



RNECE

Regional Nutrition Education and
Obesity Prevention Centers of Excellence
National Coordination Center at the University of Kentucky

POINTING THE WAY
TO GOOD
NUTRITION

RNECE Initiative Mission and Objectives

The overarching goal of the RNECE is to improve the health of low-income Americans by fostering a culture of health through multiple strategies, including nutrition education and complementary public health approaches implemented at each level of the socio-ecological framework through policy, systems and environmental changes.

- Strengthen the evidence-base on effective nutrition education and obesity prevention programs for diverse population groups.
- Evaluate the long-term effectiveness of nutrition education and obesity prevention interventions for disadvantaged and underserved populations and opportunities for new research.
- Identify and create research collaborations and synergistic relationships among researchers and EFNEP/SNAP-Ed program directors, universities and other implementers, and state and federal agencies.
- Enhance the impact of state and community nutrition education and obesity prevention efforts by providing the public health-related training and evidence that practitioners need for improving nutrition and health behaviors, environments, and policies in ways that are equitable, efficient, and sustained over time.

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QUARTERLY REPORT

January 1 – March 31, 2016

Message from the Director, National Coordination Center

The second year of work for the RNECE Initiative continues to build the evidence base for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) and Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) while communicating with a broad range of stakeholders about our progress. Research and sub-award projects are described in this report and summarized in the Research Project Inventory table at the end of the report. We continue to build productive relationships among researchers, implementing agencies, and government agencies. During this quarter, two national presentations provided an initiative update for program implementation stakeholders. Personnel in the field are supportive of the RNECE Initiative and its potential to enhance their efforts to help low-income consumers access a more nutritious diet and healthy lifestyle.

Dr. Ann Vail
<http://rnece-ncc.org>



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RNECE National Coordination Center at University of Kentucky

On a monthly basis, the National Coordination Center (NCC) leads conference calls for all RNECE personnel and provides news articles for a variety of online outlets reaching EFNEP and SNAP-Ed implementing agencies and researchers. During this quarter, both oral and poster presentations were delivered to two national conferences: (1) Association of SNAP-Ed Nutrition Networks and Other Implementing Agencies (ASNNA) and (2) Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP). Audience interest in the RNECE work is evident by comments and questions at these presentations. Participation by key personnel from all Centers at both national meetings allowed a more full explanation of the RNECE work for implementing agency personnel. Following the ASNNA conference, a meeting of USDA officials and personnel from all RNECE Centers was held. This February 11-12, 2016 meeting provided an opportunity to coordinate work among the Centers and move forward collaboratively at a critical stage of the initiative.

New entries and updates for the Research Project Inventory were requested and received this quarter. The summary table at the end of this report includes these updates. We worked closely with Andrew Naja-Riese [USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Western Region] and the SNAP-Ed evaluation framework working group to update the RNECE Research Outcomes database. The data collection instrument for RNECE research project outcomes is now consistent with the final SNAP-Ed evaluation framework. The outcomes survey has also been modified to include EFNEP language.

Presentations:

Mullins J., Stephenson L., Franck K., Dollahite J., Ammerman A., Baker S., Barale K., Contreras D., Britt-Rankin J. *Regional Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Centers of Excellence (RNECE)*. Presented at the 2016 Association of SNAP-Ed Nutrition Networks and Other Implementing Agencies (ASNNA) Winter Conference; February 8-11, 2016; Arlington, VA.

Kurzynske J., Brewer D., Mullins J., Vail A., Ammerman A., Baker S., Dollahite J., Savaiano D., Stephenson L. *Pointing the Way to Good Nutrition: Regional Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Centers of Excellence (RNECE)*. Poster presented at the Association of SNAP-Ed Nutrition Networks and Other Implementing Agencies (ASNNA) Winter Conference; February 8-11, 2016; Arlington, VA.

Kurzynske J., Paddock J., Britt-Rankin J., Franck K., Jones L., Barale K., Baker S., Mehta M., McCaffrey J. *What YOUR Regional Nutrition Education Centers of Excellence (RNECE) Are Doing and How They May Impact Your Work*. Presented at the 2016 National Coordinator's Conference: Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP); March 14-17, 2016; Arlington, VA.

Vail A., Ammerman A., Baker S., Dollahite J., Savaiano D., Stephenson L. *Connecting the Pieces through Implementation Research – Regional Nutrition Education Centers of Excellence*. Poster presented at the 2016 National Coordinator's Conference: Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP); March 14-17, 2016; Arlington, VA.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Those who were served by the RNECE Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change Center (RNECE-PSE) projects this quarter. Where appropriate, population groups such as racial, and ethnic minorities and those who are socially, economically, or educationally disadvantaged are listed.

Target Audience Type	Description
Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SNAP-Ed and EFNEP Networks

PRODUCTS

RNECE-PSE products for this quarter, with a brief description, reference, and/or link.

Type of Product	Product Description
Posters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitted abstract to the American Public Health Association (APHA) for poster and / or presentation • Poster submission accepted for annual Society of Nutrition Education and Behavior conference--“A Delphi Study to Identify Barriers, Facilitators and Training Needs for Policies, Systems, and Environmental Interventions in Nutrition Education Programs for Low-Income Audiences” to be presented by Karen Franck and Karla Shelnett
Conference Papers & Presentations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASNNA Annual Conference 2016 • EFNEP Directors Meeting 2016
Websites (new, current, and/or updated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed site map for RNECE-PSE website
Publications for eXtension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RNECE-PSE April update article
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rounds 1, 2 and 3 of Delphi surveys to collect information related to barriers, facilitators, training, and technical assistance needs in regards to PSE change strategies in EFNEP & SNAP-Ed programs completed • PSE Subject Matter Expert Pre-screen Develop A Curriculum (DACUM) panel survey distributed

RNECE-PSE products for this quarter continued on next page

RNECE-PSE products for this quarter cont.

