

**SNAP-Ed Monthly Project Activities and Outcomes Report  
FY 2018**



**BETTER LIVING  
FOR TEXANS**  
TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION

**Contractor:** Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service  
**Contract Number:** 529-17-0002-00003  
**Reporting Period:** January 1– March 31, 2018

Describe SNAP-Ed activities and outcomes during the current reporting period.

**SNAP-Ed Program Summary:**

- **Progress in achieving overarching goals:**

**Objective 1: Health promotion to help the SNAP-Ed eligible target audience establish healthy eating habits and a physically active lifestyle.**

The Better Living for Texans program continued to deliver adult programs with new and established partnering agencies and youth programs at schools and other youth agencies. In the months of January, February, and March, County Extension Agents and Better Living for Texans (BLT) Assistants conducted educational sessions on general nutrition, physical activity, gardening, food safety, and food resource management. Direct educational contacts and PSE changes included program series taught from a combination of the eight evaluated program series BLT offers which includes participants completing a pre, post, follow-up and/or retrospective surveys. (Adult series: *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!*; *Eat Smart, Live Strong*; *Step Up, Scale Down*; and *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities*; youth series: *Balancing Food & Play*; and *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!*; combined youth and adult series: *Walk Across Texas* and *Walk N Talk*)

In addition to these series, single education programs/classes are held in regions and counties across the state. *Path to the Plate* programs focus on delivering basic, factual research-based agriculture and food production/food preparation/food safety information. *Dinner Tonight!* programs continue to be well accepted by our adult audiences. This program offers cooking demonstrations and food tastings of our BLT/SNAP-Ed recipes and teaches healthy cooking skills. Partnering agencies, local stores, and local chefs all come together to deliver this successful program.

**Objective 2: Reduce risk factors for chronic diseases among the SNAP-Ed eligible target audience such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.**

Single education programs and program series that survey behavior change offered by BLT teach the importance of making healthier food selections, consuming more fruits and vegetables, and the importance of increasing physical activity to help reduce the risk and/or onset of obesity and of chronic diseases. At the start of a new calendar year, several counties kick off either the eight-week series *Walk Across Texas/Walk N Talk* or the twelve-week series, *Step Up, Scale Down*. Both programs focus on increasing physical activity and choosing healthier food selections.

County Extension Agents offered various themed *Dinner Tonight!* cooking programs for BLT eligible participants to attend at no charge. These single education programs feature

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preparation of healthy recipes prepared by agents, local chefs, and others from the community.

A diabetes program series, *Do Well, Be Well*, continues to be taught in counties across the state. While it is not listed as an intervention program with our SNAP-Ed eligible audiences, when offered to them at no charge, a portion of the curriculum covering general nutrition, portion control, and the importance of physical activity are discussed with the participants. Health care professionals and nutritionists with expertise in diabetes from the local community partner with the county Extension educators to deliver this program.

**Objective 3: Increase collaboration of nutrition, physical activity, and wellness education across the state.**

In the second quarter, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service's partnership with Univision San Antonio changed the focus to gardening. Segments on building and maintaining home gardens were spotlighted. One of BLT's gardening educators presented key concepts from the *Growing and Nourishing Healthier Communities* program series. The segments are scheduled to run each Saturday during the noon news/information program and continue through April 2018. The gardening videos are being developed in Spanish and will be available in English for use with other BLT related gardening programs and events.

AgriLife Extension continues collaborations and partnerships both within the Texas A&M system and with external agencies/organizations. The Healthy Texas initiative (an internal collaborative effort within Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Texas A&M Health Science Center) continues to promote nutrition, physical activity, and gardening programs with external collaborations (local agencies and schools). In the second quarter, several counties in the East Region kicked off Walk Across Texas programs aimed for families to get involved. Record numbers of both youth and adults enrolled. As the spring semester started, youth gardening programs started up schools and youth agencies across the state. These programs teach basic gardening skills, the importance of making healthier food choices, eating more fruits and vegetables, and the importance of being physically active.

Other collaborations across the state continued with BLT programs being held and presented to clientele associated with county/local agriculture organizations, child care facilities, senior adult/citizens centers, parks and recreation centers, schools of all grade levels, faith-based groups, food banks and pantries, food stores, nonprofits, government agencies, human service agencies, workforce development groups, and worksites.

**Objective 4: Increase consumption of fruits, vegetables, and other foods that comprise a healthy diet among the SNAP-Ed eligible population.**

Program series offered during the second quarter continue to be well accepted and results show positive behavior changes. The *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!* series emphasizes at each session the importance to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. Food demonstrations highlighting recipes for each meal – breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snacks, feature fruits and vegetables. To reinforce the key concepts, educational reinforcing resources (i.e., handouts, incentive items related to the session's

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content, printed recipes) are give to each participant to take home and use. Print materials are available in English and Spanish.

Gardening programs continue to be implemented at schools across the state through the *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!* (LGEG) youth series and the *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities* (GNHC) adult programs started up in the southern, warmer regions.

