

# EFNEP in Los Angeles County: Improving Nutrition in Low-Income Latino Communities

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## Introduction

Los Angeles County has a population of 10.1 million residents of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. Forty-eight percent of the population is Latino,<sup>1</sup> however, Latinos make up over 67.4% of food insecure households.<sup>2</sup> Obesity rates are also highest among Latinos in Los Angeles County at 32%.<sup>3</sup>

Local health disparities are exemplified by childhood overweight and obesity rates in the poorest and richest cities within the county. In Huntington Park an estimated 53% of children are overweight or obese, compared to 11.3% in wealthy Manhattan Beach.<sup>4</sup>

Los Angeles County EFNEP targets Latino families in the poorest cities of Los Angeles to achieve the greatest impact.

## Method

Bilingual (English and Spanish) speaking Community Education Specialists teach a series of 8 nutrition education lessons. Lesson topics include: healthy eating patterns, food resource management, food safety, and physical activity. Participants receive incentives in each class to increase retention (cookbooks, measuring cups, etc.).

EFNEP educators collect demographic data, and conduct a validated pre and post questionnaire. Classes are randomly selected to participate in a pre and post 24-hour dietary recall.

1. United States Census Bureau. *QuickFacts, Los Angeles County, CA*. Retrieved from [www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/losangelescountycalifornia/](http://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/losangelescountycalifornia/)
2. LA County Department of Public Health, *Food Insecurity in Los Angeles County*, September 2017
3. Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. *Community Health Assessment 2015*; March 2015.
4. Babey SH, Wolstein J, Diamant AL, Bloom A, Goldstein H. Overweight and Obesity among Children by California Cities 2010. UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and California Center for Public Health Advocacy, 2012.
5. 2017 California EFNEP Impact Sheet. Retrieved from [http://efnep.ucanr.edu/About\\_EFNEP/Impact/](http://efnep.ucanr.edu/About_EFNEP/Impact/)

## Demographics

*In Federal Fiscal Year 2016-2017:*

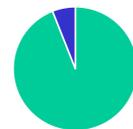
- **Race/Ethnicity:** 95% of participants (n=492) were Hispanic/Latino, 3% declined to respond.
- **Income:** 99% of participants reported income: 85% were at or below 100% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), 29% lived in extreme poverty ( $\leq$  50% FPL), and 0% were above 185% FPL.
- **Education:** 77% of participants reported education level: 23% did not complete 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 38% did not complete high school or obtain a GED.
- **Gender:** 99% of participants were female.
- **Family Composition:** 97% of participants had children. The total number of people in program families impacted by EFNEP was 2367.

## Results

*In Federal Fiscal Year 2016-2017:*

Eighty-nine percent of participants graduated by completing at least 6 sessions, exceeding both the state (82%) and national averages (63%).<sup>5</sup>

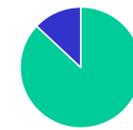
EFNEP families saved an average of **\$53.20 a month** on groceries.



94% of participants showed improvement in one or more food resource management practice (such as planning meals, comparing prices, or not running out of food)



94% of participants showed improvement in one or more nutrition practice (such as making healthy food choices or reading nutrition labels)



87% of participants showed improvement in one or more food safety practice (such as thawing and storing foods correctly).

## Conclusions

Los Angeles EFNEP is successful in improving the nutrition, food safety, and food resource management knowledge of urban low-income Latino participants.

Building community trust by partnering with organizations such as neighbourhood schools, preschools, and community-based organizations like the Mexican American Opportunities Foundation, improved participant recruitment, retention and data collection.

Bilingual, experienced educators who live in the communities they serve have contributed to participant engagement and the cultivation of lasting partnerships.

“These series of classes were amazing. It was a great opportunity for me to be greatly educated on how to give my family a more nutritious diet. I was amazed and shocked by the amount of sugar in so many products. To actually visually see the amount of salt and sugar in certain products is scary and alarming. Taking this nutrition class has strengthened my role as a parent to provide my family better health through nutrition and [I am] wiser in the products that I choose to purchase.”

- EFNEP Participant, Mexican American Opportunities Foundation, Huntington Park



EFNEP Participants completing the Food Behaviour Questionnaire at Maternal and Child Health Access Center, Downtown Los Angeles (Top Left)

EFNEP Staff and Participants preparing a recipe at San Antonio Elementary School, Huntington Park (Top Right)

EFNEP Class at the Mariposa Community Garden, Koreatown, Los Angeles (Left)