Type of Product	Product Description
Toolkits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisted RNECE-South by populating 18 templates from the Obesity Prevention toolkit for an interactive toolkit
National Trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marsha Davis continues to serve as liaison for this portion of the project
Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval received for Discovery Phase Delphi study of implementing agencies • Environmental scan of facilitators, barriers, training needs and current training offered in programs completed • Environmental scan of PSE related competencies in literature and within PSE experienced institutions and organizations in progress

Accomplishments

RNECE-PSE accomplishments for this quarter

Achievement / Goal Accomplished / Major Activity Completed	Specific Objectives Met	Results, including major findings, developments or conclusions (both positive and negative)	Key Outcomes or Other Achievements Realized	Additional Information
Attended DACUM International Training Institute at The Ohio State University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Become certified in coordinating and facilitating the DACUM occupational analysis process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RNECE-PSE Co-Director and Project Director now DACUM certified 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DACUM process to be employed to identify competencies needed for PSE approaches by implementing agency coordinators / supervisors

RNECE-PSE accomplishments for this quarter continued on next page

RNECE-PSE accomplishments for this quarter cont.

Achievement / Goal Accomplished / Major Activity Completed	Specific Objectives Met	Results, including major findings, developments or conclusions (both positive and negative)	Key Outcomes or Other Achievements Realized	Additional Information
PSE Change Center face to face annual meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe and explore Principal Investigator (PI) / CO-PI area of expertise and interest • Understand objectives in each milestone team • Answer / clarify any outstanding questions and / or concerns • Develop 90 day action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor changes in milestone teams to better use expertise • Consensus on RNECE-PSE efforts and action steps • 90 day action plan 		
Established DACUM panel for SNAP-Ed coordinators / supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secured venue for DACUM panel • Prescreen survey for potential SNAP-Ed PSE experts to participate • Recruit SNAP-Ed coordinators / supervisors to participate on DACUM panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spark Center in Franklin, TN will be used to conduct DACUM panel • 10 SNAP-Ed coordinators / supervisors confirmed to participate diverse in implementing agency and geographic location 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panel will identify PSE competencies to systematically guide RNECE-PSE efforts for PSE training and technical assistance

RNECE-PSE accomplishments for this quarter continued on next page

RNECE-PSE accomplishments for this quarter cont.

Achievement / Goal Accomplished / Major Activity Completed	Specific Objectives Met	Results, including major findings, developments or conclusions (both positive and negative)	Key Outcomes or Other Achievements Realized	Additional Information
Environmental Scan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a list of current and available PSE trainings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified 60 available PSE trainings online 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings will be reviewed further with Quality Matters standards and mapped to PSE competencies identified in the DACUM process
Delphi Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete three rounds of surveys • Gain consensus on barriers, facilitators, training and evaluation needs in regards to PSEs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top barriers for implementing PSEs in SNAP-Ed and EFNEP include evaluation issues / concerns, lack of PSE training, and problems with coordinating direct education with PSEs • Top facilitators include access to evaluation expertise, access to quality training, and experience with PSE implementation • Top training needs include how to evaluate PSEs, how to train and supervise staff to implement PSEs, and how to implement PSEs as an agency 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary report is being written

RNECE-PSE accomplishments for this quarter continued on next page.

RNECE-PSE accomplishments for this quarter cont.

Achievement / Goal Accomplished / Major Activity Completed	Specific Objectives Met	Results, including major findings, developments or conclusions (both positive and negative)	Key Outcomes or Other Achievements Realized	Additional Information
e-Learning Assistant search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire e-learning assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewed 3 candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected top 2 candidates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On boarding in process
Tailoring Readiness to Change tools for implementing agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailor readiness tools for SNAP-Ed agencies • Obtain feedback from SNAP-Ed agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback received to tailor readiness tools for different SNAP-Ed implementing agencies and clarify language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness for PSE self-assessment tool and PSE reporting tool for readiness still undergoing modifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning on collaborating with other groups working on readiness

RNECE North Central Region Center at Purdue University

Research priorities of the North Central Region Nutrition Education and Obesity Center of Excellence (RNECE-NC) are to:

- Address the policy, systems and/or environmental (PSE) aspects of the rural communities of the North Central region, including rural-urban comparisons.
- Address the specific needs of immigrant, minority and/or other at risk populations in this region.
- Strengthen the evidence base on effective nutrition education/obesity prevention programs for diverse groups, notably SNAP-Ed and EFNEP.

This center also seeks to increase researcher and SNAP-Ed/EFNEP partnerships through an affiliates program. Partnerships are developed among affiliates through information shared on the Center website, webinars featuring funded research and affiliate meetings. A face-to-face affiliate meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2016 in Chicago. Fifty participants have registered to attend our face to face meeting.

