

NUTRI-NET NEWS

July 2000

This newsletter is a service of the Nutrition Education Network of Wisconsin. The Network is designed to enhance coordination and communication among agencies and organizations that educate Wisconsin's low income individuals and families about nutrition and food.

Nutri-Net News shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

Visit our Web site at:
<http://www.nutrisci.wisc.edu/nutrinet/>

No-Shows a Growing Concern for Wisconsin's Transition to Quest Card *Gene Holt, Quest/EBT Outreach Manager, Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee*

A recent report from the State of Wisconsin's Department of Workforce Development (DWD) confirms what advocates have been saying for months. Many current food stamp recipients are not appearing at their scheduled Quest training sessions, thereby losing temporary access to their food stamp benefits. The DWD report covered the conversion activity that took place in Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Stage 1 conversion included Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Kenosha, Lafayette, Marquette, Racine, Richland, Sauk and Walworth counties. By the end of the conversion month, 72% of the Stage 1 clients had received training and picked up their Quest card.

The remaining 28% did not show up at their training and did not get their Quest card. Without their Quest card, clients ceased to have access to their food stamp benefits.



Walworth County, with only 500 food stamp cases, still had a no-show rate of 27% by the end of the conversion month. Dane County, with the largest urban population within Stage 1, had the worst experience. By the end of the conversion month, just 66% of the clients had been converted with an astounding 34% yet to be converted.

In Stage 2 (85%) and Stage 3 (78%), the percentage of food stamp clients converted by the end of the conversion month, was slightly better.

It should also be noted that these numbers,

(Continued on page 2)

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Nutri-Net News

as provided by the DWD, have been culled to remove any misleading cases that might mis-represent the problem. Cases that are closed or have no benefits are not counted in these totals.

Conversion is continuing in Stages 4, 5 and 6. Milwaukee County will follow Stage 6 and will attempt to convert 36,000 food stamp households over a three month period, affecting benefits in September, October and November. If Milwaukee County has a similar experience as Dane County, more than 12,000 households (affecting more than 33,000 men, women and children) will lose temporary access to their food stamp benefits. Milwaukee area food pantries will not be able to meet the demand for food that replaces what people would otherwise have purchased with food stamps.

Hunger Task Force continues to work with Milwaukee County and various community-based organizations to get the word out on the upcoming conversion. Our outreach effort includes overview training of community advocates, talking points, posters (English only) and client flyers [English, Spanish, Hmong, Russian (soon) and Lao (soon)]. Other languages being considered for our outreach flyers include Vietnamese, Cambodian and Albanian.

If you are interested in seeing samples of our outreach materials, or for questions about the Quest conversion in Milwaukee County, contact Gene Holt (414) 777-0483 or email at: gene@hungertaskforce.org

BROWN COUNTY FOOD SECURITY RESEARCH

Karen Early, UWEX-WNEP Coordinator, Brown County

Brown County UWEX began a Food Security Initiative in 1995 in response to changes in the political climate regarding welfare and family support programs. An outcome of these program changes was an increased problem of hunger for many county residents. The Food Security Initiative in Brown County went beyond short-term emergency relief efforts and focused on community food security, which embraces a long term planning

and multidisciplinary systems approach in addressing hunger.

A national USDA Food Security Survey in 1998 and observations of struggling families in the county, led Brown County to examine the extent of local food insecurity and to determine how to address it locally. UWEX in collaboration with the University of Wisconsin - Green Bay Social Work Professional Program, first conducted the survey in 1998 and repeated it in 1999 to gain further information. The USDA Food Security Survey was used to measure respondents' food security status.

The survey was modified to include questions pertaining to relevant demographic information, such as household size, age, and employment status; reasons for food insecurity; and the potential benefits of several food assistance initiatives. Those willing to answer questions were female (83%), Caucasian (63%), younger than 40 (81%), less educated than the general population (34%), resided in households with a total of four or more people (48%) and had jobs paying an average of \$7.87 an hour. About half the members of households in the survey were children younger than 18. While most of those questioned were white, minorities were reported to be disproportionately over-represented in the sample.

Ten different sites - all serving households at risk for food insecurity - were included in this evaluation: two of the sites were meal sites, six were food pantries, and two were WIC offices. The total number of individuals asked to participate in the study was 760. The total number who agreed to participate was 566, yielding an overall response rate of 74%.

