily practices. The result is measurable public value: healthier families, stronger community partnerships, and more resilient food systems.

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Raising kids, Eating right, Spending smart