The center also recently completed a round of request for proposals. Four new research projects were granted funding following an extensive review and ranking process involving outside reviewers. The following proposals were funded on February 1, 2016

- Evaluating a Multi-Modal Community Nutrition Education Model within SNAP-Ed and EFNEP (Phase 2): University of Illinois Extension, Jennifer McCaffrey
- Influence of PSA on dietary quality at diverse low income child care settings, Michigan State University Extension, Dawn Earnesty
- Does SNAP-Ed affect food security and obesity differentially in urban and rural environments? A longitudinal, randomized and controlled study, Purdue University, Heather A. Eicher-Miller
- Weight and Environmental Assessment Trial (SWEAT), The Ohio State University, Carolyn W Gunther

These projects join the University of Missouri Extension “Eat Smart In Parks” project and phase 1 of University of Illinois Extension’s “Evaluating a Multi-Modal Community Nutrition Model within SNAP-ED and EFNEP” project previously funded by the RNECE-NE

RNECE Northeast Region Center at Cornell University

The primary goal of the Northeast Region Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Center of Excellence (RNECE-NE) is to expand the evidence base that supports effective nutrition education of diverse low-income program participants delivered in conjunction with policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) approaches that make healthy choices easier in order to prevent obesity. The RNECE-NE key initiatives are a signature research program, nationwide training program, and a systematic review of literature with these objectives:

1. **Foster sustainable regional and local collaborations** among researchers working in a variety of relevant disciplines and nutrition and health program implementers serving low-income audiences across the northeastern United States, a region of stark geographical contrasts from dense urban to remote and isolated rural;
2. **Develop a signature research program** that combines direct education with PSE changes able to be effectively implemented by programs such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Education (SNAP-Ed) that serve low-income rural and urban participants from a wide range of ethnic, racial and linguist backgrounds;
3. **Create a system of sub-awards to fund projects that rigorously test the effectiveness of emergent or practice-based interventions** that combine nutrition education and public health approaches to support a culture of health among low income populations;
4. **Develop a communication and dissemination system** including mentoring and staff development through eXtension, social media, and on-line platforms as well as research articles to share: (1) the work of the Center, (2) research results from Center projects, and (3) best practices for nutrition education approaches that include PSE change efforts.

Progress Update

Progress update for RNECE-NE this quarter.

The regular bi-monthly conference calls for the Center Steering Committee were held on January 21 and March 10, with updates provided and input received on the center's work. The goal of the signature research program is to investigate *whether the combination of direct nutrition education and PSE changes have greater impact on dietary intake and physical activity than either strategy alone*. Five research projects are supported; one internal and four as external sub-awards. Mid-year reports were received from the external signature research projects, and feedback provided to each research team.

The nationwide training workgroup, with representatives from all RNECEs, met on January 13 to finalize the national PSE training needs survey and plan distribution. The workgroup met again on February 24 to provide input on analysis and interpretation of preliminary results. The survey was concluded in March; there were 600 respondents from 56 states and territories.

Survey data analyses are now complete. Training topics were almost all rated highly – indicating survey topics reflected training needs. Overall, the Western FNS Region rated the need for training for both directors and managers/practitioners significantly higher for many topics compared to other regions. The Southeast Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Region rated the need for training for both audiences significantly lower for many topics compared to other regions. Directors rated the need for training for directors on topics related to evaluation significantly higher compared to ratings by and for those in other positions. There were very few significant differences in how training needs were rated based on program (SNAP-Ed vs EFNEP) or years of experience.

The systematic review workgroup met on January 7, February 4, and March 8 to develop the systematic review protocol. The protocol is nearly complete. The workflow, software tools and data extraction form will be piloted next quarter by the systematic review management team and refined before commencing the review.

In addition to contributing to other presentations as indicated above under the National Coordinating Center report, RNECE-NE staff and stakeholders presented on the center's work at ASNNA in February and to the National EFNEP Coordinator's Conference in March:

Dollahite J. *The Northeast Regional Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Center of Excellence*. Presentation at ASNNA, February 8-11, 2016, Arlington, VA.

Paddock J., Mehta M. *Northeast Regional Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Center of Excellence: Signature Research*. Breakout session at the National EFNEP Coordinator's Conference, March 14-16, 2016, Arlington, VA.

RNECE South Region Center at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The ***Southern Region Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Center of Excellence (RNECE-South)*** at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill (UNC) and North Carolina State University (NC State) equips SNAP-Ed and EFNEP implementing agencies to create a culture of wellness where program participants experience measurable improvements in their health, nutrition and physical activity through multiple strategies including nutrition education and public health approaches. This regional center has promoted nutrition education and policy, systems and environmental change (PSE) through our Faithful Families Signature Project and Innovation Sub-Awards; our research in social media interventions for EFNEP and healthy retail interventions for SNAP-Ed; and our online training opportunities and SNAP-Ed Obesity Prevention Toolkit website development. RNECE-South serves SNAP-Ed and EFNEP efforts in: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Oklahoma, Virginia, Louisiana, South Carolina, Kentucky, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

UPDATES



Eat Well Be Well Healthy Stores Project

During this reporting period, staff worked on recruiting store managers in our target counties to join the Healthy Stores Project. Staff were successful in recruiting three intervention and three control stores in both Orange and Warren Counties. Working with our community partner in Lenoir County, we were able to recruit two intervention stores and two control stores. Once recruitment was complete, staff began to collect pre-test data, conducting customer intercept surveys (Orange n=167; Warren n=176; Lenoir

n=122) and store environmental assessments at all 16 stores and store manager interviews at the eight intervention stores. Pre-test data were used to develop the five intervention phases, select the specific promoted foods and create the intervention materials.

Additionally, we asked customers during their survey to choose their favorite project title that will act as a cue to action throughout the intervention; they chose “Eat Well Be Well”.

Our graphic designer created the above logo for Eat Well Be Well that will be used on project materials in all the intervention stores.

