

# Making a Difference

## 2017-2018 Lubbock County

### *Better Living for Texans – A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!*

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#### **Relevance**

More than 3.7 million individuals receive benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), historically known as food stamps. In Lubbock County, an estimated 34,653 individuals receive SNAP benefits and 22% of children live in poverty. Studies have shown individuals who live in poverty (including SNAP recipients) have dietary intakes that are not in agreement with current recommendations (i.e. Dietary Guidelines or MyPlate). This audience, like many, may not recognize their risk for foodborne illness. Having enough food to eat is also a challenge; an estimated 1 in 6 households in Texas experience food insecurity.

#### **Response – Better Living for Texans (BLT)**

The BLT Program is a cooperative endeavor among Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) of USDA. A component of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), BLT offers food and nutrition education to SNAP recipients, applicants, and other low-income audiences to help improve their ability to plan and prepare nutritious meals, stretch food dollars, and prepare and store food safely. BLT can also incorporate gardening and the *Walk Across Texas* program to promote physical activity and improve access to vegetables and fruits. During the 2017 – 2018 BLT year, 144 Lubbock County adults completed the BLT *A Fresh Start to a Healthier You!* series. This program focuses on improving vegetable and fruit intake, meal planning, increasing physical activity, and adopting selected behaviors that can reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Of those participants, 84 completed the 30-day follow-up survey which allows us to assess the extent that targeted behaviors were adopted. This report reflects the 144 participants who completed the pre -survey, 57 who completed post survey measuring intent to change behavior and the 84 participants who also completed the follow-up survey. Contacts were made in programs at Lubbock ISD, South Plains Community Action Head Start parenting programs and food service staff, Texas Tech Early Head Start parents, senior citizens centers, Lubbock & Frenship ISD's and the alternative school's health fairs, The Community Health Center of Lubbock, Habitat for Humanity, Summer Youth Food Service programs, South Plains Area Agency on Aging, Catholic Family Services, Managed Care for Addictive Disorders Women's Walker and men's Mash units, Foster Grandparents Volunteers, Hillcrest Manor Apts. & King's Dominion Apts. Sr. Citizen programs, and others. Collaborations in addition to the previous program locations include Texas Tech University Dietetic Interns, Building Strong Families Conference and its participating agencies, Family Guidance & Outreach Center, Texas Department of Health & Human Services, and Region 17 Education Service Center.

**Senior Citizens Centers and Other Group Programs** – are provided by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in Lubbock County to satisfy the USDA and South Plains Association of Governments Area Agency on Aging requirements of a monthly nutrition program for each senior center. Older persons are at a higher risk for developing diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic illnesses as well as food borne illness. One "In The Know About Nutrition" topic per month was taught at 6 BLT senior centers. The 4 Texas Tech Dietetic Interns each wrote from one to three of these nutrition presentations during their community nutrition rotation in the Lubbock County Extension Office in 2018. This will continue with the interns in the 2019 internship class. The SPAG AAoA senior center bookkeepers and directors also receive the sr. center programs (3 per quarter) so that the centers in counties without agents would have an approved nutrition program to present. Some of these centers also provide home delivered meals and the nutrition program is also delivered by volunteers along with the meals.

**Food Safety, Sanitation, and Food Preservation** - Five Food Protection Management 2- day classes were scheduled with the Hale County FCS Agent, Deana Sageser in Hale & Lubbock Counties with 24 participants. Ten Food Handlers classes were also held from January through October 2018 with 170 participants. Many of these participants work in public or church day cares, schools, and head start food service programs and may qualify as BLT participants as well as serving BLT families. Others were restaurant employees and may have been BLT qualified participants. One class was presented for 3 Work Force Solutions clients in November, but those results will be included in 2019 results as a Food Handler's class is scheduled every quarter with Work Force in 2018-19 due to the State Law requiring all food service employees to have this certification. Work Force will pay for the certification. Surveys must be sent for compilation by October 15.