**Objective 5: Increase ongoing physical activity among the SNAP-Ed eligible population in accordance with the recommended Physical Activity Guidelines.**

Better Living for Texans programs focused on increasing physical activity along with a nutrition message continued to be implemented across the state. The program series are *Balancing Food and Play*, *Step Up*, *Scale Down*, and *Walk Across Texas* and/or *Walk N Talk*. While each of these interventions offer varying number of sessions, they continue to be requested and well received.

- **Number of new projects implemented by identified primary approach (specify approach - Direct, Indirect, Social Marketing, Policy, Systems, or Environmental Change):**

During the second quarter, no new projects were implemented by the BLT program.

- **Number of ongoing projects identified by primary approach (specify approach: Direct, Indirect, Social Marketing, Policy, Systems, or Environmental Change):**

Continuing in the second quarter, the BLT State Office website was regularly updated. New postings were added to the BLT State Office Facebook nearly daily with recipes, happenings within the program, and success stories. (Social Marketing)

County Extension Agents and BLT assistants/educators continue to provide programs of direct educational and Systems and Environmental Changes to SNAP-Ed eligible youth and adult audiences. Agents and BLT assistants continued to maintain/create BLT related county websites and Facebook pages. (Direct, Indirect, Social Marketing, Systems and Environmental Changes)

To better tell our story, the BLT Regional Program Managers continued to work directly with county Extension agents and BLT assistants to develop success stories that can be used to highlight at local, regional, state, and when appropriate national levels via print media, television, and other social media outlets. (Social Marketing)

BLT continued to produce monthly newsletters in both English and Spanish for county educators to use or adapt as needed for their local audience(s). Each month seasonal or current nutrition topics are highlighted and accompanied with recipes. January's newsletter titled, *Turnip Facts*, featured this winter root vegetable. February's newsletter covered strategies in sync with the title, *Quick Dinner Tips*. Recipes for "Quick Skillet Lasagna" and "Veggie Stir-Fry" were also featured. The newsletter for March explained phrases found on food packages, thus the title, *Best-by, Use-by, Sell-by: What They Mean to You*. (Indirect)

County agents and BLT educators served on School Health Advisory Councils (SHAC) within the counties and communities they serve. From this involvement, counties are given opportunities to implement gardening programs, *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!*, that build

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teaching gardens (environmental), change policy for healthier food selections in the school cafeteria and create safe walking/outdoor spaces for physical activities (policy, systems, and environmental), along with implementing youth *Balancing Food and Play*, and *Walk Across Texas/Walk N Talk* programs. (Policy, Systems and Environmental Changes).

Note: Because BLT does not have a single social marketing campaign, this is not data is not included on the EARS report.

- **Partnership activities:**

For a detailed list of partnerships, please see our EARS report which lists the number of various locations where BLT programs are conducted. Our partnerships with community centers, churches, senior adult/citizen service centers, food banks/pantries, public and designated low-income housing, Head Start programs, school districts, and other agencies allow the BLT educators to continue to make positive impacts through programs that teach general nutrition, the importance of physical activity, and access to fruits and vegetables through gardening.

- **Staff/partner trainings:**

The BLT State Office held a State Office meeting February 20 – 22, 2018 in College Station, TX. Topics covered were general business procedures, programmatic and intervention changes anticipated for FY 2019, county filing systems, strategic planning opportunities with other AgriLife Extension program areas. Fourteen State Office staff, which included the business office staff, Regional Program Managers, the program coordinator and the program director, attended.

- **Conference presentations and/or other journal publications:**

None to report.

- **Major achievements (not already addressed):**

No new major achievements to currently report.

- **Major setbacks, if any:**

Not necessarily setbacks, more as a challenge. In the northwest/western part of the state, extremely dry conditions continue. Counties implementing youth and adult gardening programs strategically identify ways/resources to water plants regularly.

- **Overall assessment:**

Overall, the second quarter was a success. BLT educators (agents and assistants) continue to seek new program partners while maintaining established partnerships for program delivery. They identify ways to keep all BLT programs relevant to the individuals and families they serve.

Please remember to submit your EARS Report along with the monthly summary.

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**Better Living for Texans**

**Nutrition Focused Programs**

Participants from the *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!* working on kitchen skill while preparing the “Tangy Fruit Salad” recipe. (Williamson County)



Graduates from the *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!* showing off their certificates of completion. (Cameron County)

**Physical Activity Focused Program**

Youth and faculty/staff from Como-Pickton Elementary School successfully completed the eight-week Walk Across Texas/Walk N Talk program. (Hopkins County)



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**Gardening Focused Programs**

In counties across the state, it is that time of the year to prep the garden beds and plant seeds for another growing season. Youth participate in the *Learn, Grow, Eat & GO!* ten-week gardening program while adults join the *Growing and Nourishing Healthy Communities* six-week gardening program.