Social Media

Our staff have begun to collect and analyze the historical analytics data on the North Carolina Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (NC EFNEP) Facebook pages. We are analyzing data and hope to have results to share by end of summer 2016. Our consultant Dr. David Cavallo and staff member Emily Foley held a technical assistance call with the Signature Sub-awardees’ social media staff on March 30th. Multiple resources have been provided to

address the difficulty of recruiting participants to use the University of Florida and the University of Arkansas's projects' Facebook pages.

Faithful Families Signature Sub-Award

University of Florida: Trained lay leaders and EFNEP staff in program implementation and evaluation. Recruited 12-15 participants at two faith community sites and two lay leaders at each site. Efforts to work with a tech company to create an online platform to manage various aspects of the intervention were unsuccessful and had to be abandoned. Staff will move forward managing the data collection and social media interaction independently.

University of Tennessee: Recruitment of participants at 4 sites in two counties has occurred. Pre-test evaluation data collection is complete and the intervention is well under way. The social media component of the intervention was not able to be completed due to low participation numbers on the Facebook group page.

University of Arkansas: Conducted two separate trainings for county staff and volunteers implementing the project. The first was a virtual training covering the data collection protocol including signed Letters of Commitment from faith-based community partners, informed consent from study participants and data collection methodology using survey tools and biometric measures (height, weight and blood pressure). The second was an in-person training that again reviewed the study protocol as well as an in-depth overview of the lay leader training and conceptualized process for the policy, system and environmental change work implemented through Faithful Families. Programming and weekly check-ins for county staff have begun in all five study counties.

Innovation Sub-Award

University of Georgia: This goal is to recruit 20 participants, each of whom will complete three individual interviews during the ~6-week period with the loaned smartphone and Food eTalk program. They have recruited 14 participants. Three participants have completed all 3 interviews, 10 participants have completed 2/3 interviews, and 1 has completed only her first interview. Audio-recordings from these individual interviews are being transcribed verbatim and preliminary analysis is ongoing as a part of the transcription and preliminary coding process. Individual participants are also taking images of their food environment including: food at the supermarket, at home (both packaged and prepared meals), and meals when dining out. Among the 3 completed participants as of March 23, 2016, 77 images have been collected and will be analyzed using Photovoice methods. All images are geo-tagged. At the second and third interviews, participants are asked to discuss their photos with the researcher, and probes such as "tell me more about this image" and "help me understand what this image means to you" were used. After the third interview, when the loaned smartphone is collected, the images are removed from the phone and stored for future analysis. Lastly, the abstract they submitted to the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior Annual meeting was accepted for presentation, and the

data for that abstract includes preliminary findings from the aforementioned focus group portion of this project.

Toolkit Advisory Group

Our advisory group has met twice to discuss the structure and functionality of the SNAP-Ed Toolkit website. A template was developed to collect and document the specific information about each intervention that will be included in the website and used in the search function. Staff from the PSE Center have completed templates for 21 new interventions that were added to the toolkit in 2016. RNECE-South staff are working on mapping the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Indicators on to each intervention's evaluation components to make sure they line up. Additionally, our web developer has been designing the website and search functionality.

Webinars

In January, we assisted in the final Public Health Institute's Southeast Learning Community Webinar "Incorporating Farmers Markets and Community Gardens" and staff member Daniella Uslan spoke about SNAP-Ed UNC's work on community gardens and farmers markets. In February, we hosted the "PSE Change Measurement and Reporting" webinar. There were multiple speakers that provided an overview of policy, systems, and environmental changes (PSE) activities within the SNAP-Ed and EFNEP programs and how to evaluate those activities. Information on how to measure reach in PSE activities and examples from implementing agencies was provided. There were 83 participants that attended.

RNECE West Region Center at Colorado State University

The Western Region Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Center of Excellence (RNECE-West), a joint effort of Colorado State University and Washington State University Extension, aims to improve the health of low-income Americans, especially Hispanics, through strategies at the individual and environmental levels of the social-ecological model, including complementary nutrition education and public health approaches particularly for EFNEP and SNAP-Ed programs.

The RNECE-West primary goals include:

- Working to build the evidence-base for nutrition education and obesity prevention strategies and interventions that produce measurable improvements in health, obesity, nutrition (food behavior), and physical activity-related outcomes of interest to USDA;
- Developing effective education/extension, and policy, systems and environmental translational activities that promote health and prevent/reduce obesity in disadvantaged low-income families.

RNECE-West objectives address building the evidence-base for nutrition education interventions through rigorous evaluation; developing research collaborations and synergistic

relationships; and supporting effective education, policy, systems and environmental (PSE) activities that promote health.

Target Audience

Those who were served by RNECE-West projects this quarter. Where appropriate, population groups such as racial, and ethnic minorities and those who are socially, economically, or educationally disadvantaged are listed.

Target Audience Type	Description
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited resource families
Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> EFNEP and SNAP-Ed program leaders, educators, participants and stakeholders
Population Group: Racial Minorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blacks
Population Group: Ethnic Minorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Latinos and Non-Latinos
Population Group: Economically Disadvantaged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals/families at 185% of poverty and below

PRODUCTS

RNECE-West products for this quarter, with a brief description, reference, and/or link.

Type of Product	Product Description
Websites (new, current, and/or updated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated RNECE-West website (www.wrnece.org)
Non-National Trainings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biometric data collectors in Colorado trained on collection processes by Dr. Chris Melby, nutrition faculty at Colorado State University

Accomplishments

RNECE-West accomplishments for this quarter.