**Results (BLT)**

Participants were: female (49.3%) vs male (50.7%) and from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds (37.8% Hispanic or Latino, 62.2% Non-Hispanic; 81.3% White; 10.9% Black). More than 61.3% (n=84) had a high school degree or less; 38.7% (n=53) had completed some college or a college degree. The average household size was 2.71 and the mean age was 38.01. Approximately 79.1% (n=53) of 144 participants received SNAP benefits. More than 20.9% (n=14) had received food from a food pantry/bank within the previous 30 days. Additionally, 14.9% participated in free or reduced school meals; 7.5% were in head start; 6.0% qualified for TANF; and 19.4% qualified for WIC. **Meal Planning and Food Resource Management – Adoption of behavior-**Upon entry into the BLT program, most participants were planning their meals (66.10%), shopping for food with a list (72.1%) and comparing prices (73.0%) “always” or “sometimes”. After the program ended, the percentage of participants increased who reported intent to practice planning meals (78.6%), using a list (77.0%), and comparing prices (86.9%) “always”, or “most of the time”. **Food Safety-Adoption of behavior-**At the beginning, a majority washed hands before preparing meals (n=125; 96.9%) and washed fruits & veggies before eating or preparing them (n=116; 85.9%) “always” or “most of the time”. After the program, more reported washing hands before preparing meals “always” or “most of the time” (97.9%; n=91), and washing fruits & veggies before eating or preparing them (94.5%; n=86). While there was an increase, more need to be aware of the dangers of inadequate hand washing and washing of produce in light of numerous recalls in 2017-18.


**Other Findings:** In the beginning, 50.0% (n=136) indicated that they are physically active at least 30 minutes five days a week “all of the time” or “most of the time”. After the program, this number increased somewhat to 57.6% (n=92). Program satisfaction was rated either “good”, “very good”, or “excellent” by 90.8% (n=65) of participants, while 92.0% (n=63) were “very likely” or “likely” to recommend BLT programs to others and 84.9% (n=66) were “very likely” or “likely” to attend another BLT program.

**Senior Citizens Centers and Other Nutrition Programs-**Six BLT senior citizens centers received a monthly nutrition program. Topics for 2016 included in the “In The Know About Nutrition” series were: “Processed Food: What’s Ok & What to Avoid”, “Omega 3: The Basics”, “Prepare for the Unexpected: What to do When Disaster Strikes”, “Easter Time Means Egg Time”, “14 Ways Consumers Can Reduce Food Waste”, “Planning Healthy Meals for 1 or 2”, “Protein for Seniors”, “Food Safety & Selection at Farmer’s Markets”, “Tips on Eating Out”, “Healthy Halloween Treats”, “Beat the Bulge This Holiday”, and “Control Holiday Cravings”. There were about 2300 participants (including 600 home delivered meal participants) receiving the handout and program from the Lubbock CEA-FCS, BLT-EA or volunteers for the home delivered meal program at Slaton Sr. Center. Because the Sr. Center directors and bookkeepers come to Lubbock for a SPAG AAoA quarterly training from the 20 surrounding counties of which several have no FCS Agent, a program highlighting the Lubbock County senior center lessons for the quarter is presented. These directors then have 3 nutrition programs to present to their clientele, fulfilling the program requirements of

USDA and SPAG. This agent is also a member of the SPAG AAoA Community Advisory Council. Nutrition education was also provided at the Teen Summit (approx..575), Harwell Elem. Health Fair (approx..609), and Summer Youth Food Service Camps (approx..400). **Food Safety, Sanitation, & Food Preservation** Food Handlers were taught to 170 and 24 attended the Food Protection Mgt. classes. The Lubbock CEA-FCH & BLT-EA served as preceptors to 4 TX Tech Dietetic Interns during their community nutrition rotation. These results are in the Health & Wellness and/or Food Protection Management Summary. The BLT –EA retired on July 31, 2018.

**VALUE**

**Better Living for Texans**



These nutrition programs teach low-income audiences to prepare nutritious meals, stretch their food resources, improve their food-safety practices, and participate in regular physical activity. This not only improves the quality of life and reduces the risk of chronic disease for participants, but also lowers public health care costs.