

Healthy Choices Healthy Lives

FoodWise is federally funded by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). With local strengths, we support healthy eating habits, active lifestyles and healthy community environments for Wisconsin residents experiencing limited incomes through nutrition education at the individual, community and systems levels.



Vernon County Landscape

Whether people are healthy or not is affected by systems, policies, and environmental factors.

6%

of county residents experience limited income and low access to a grocery store[^]



9%

of county residents use SNAP benefits to purchase food for themselves and their families.*



Achieving More Together

UW-Madison Division of Extension works alongside the people of Wisconsin throughout urban and rural communities to deliver practical educational programs where people live and work. In Vernon County, FoodWise partners with schools, Farmers' Markets, Libraries, County Agencies, subsidized housing and food banks to help make the healthy choice the easy choice in our communities.

Community

Impacts in 2023

Engaged 4,171 community members through program activities, indirect education, social marketing campaigns, and policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) activities in K-12 school settings, farmers' markets, food banks, and congregate meal sites.

Collaborated with K-12 schools, libraries, food banks, and agricultural organizations who newly adopted, or maintained 20 PSE changes to make the healthy choice the easy choice. Some changes include:

- Farm-to-table/use of fresh or local produce.
- Practice that encourages meal service staff to prompt healthy choices.
- Initiation, improvement, expansion, reinvigoration or maintenance of edible gardens.

[^]County Health Rankings

* WI Dept of Administration and WI Dept of Health Services

Inspiring Collaborations



The Crawford/Richland/Vernon Counties team works alongside Farmers' Market managers in southwestern WI to make local, healthy food more accessible to residents with limited income. For over 3 years, we have met in a virtual community of practice coalition sharing ideas and best practices. These ongoing relationships have resulted in many multilevel collaborations this year:

- With the assistance of Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) intern Jenny, we created and distributed a culturally relevant video for the Spanish-speaking community. The purpose was to guide them on using EBT at the Farmers' Market to purchase culturally relevant foods.
- Widely distributed a booklet in English, Spanish and Hmong to share about area markets and where to utilize food benefits.
- Participated in an 'EBT at Farmers' Markets' social marketing campaign that utilized paid ads on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and other communication channels.

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Multi-level Program Efforts



23% of children in Vernon County live in poverty. This is 9% higher than the state average of 14%. Additionally, 47% of children are eligible for free and reduced lunches*.

Schools and school Food Service Professionals have the responsibility of providing students with nutritious meals and making new foods more appealing. FoodWise supports their efforts at the individual and community levels by providing nutrition education in schools and with parents, participating in the statewide Harvest of the Month social marketing campaign, organizing a food service coalition, and implementing PSE changes.

Partnerships forged at Prairie View Elementary and De Soto Middle School coordinated these efforts, incorporating taste tests and lunchroom activities to encourage students to eat 6 different locally sourced Harvest of the Month items. Additionally, it led to new funding from DATCP to expand this project in fiscal year 2024.

Acknowledgments:



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Former Nutrition Educator 2023



Jenny Serrano
AHEC Intern 2023

^County Health Rankings; * ACS 2016-2020