Achievement / Goal / Major Activity Completed	Specific Objectives Met	Results, including major findings, developments or conclusions (both positive and negative)	Key Outcomes or Other Achievements Realized	Additional Information
<p>Testing of Mediums to Reach Program Graduates Long-term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the best way to reach EFNEP and SNAP-Ed graduates 6 and 12 months post-graduation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response rates for each strategy combining 6 and 12 months responses Colorado (CO) and Washington (WA): Postal mail: 17/13% Email: 17/0% Text from educator: 18/7.5% Text from state office: 2/5% Phone call from educator: 20/35% Phone call from state office: 16/22% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reaching the EFNEP/SNAP-Ed target population long-term is difficult due to the transient nature of this population Response rates where low in all categories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection for this project was completed in Colorado and West Virginia; three additional states are currently collecting data for this project The second phase of this project is to ask current EFNEP / SNAP-Ed participants (in the same 5 states) at graduation how best to reach them at 6 and 12 months post-graduation. We will follow-up using their suggested approach to see if response rates improve
<p><i>Additional details provided in the narrative below.</i></p>				

RNECE-West accomplishments for this quarter cont.

Achievement / Goal / Major Activity Completed	Specific Objectives Met	Results, including major findings, developments or conclusions (both positive and negative)	Key Outcomes or Other Achievements Realized	Additional Information
Secondary Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a secondary data analysis of national EFNEP evaluation data set from 2007-2014 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 512,899 subjects with complete data • National race / ethnicity breakdown was roughly 30% white, 30% black and 30% Hispanic • Regionally % black was highest in the south (42%) and % Hispanic was highest in the west (57%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretest scores are consistent over time as are change scores suggesting that EFNEP’s impacts are consistent over the years • Predominant change scores: Healthy Eating Index (HEI) 70% of states improved 3-7 points on total score; more than 2/3 of states improved on 3 Behavior Checklist Questionnaire (BCL) scales of 0.5-1 pts; more than 70% of states improved by less than a ½ serving of fruits and less than a ½ serving of vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RNECE-West staff have not yet determined what other analyses will be conducted on this data set. Final report has been drafted
<i>Additional details provided in the narrative below.</i>				

RNECE-West accomplishments for this quarter cont.

Achievement / Goal / Major Activity Completed	Specific Objectives Met	Results, including major findings, developments or conclusions (both positive and negative)	Key Outcomes or Other Achievements Realized	Additional Information
Long-Term Follow-Up Evaluation of Eating Smart Being Active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the long term impact of Eating Smart Being Active on participant behavior, blood pressure, Body Mass Index (BMI) and HbA1c, delivered through EFNEP and SNAP-Ed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IRB submitted by CO and WA IRB approved in CO Biometric data collectors have been trained and have practiced collecting biometric data on several different groups including the target audience Additional states identified and confirmed to implement the intervention 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biometric data collection protocols refined. First data collections on actual participants scheduled 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data collection will begin April 2016
Food Pantry Environmental Scan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore avenues to pursue the development, field testing and validation of a food pantry environmental survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IRB submitted and approved Twelve interviews with Food Pantry managers have been completed and sent for transcription Managers in every Western state have been identified to participate in the interview process Feasibility testing procedures for various tools have been submitted for IRB review 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This project will have a pilot instrument ready for field testing by August 2016 A graduate research assistant will start at Colorado State University in August 2016 and her work will include field testing for validation

Additional details provided in the narrative below.

RNECE-West accomplishments for this quarter cont.

Achievement / Goal / Major Activity Completed	Specific Objectives Met	Results, including major findings, developments or conclusions (both positive and negative)	Key Outcomes or Other Achievements Realized	Additional Information
Environmental Support Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop environmental support activities to couple with direct education • Activities will be designed to empower EFNEP and SNAP-Ed participants to initiate change in their micro - environments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Literature review complete • Paraprofessional educators from various states identified and currently being scheduled for phone focus groups • Practice phone focus group with CO paraprofessional educators completed • Focus group questions tweaked based on practice focus group 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RNECE-West staff will be conducting up to 10 phone focus groups with paraprofessional educators from several states • Individual focus groups will include only 1 educator from a state
Multi-disciplinary methods for effective, sustainable, and scalable evaluations of nutrition education programs (RNECE Longitudinal Research Study, Utah State University)				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the new signature research project being done in Utah but reported through RNECE-West (additional details are at the end of this section)
<i>Additional details provided in the narrative below.</i>				

Collaborative Work and Meetings

RNECE-West collaborative work and meetings held this quarter.

Major Activity	Specific Objectives Met	Results (major findings, developments or conclusions; positive and negative)	Key Outcomes or Other Achievements Realized
RNECE-West Leadership Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference calls 1/8/16 1/15/16 1/21/16 2/4/16 2/10/16 2/19/16 2/25/16 3/2/16 3/8/16 3/21/16 3/23/16 3/31/16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team meets weekly to discuss center project progress, develop protocols, develop advisory and steering committee agendas, complete reporting and work on center led research projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project protocols developed, advisory and steering committee agendas developed
PSE Advisory Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference call 1/12/16 • Email update 3/7/16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advisory group members provided input for Food Pantry contacts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated advisory group on food pantry progress • Requested assistance connecting with food pantry managers in the region
Nutrition education advisory group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference call 2/3/16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated advisory committee on project progress 	
Steering Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference calls 1/14/16 3/10/16 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated steering committee on project progress 	

Outreach Activities and Dissemination of Information to Constituents of Interest

Outreach activities that have been undertaken by RNECE-West to reach members of communities who are not usually aware of these activities for the purpose of enhancing public understanding and increasing interest in learning and careers in science.

