



Ideas for Cooking and Nutrition • New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service

FY2023 Impact Report

Summary

Ideas for Cooking and Nutrition (ICAN) is a New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service (NMSU CES) program funded by Federal grants to provide nutrition education to SNAP-eligible audiences in New Mexico. Our mission is to inspire New Mexico's families to make healthy food and lifestyle choices, and to make those choices possible by creating health-friendly communities.

ICAN is the largest implementing agency for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) grant in New Mexico, and the only implementing agency for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) grant. Both grants are authorized by the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, commonly referred to as the "Farm Bill," and are administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

ICAN improves quality of life statewide by:

- Teaching practical skills including cooking, food safety, and food resource management
- Providing evidence-based nutrition education
- Developing healthy public spaces such as school and community gardens
- Engaging clients with the safest, most effective approaches, including online classrooms and social media
- Connecting clients with community partners that provide healthy living resources
- Evaluating and improving programming to adapt with the communities we serve

Economic Benefit

ICAN operates in 22 counties across New Mexico, providing **60+ job opportunities** to local residents and contributing **\$2.1 million** to the state's economy in salary and benefits.

By reducing obesity and creating healthier living environments, nutrition education programs in New Mexico **decrease healthcare costs** and **increase productivity**. Teaching New Mexicans how to stretch their food dollars means they have more funds to spend on other critical needs.

Reaching Clients and Inspiring Behavior Change

Throughout 2023, ICAN met with over 53,000 New Mexicans at 277+ community sites around the state. ICAN serves diverse SNAP-eligible audiences, with 50% of clients being Hispanic, and another 9% Native American. Most ICAN families live on \$237 or less total income per week for a family of four.

After participating in ICAN series classes:

- **96%** of adults improve **diet practices** such as eating more fruits and vegetables and drinking fewer sugary beverages
- **92%** of adults improve their **food resource management** strategies such as planning meals before shopping and comparing food prices
- Families **save** an average of **\$27** on their month-to-month **grocery budget**
- **69%** of adults improve their **food safety** practices such as washing hands before preparing food
- **90%** of youth improve **diet quality** behaviors such as choosing foods according to Federal Dietary Recommendations

In 2020, ICAN re-tooled to continue serving our audience no matter where or when they need to meet us. Changes made to the ICAN program—such as the **vast expansion of our social media presence** and an extensive new **network of online classrooms, video recipes, and self-paced online courses**—will expand ICAN’s reach for years to come. Over **391,000 users** were reached by ICAN social media content in 2023.

ICAN’s food gardening course Seed to Supper saw 267 clients this year. A separate **pilot course** in Albuquerque, NM taught 39 clients how to cook produce direct from local farms.

“I learned a ton of new ways to incorporate veggies into my meals, the best ways to pick veggies/fruit based on their seasons, and about the great farms in Albuquerque and the wide varieties of produce they provide for the city.”

—Farm-Fresh Cooking client

This year we initiated a brand-new partnership with the national nonprofit Brighter Bites, which provides education-driven produce distribution. The Brighter Bites coalition of community partners will be delivering fresh fruits and vegetables as well as nutrition education into New Mexico schools starting in 2023.

ICAN has created **over 35 partnerships** with community leaders, schools, and non-profits. We continue to lay groundwork for school and community gardens, making our goal of healthy lifestyles for New Mexico’s families achievable by **creating environments where being healthy is the easy choice**.