

Talking Points for Use with Local Superintendents of Education

What is NEP?

The Nutrition Education Program (NEP) is designed to improve the likelihood that program participants will make healthy choices within a limited budget and choose active lifestyles. The program is targeted to food stamp recipients and eligibles. Nutrition education is offered at sites where this audience can be targeted. These sites include local food stamp offices, public housing, food banks and public schools where 50% or more of the students receive free and reduced priced meals.

How is NEP funded?

NEP is a collaborative effort between the Alabama Cooperative Extension System of Auburn University and the Food Stamp Program of the Alabama Department of Human Resources (ADHR). Funding is provided on a 50-50 match basis. ADHR provides 50% of the funding as new federal dollars into the state. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System must match this 50% funding through public, non-federal dollars.

Before I tell you what NEP has to offer, let me assure you that the Nutrition Education Program has received acceptance and encouragement from the State Superintendent of Education. Dr. Joseph Morton has signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Nutrition Education Program and Department of Education.

What does NEP offer?

NEP educators will be able to provide regular visits (30-50 minutes per lesson, weekly if desired) to elementary students in classrooms. These classes will be scheduled in conjunction with the appropriate teachers. In general, a class can receive an unlimited number of nutrition classes from a NEP educator, but 6-8 classes are the average number. During these educational opportunities, the NEP educator will:

- Provide developmentally appropriate, interaction nutrition education,
- Promote physical activity when possible,
- Reinforce Alabama Course of Study Content Standards and
- Integrate food tasting in appropriate lessons.

After each lesson, NEP educators will leave supplemental materials, usually 2 activities, for teachers to use with their students before the next visit by the NEP educator. Each supplemental activity will be teacher-friendly, and will require about 15 minutes to be completed by students. It is important that teachers complete these supplemental activities with students before the NEP educator provides another class.

What does a school system need to provide?

Teachers in classrooms receiving NEP education will:

- Work with the NEP educator to schedule classes,
- Monitor classes during the NEP education,
- Facilitate the completion of the easy-to-use supplemental activities provided by the NEP educator and
- Document time spent on supplemental activities on a monthly time and effort calendar.

How do I get NEP in a classroom?

As mentioned previously, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System must provide 50% of the funding for NEP through public, non-federal dollars. One way this is accomplished is through matching of non-federal public salaries, such as public school teachers.

In order to receive the educational benefits of NEP, the time that teachers spend on supplemental activities can be used as an in-kind match for NEP. This in-kind match needs to be documented. To facilitate this documentation, the following assurances on teachers involved in NEP are needed.

1. The in-kind contribution from a teacher's salary is from a non-federal public source and does not originate as federal or private funds.
2. The in-kind contribution from a teacher's salary is not being used as a match for other programs.

Once these assurances are met, the following information on teachers' salaries is needed.

1. Annual salaries for teachers involved in NEP activities. These salaries need to be submitted on the Teacher Salary Information (hand out). This salary information will remain confidential. Please notice that the employee benefit rate for your school system also is needed.
2. As mentioned, teacher calendars must be completed on a monthly basis (show example of Teacher Calendar). This procedure is very simple. Teachers write in how much time they spend on NEP activities during a month. The NEP educator will coordinate this activity with the teachers. (It is important to emphasize that teacher calendars will NOT be burdensome to teachers.)