Graduate Student Projects:

- 3 graduate students involved in research projects (as Master's Theses) with the center:
 - Environmental support activities
 - Long-term follow-up of Eating Smart • Being Active curriculum
- Graduate Research Assistant recruited to be involved in field testing and validation of food pantry assessment tool. To begin summer 2016.

Additional Observations

RNECE-West additional observations, findings, developments and / or conclusions (both positive and/or negative).

Food Bank Scans update:

The RNECE-West is currently exploring avenues to pursue the development, field testing and validation of a food pantry environmental survey. This environmental survey also referred to as an "e-scan", will be used in coordination with EFNEP supervisors and SNAP-Ed managers to measure and report changes in the food pantry environment. Environmental data and data gathered from USDA food assistance program clients will strengthen the evidence for policy actions that support environmental adaptations making the healthiest choice the easiest choice for food bank clients.

1st Quarter of 2016:

IRB review was completed and project was deemed exempt. Twelve interviews with Food Pantry managers have been completed and sent for transcription. Managers in every state have been identified to participate in the interview process. Feasibility testing procedures for various tools have been submitted for IRB review. This project will have a pilot instrument ready for field testing by August 2016. A graduate research assistant will start at Colorado State University in August 2016 and her work will include field testing for validation.

Behavior Checklist Validation:

NC2169, the multi-state Agricultural Experiment Station (AES) research project looking at EFNEP evaluations, is coordinating with several EFNEP volunteer committees to develop a new Behavior Checklist Questionnaire (BCL). Since the BCL is used by all EFNEP programs as well as many SNAP-Ed programs, the timely development of a new, validated tool is critical to building the evidence base for both EFNEP and SNAP-Ed. The RNECE-West will work in conjunction with NC2169 and the EFNEP Behavior Checklist Committees to finalize the validation (including reliability and construct validity testing) on the newly developed questions for the nutrition domain.

1st Quarter of 2016:

Seven states collected test/retest surveys from a total of 173 participants. Data entry is underway and analyses is expected to be completed in May. 6 states have agreed to do construct validity testing on the nutrition domain items using multiple phone dietary recalls at pre and post class series at which times the nutrition items will also be completed. This phase of the validation is anticipated to be completed over the summer. Project is on track to be completed in 2016.

Developing Environmental Support Activities for Use in Conjunction with Direct Education:

The RNECE-West will develop, pilot and evaluate six environmental support activities to complement direct nutrition education curricula. The purpose of this project is to help bridge the gap between direct education and PSE interventions and provide new educational resources for EFNEP and SNAP-Ed to incorporate participant engagement specifically related to change in their micro-environment. These new activities will be designed to be added to existing direct education curricula and will add to the body of knowledge that behavior change related to healthy eating and active living may be improved and sustained by addressing multiple levels of the Socioecological Model (SEM). A literature review has begun and the other preliminary steps for this project will begin late Fall 2015.

1st Quarter of 2016:

A pilot focus group was completed with educators in Colorado. Subsequently, questions were refined. A total of 72 educator's names and contact information was collected in 10 states and 4 focus groups have been scheduled and more will be scheduled to be completed by early June. Project is running a little behind the original timeline. Some aspects of this project might not be completed, given that FY 2016 and FY 2017 funds are not available, as originally planned.

Long-Term Follow-Up Evaluation of Eating Smart • Being Active (ESBA):

The RNECE-West will collect longitudinal data, including biometric data (BMI, blood pressure, HbA1C), from EFNEP and SNAP-Ed class participants at pre, post and 6 (or 12) months. The EFNEP Behavior Checklist (BCL), 24 hour recall and biometric data will be compared to demonstrate program outcomes long-term.

These studies will be conducted initially in Colorado and Washington. Once protocols are established, six additional programs [at least one from each National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) region] using *ESBA* will be recruited to provide a broader reach and generalizability to findings. The long-term follow-up evaluation will provide objective outcome data and assess how behaviors change after graduation, i.e., do they continue to improve, maintain or regress.

1st Quarter of 2016:

Data collectors in Colorado have been trained and have practiced several times including with the target audience. Data collection will begin in Colorado in May. Washington is going through IRB approval and data collectors will be trained in May for data collection to start in June. Other states (n = 4) have been identified and equipment purchased.

Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR):

The RNECE-West is contracting with the Public Health Institute (PHI) to complete a two-year assessment of Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) in Hawaii and Los Angeles, California. There is also a possibility for a one year assessment of YPAR in a California Cooperative Extension rural site in FFY 2017. YPAR is a practice-based intervention according to SNAP-Ed Strategies and Intervention: An Obesity Prevention Toolkit for States, May 2014. This evaluation will assess if the program should: 1) continue use of the intervention without change; 2) strengthen the intervention to be more effective; or, 3) de-emphasize or discontinue the intervention because the evidence of its effectiveness is limited. YPAR is currently used in SNAP-Ed programs resulting in meaningful youth-driven policy, systems and environmental change (PSE) change.

1st Quarter of 2016:

This project is currently on hold while available funding is re-assessed.

RNECE-West Sub-awards:

- **Utah: Evaluation of a novel, low-cost, low-burden, scalable technology for evaluating EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Effectiveness**

The purpose of this study is to assess changes in fruit, vegetable, whole grain, and dairy grocery purchases before and after participation in Utah EFNEP and SNAP-Ed. Researchers will assess the utility of a novel technology QualMART that detects changes in grocery purchases using customer loyalty cards, and that quantifies expenditures on these foods. The technology is automatic, requiring no effort by the participants, minimizing reporting bias. The analysis is quick, low cost, and promises to scale to any population.