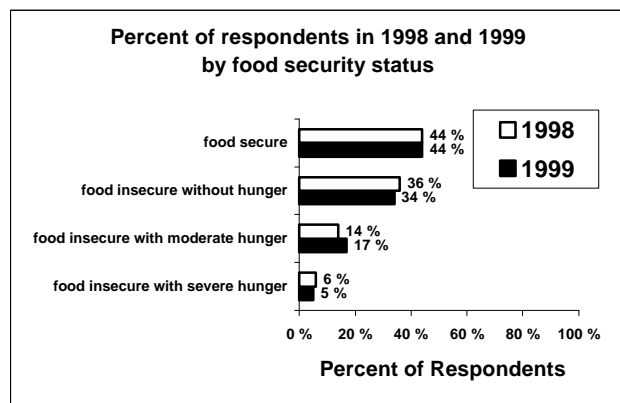
The survey divides households into three categories of food insecurity: 1) *Food insecure without hunger*, when there is concern about food management and some reduced quality of diet, but little or no reduction in the food intake of household members. 2) *Food insecure with moderate hunger*, when food intake for adults in the household is reduced so those adults repeatedly experience the physical sensation of hunger. 3) *Food insecure with severe hunger* when both adults and children in the household are experiencing physical sensations of hunger and extensive reductions in food intake.

Fifty-six percent of this population reported food inse-

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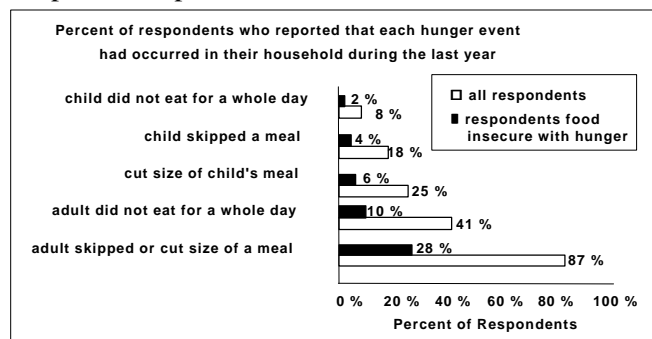
Nutri-Net News

curity. Of that, 34% of those responding said they were "food insecure without hunger," while another 17% said they were moderately hungry. Five percent cited severe hunger.



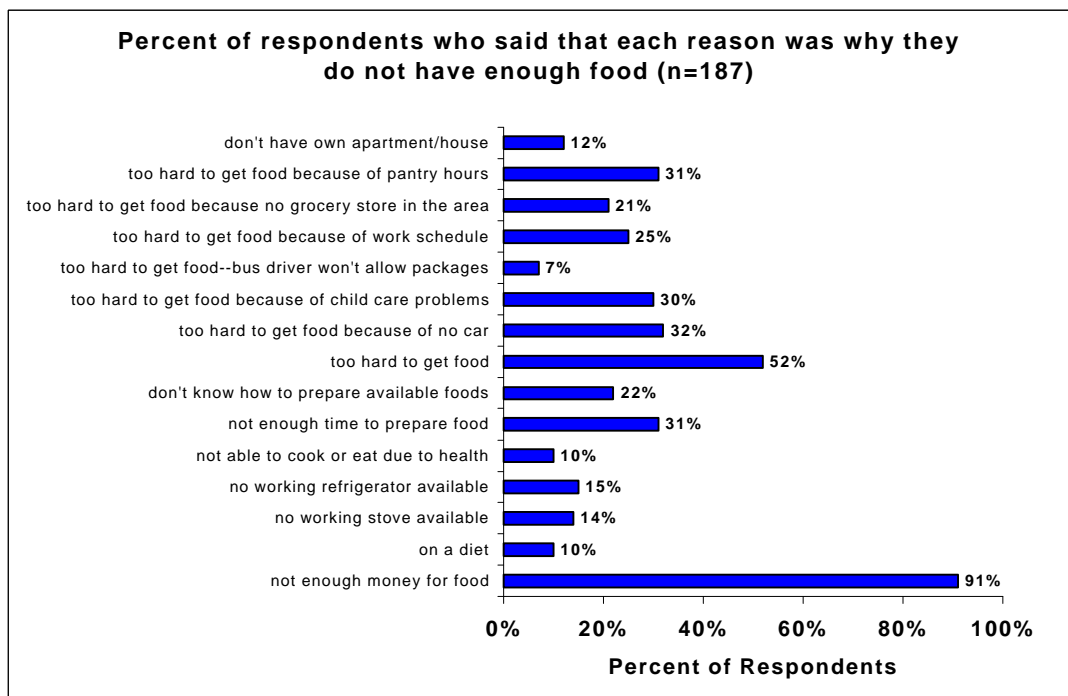
While many respondents reported they were employed in some capacity, virtually all (91%) reported they were unable to acquire the food they needed because of a lack of money. They cited an array of other problems, including difficulty in finding food (52%); food pantry hours too restrictive (31%); no car to get to food sources (32%); not enough time to prepare food (31%); difficulty getting food because of child-care problems (30%); work schedule keeping them away from food sources (25%); and not knowing how to prepare available foods (22%).

