

# Making a Difference

## Learn Go Eat & Grow!

### Relevance

In the United States, Hispanics are the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority, constituting 17% of the U.S. and almost 40% of the Texas population. Hispanics are disproportionately affected by obesity, heart disease, metabolic syndrome, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease, and type 2 diabetes (T2D). In Texas, 66% of adults and 33% of children are overweight or obese, with the highest rates among Hispanics. Low socioeconomic status exacerbates the problem, with 47% of low-income Hispanic children in Texas being overweight or obese. It has been shown that over 30% of Hispanic children (8-18 years of age) have pre-diabetes and the metabolic syndrome. Compared to other ethnicities, Hispanics have elevated levels of visceral adiposity, increased progression of carotid intima media thickness, are more likely to be insulin resistant, and exhibit early signs of  $\beta$ -cell dysfunction, all of which are linked to increased risk of T2D and cardiovascular disease. (Source: academic research by Dr. Jaimie Davis and others)

During the summer gardening program (LGEG) students will understand from where food comes and how to grow it, learn the benefits of eating fresh produce, explore the benefits of eating locally grown foods, learn sustainable horticultural practices, learn to prepare produce harvested from the garden, develop a more diverse palate, and practice alternative forms of exercise, all within high-risk populations of elementary and middle school students. Students mental health and wellness will also be impacted by practicing stewardship, learning responsibility, developing gardening skills, practicing patience and group dynamics, creating a sense of community, instilling a positive work ethic, increasing self-esteem, and improving social skills and behavior.

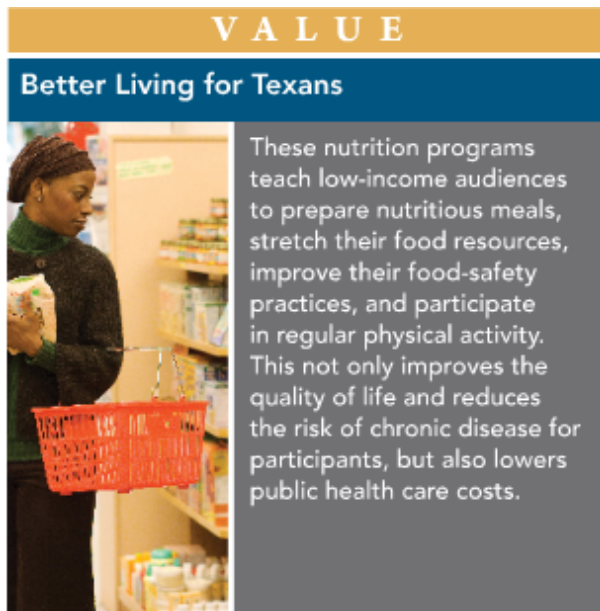


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## **Response & Results**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this program was not able to begin.

## **Conclusions and Future Plans**



**V A L U E**

**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.

If the COVID-19 pandemic allows, this program will happen as planned during the summer of 2020.

## **Acknowledgements**

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