1st quarter of 2016:

Utah State and University of Utah IRBs remain in place and were unchanged this quarter.

Drs. Durward and Hurdle met with the RNECE-W directors by telephone on 09/02/2016. We reviewed the study design, with a special focus on the QualMART technology developed at the University of Utah for use in the project.

Dr. Hurdle gave an invited seminar on the QualMART technology at the Oregon Health Sciences University Department of Biomedical Informatics. In addition to explaining the underlying technical approach, he emphasized the importance of using household-based grocery food quality metrics, like the one we are using in the current study, in low income populations (e.g., benefits such as SNAP are allocated at the household level and thus are a good match to the household-level measures that are part of QualMART). Dr. Hurdle was told that the audience was the largest for the seminar series in recent memory, and a direct result was an invitation for Dr. Hurdle to join Oregon Health & Science University (OHSU) in a new National Institutes of Health (NIH) Research Project Grant Program (R01) application targeted at diabetes and self-management in low-income populations.

Participant recruitment is in progress. We have recruited 18 English-speaking and 7 Spanish-speaking participants to date.

Christina Aguilar, MS, RD, revised the mappings of Universal Product Codes (UPCs) to What We Eat In America (WWEIA) food categories for fruits, vegetables, and dairy (these mappings form the underpinnings of the QualMART toolset). These were reviewed by Dr. Guenther and differences were resolved. The final food group, whole grains, is currently under review, and once it is verified this will complete the review of all of the food groups that were proposed in the current evaluation study. Ms. Aguilar is now working for the study team at 50% FTE (supported by other grant funding).

The Kroger analytics company, 84.51, reported the Kroger data governance board has approved the data release for this project. Dr. Hurdle has been in contact with 84.51 to expedite the data use agreement so the data exchange can begin.

- **Alaska: Sugar Sweetened Beverage Intake among EFNEP Participants – An Evaluation of the National EFNEP Database**

Project Investigator will conduct a secondary analysis of the EFNEP data set from 2014. The analysis will include estimations of the change in sugar sweetened beverage (SSB) intake and expenditures among program participants. The primary objective of this project is to evaluate the impact of EFNEP on SSB intake, to calculate the impact of the EFNEP intervention on diet quality as estimated by the Healthy Eating Index 2010 (HEI2010) and to estimate the expenditures being made on SSBs by EFNEP participants. Analysis of data will be limited to the Western Region EFNEP participants.

1st quarter of 2016:

National level dietary food items in EFNEP included 1,424,659 million (pre/post recall) foods reported from 124,647 participants. Western region included 215,657 foods. WWEIA code 72### (SSB) occurred 7467 times in the western region reporting by 13,775 women. 4988 SSB occurrences were associated with pre-EFNEP training recalls, 2479 with post- training. For those participants that had code 72 in both pre/post recalls, there were fewer calories associated with SSB in the post recall ($P < .03$). However, the data is not ready for a complete analysis as case selection needs to be revisited. For instance, average total kcal for the first recall is 1644, and 1322 for the second. These numbers are too low (compared to [National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey {NHANES}/WWEIA]) and have unusual disparity. They are expected to be closer to 1,800 kcal daily and differ by less than 100 kcal. If after careful inspection of reporting the disparities remain, then an appropriate statistical technique, for instance standardization or nonparametric analysis, will be considered.

Significant Progress on Other Projects (those not included in the Western Region SNAP-Ed Evaluation):

- Name of Project: Multi-disciplinary methods for effective, sustainable, and scalable evaluations of nutrition education programs (RNECE Longitudinal Research Study, Utah State University)
- Unique Merit(s) of Project: This program will develop new technologies for program evaluation. Originally the project was designed to use these new methods to compare program participants and non-participants longitudinally; however, given that FY 2016 and FY 2017 funds will not be available, there was a need to downscale the original plan. The first objective is to evaluate EFNEP and SNAP-Ed effectiveness in changing the home food environment over time by assessing the quality and cost of household grocery food purchases for 2 months before and after program participation. This work extends the pilot data collection funded through a RNECE-W sub-award. The second objective is to validate the mobile version of the Automated Self-administered 24-hour Recall (ASA24) for the low income population, using two modes: unassisted and assisted by a paraprofessional. Both modes will be evaluated in a feeding study. The observed foods consumed will be compared to those reported by study participants. This project develops tools that can be used to strengthen the evidence base for the effectiveness of EFNEP and SNAP-Ed. It is a collaboration among researchers at the University of Utah, Utah State University, and National Cancer Institute and directors of EFNEP and SNAP-Ed in participating states.

1st Quarter of 2016:

- Study materials and IRB protocol developed. IRB approval gained at Utah State University. IRB applications in preparation or submitted by colleagues in CO, TN, ID, and Westat, the private research firm conducting the feeding study.
- Household recruiting and training procedures refined, through experience with the RNECE-W sub-award, "Evaluation of a novel, low-cost, low-burden, scalable technology for evaluating EFNEP and SNAP-Ed Effectiveness."
- Initial meetings of management teams in January, February, and March.
 - Hiring, study preparations, and document translation ongoing for feeding study.
 - ASA24 training manual completed.
- Potential advisory group members identified and invited to participate. The five advisory group positions have been filled.
- Work begun at the University of Utah on modifying QualMART technology.

