The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), “assists low-income families and youth to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and changed-behaviors to improve the total family diet and nutritional well being.” www.fnec.cornell.edu/Our_Programs/EFNEP.cfm

Adult participants learn how to make food choices to improve the nutritional quality of the meals they serve their families. Through an experiential learning process, they increase their ability to select and buy food; gain skills in food preparation, storage and sanitation; and learn to better manage their food budgets and related resources.

Youth participants are engaged in a series of lessons that create mastery, belonging, independence, and generosity. In addition to nutrition, food preparation and food safety, youth topics may also include strategies for reducing screen time and being more physically active as a means of developing healthy living habits.

In New York, EFNEP exists in 32 counties. Over 6100 adult and 3800 youth participants participate in the program each year. More than 29,000 family members benefit from the knowledge and skills gained by program participants.

EFNEP is delivered in a series of lessons, typically 6 to 9, over 6 to 20 weeks. These lessons are facilitated by frontline educators, most of whom are indigenous to the target population.

EFNEP educators are provided training and support through Navigating for Success, a 19 unit training program. Group activities, guided dialogue and interactive exercises are strategies incorporated into the training, modeling the dialogue approach that staff are expected to use with their EFNEP participants.

Resources for counties providing EFNEP are available on the Food and Nutrition Education in Communities website (www.fnec.cornell.edu). Agencies interested in locating the Cooperative Extension office in their county can locate contact information on the Cooperative Extension website: http://cce.cornell.edu/learnAbout/Pages/Local_Offices.aspx.

Program Impacts
EFNEP improves the health and well-being of limited resource families and youth. Program participation leads to public savings. Research shows that better health is associated with reduced health care costs, less absenteeism from work, and less dependence on emergency food assistance.

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