tives such as a downtown grocery store, a traveling grocery store or food pantry, different pantry hours, improved transportation and community gardens would help those respondents secure food.



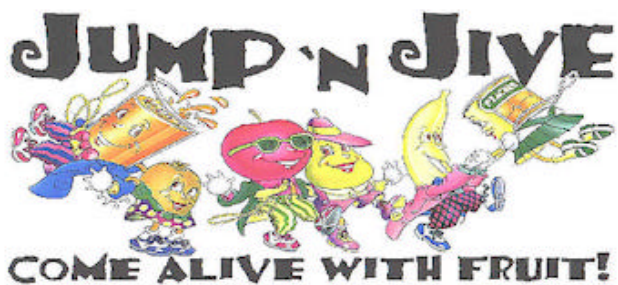
Brown County has developed a comprehensive plan to address research findings, involving initiatives to improve food security following the USDA's Community Food Security 7-Step Action Plan. Projects to date include: start up of summer breakfast and lunch programs, community gardens involving 200 families and the start of a market garden, food pantry coordination, an individual asset development program, food stamp outreach, improved Farmer's Market access and utilization, food security asset mapping and local, state and national leadership and education on food security.

For additional information regarding this survey and its results, contact Karen Early at the Brown County Extension office, 920-391-4614.



Food initia-

Nutri-Net News



Almost 100 nutrition educators from WNEP, WIC, Head Start, schools, Elderly Nutrition and other agencies with a nutrition education component attended the **JUMP 'N JIVE** workshops that were held in Eau Claire, Lac du Flambeau, Madison, and Green Bay the last two weeks of May. These educators represented one or more of the 26 counties and Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council that will be collaborating in a multi-agency promotion of the **JUMP 'N JIVE...Come Alive with Fruit** message for low-income parents and caregivers during the months of October and November 2000.

The workshops began with a brief history of the Wisconsin Nutrition Education Network and an overview of the social marketing model – a nutrition education approach emphasized by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the USDA. In addition, research that informed the development of the campaign's message and logo was presented along with the campaign's nutrition education materials. Evaluation results of last fall's pilot campaign in Rock, Dane and LaCrosse counties were reviewed and plans for the evaluation of this fall's expanded campaign were discussed. The workshops culminated with time for nutrition educators to connect with their colleagues from other agencies and programs, share ideas, and develop plans for their campaigns.

Participant evaluations reflected a very successful workshop (average score was 4.23 with 5=excellent and 1=poor.) Participants also felt confident that they will be coordinating their work with other agencies during this campaign (average score was 4.64 with 5=very confident and 1=not at

Network Update

all confident.)

The presentations and discussions gave participants an opportunity to build on the findings of last fall's pilot campaign. The combination of creative new ideas and practical planning that emerged from these workshops has us all energized for this fall's campaign. The campaign will consist of two components – an awareness building component to convey the **JUMP 'N JIVE** message and a local education component that complements that message. While posters, stickers, press releases, newsletter articles, and school lunch menu backs are being used for creating awareness, nutrition educators in WNEP, WIC, Head Start, schools, and Elderly Nutrition will be reaching the audience with the same message through interactive displays, fruit demonstrations, and other nutrition activities.

Along with Wisconsin Extension's Nutrition Education Program (WNEP), the Network has submitted a plan to the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) for the upcoming fiscal year (October 1, 2000 – September 30, 2001.) If approved, the Network will begin planning for a new campaign based on needs of the limited income population in Wisconsin for implementation in fiscal year 2002.

OUR MISSION:

The Nutrition Education Network of Wisconsin facilitates collaborative planning of nutrition education programs at the state and local levels. We promote healthful and enjoyable eating so that Wisconsin's low income individuals and families receive consistent, positive, relevant, accurate,