RNECE Research Project Inventory

Center	Implementing Organization	Project Title	Projected End Date	Project Status
North Central	University of Illinois	Evaluating a Multi-Modal Community Nutrition Education Model within SNAP-Ed and EFNEP (Phase 2)	7/3/2017	• New
North Central	Purdue University	Does SNAP-Ed affect food security and obesity differentially in urban and rural environments? A longitudinal, randomized and controlled study	7/31/2017	• New
North Central	Michigan State University	Influence of PSA on dietary quality at diverse low income child care settings	7/31/2017	• New
North Central	The Ohio State University	Weight and Environmental Assessment Trial (SWEAT),	7/31/2017	• New
North Central	University of Illinois	Evaluating a Multi-Modal Community Nutrition Education Model within SNAP-Ed and EFNEP	8/1/2016	• Ongoing
North Central	University of Missouri	Eat Smart In Parks: Youth Mapping and Photovoice to Inform Healthy Food Environments	1/1/2017	• Ongoing
Northeast	Hispanic Health Council	Nutrition Ed, Access and Texting (NEAT): Combining the Hartford Mobile Market with e-Marketing	6/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRB approval received • Subaward contracts finalized • Data collection instruments identified and/or developed • Recruitment and baseline data collection underway or completed • Interventions begun
Northeast	Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health	Successful Youth-Leader Program as part of a Multi-Level, Multi-Component Food Environment, Behavioral Intervention	6/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRB approval received • Subaward contracts finalized • Data collection instruments identified and/or developed • Recruitment and baseline data collection underway or completed • Interventions begun
Northeast	University of Maryland Extension	Transforming Lifestyles: Integrating Direct Nutrition Education with Physical Activity Using the Health Care System Expansion Model	6/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRB approval received • Subaward contracts finalized • Data collection instruments identified and/or developed • Recruitment and baseline data collection underway or completed • Interventions begun

Center	Implementing Organization	Project Title	Projected End Date	Project Status
Northeast	University of Rhode Island	Empowering Urban Schoolchildren to Increase Fruit and Vegetable Consumption through EFNEP-enhanced PSE Interventions	6/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRB approval received • Subaward contracts finalized • Data collection instruments identified and/or developed • Recruitment and baseline data collection underway or completed • Interventions begun
Northeast	Cornell Cooperative Extension in Orange and Jefferson Counties	Adopting Healthy Habits in Worksites: Increasing adoption and acceptability of policy, systems, and environmental changes within agencies serving low-income families	8/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRB approval received • Subaward contracts finalized • Data collection instruments identified and/or developed • Recruitment and baseline data collection underway or completed • Interventions begun
South	University of Tennessee	Faithful Families in Tennessee: Improving the Health of Low Income Faith-Based Audiences	6/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention and Evaluation is soon to be completed
South	University of Florida	Building Faith Through Health in the Community and Online	6/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions are in the beginning phase
South	University of Arkansas	Faithful Families: Implementation and Outcome Evaluation of Paraprofessionals and Volunteer Delivery Methods in Low-income Faith Communities	6/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions are in the beginning phase
South	DELETE - University of Oklahoma	Creating and Disseminating a Planning Guide to Support Community-Based 5K Fun Walk/Run and Wellness Expo Events	8/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CANCELLED
South	University of Georgia	Evaluation of online nutrition education eLearning program tailored to SNAP-Ed eligible adult Georgians	8/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus groups are complete • Individual interviews are almost complete • Photos are being analyzed
West	Colorado State University	Secondary Data Analysis	2/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RNECE-West staff have not yet determined what other analyses will be conducted on this data set • Final report has been drafted
West	Colorado State University	Testing of Strategies to Reach Direct Education Participants Long-Term	5/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection for this project was completed in Colorado and West Virginia • Three additional states are currently collecting data for this project • The second phase of this project is scheduled

Center	Implementing Organization	Project Title	Projected End Date	Project Status
West	Colorado State University	Food Bank Environmental Scan	8/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project will have a pilot instrument ready for field testing by August 2016 • A graduate research assistant will start at Colorado State University in August 2016 and her work will include field testing for validation
West	Utah State University	Evaluation of a novel, low cost, low burden, scalable technology for evaluation EFNEP and SNAP-Ed effectiveness	8/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is the signature research project being done in Utah but reported through RNECE-West
West	Colorado State University	Behavior Checklist Validation	9/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data entry is underway and analyses is expected to be completed in May, 2016 • Project is on track to be completed in 2016
West	University of Alaska Fairbanks	Sugar Sweetened Beverage Intake among EFNEP Participants - An evaluation of the National EFNEP Database	9/1/2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing
West	Colorado State University	Two-Year Assessment of Youth Participatory Action Research - A PSE Intervention	9/1/2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project is currently on hold as less funds are available than originally planned.
West	Colorado State University	Long Term Follow Up Evaluation of Eating Smart Being Active	8/1/2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection will begin April 2016
West	Colorado State University	Developing Environmental Support Activities for Use in Conjunction with Direct Education	8/1/2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pilot focus group was completed with educators in Colorado; subsequently, questions were refined • A total of 72 educator's names and contact information was collected in 10 states • 4 focus groups have been scheduled and more will be scheduled to be completed by early June • Project is running a little behind the original timeline; some aspects of this project might not be completed, given that there are less funds available than originally planned.
West	Utah State University	Multi-Disciplinary Methods For Effective, Sustainable, And Scalable Evaluations Of Nutrition Education Programs	9/29/2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Longitudinal research project reported through RNECE- West