

2022-2023

ServSafe® Food Safety Education



The Situation

In Kansas, the importance of food safety education cannot be overstated as it directly impacts the well-being of its citizens. According to the latest CDC statistics, approximately 48 million people get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne illness each year in the United States. Foodborne illness not only jeopardizes public health but also places an economic burden on the state. A comprehensive food safety education program is imperative to empower Kansans with the knowledge and skills needed to prevent contamination, reduce the incidence of foodborne illnesses, and safeguard the reputation of local food establishments.

What We Did

K-State Research and Extension (KSRE) Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) professionals in partnership with the Kansas Restaurant and Hospitality Association (KRHA) provided food safety training to foodservice outlets and community organizations in Kansas. The ServSafe® Food Safety Education program is a nationally recognized training program. This program targets foodservice managers, entry-level food handlers, and community organizations who provide food to the public.

Outcomes

In 2023, K-State Research and Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agents enhanced food safety awareness across Kansas with the ServSafe® Food Safety Manager and ServSafe® Food Handler curriculum. A total of 405 food service handlers and 49 food service managers participated in instructional classes, resulting in over 92 hours of educational sessions conducted in communities throughout Kansas. Based on course evaluations, an impressive 95.56% of respondents indicated increased motivation to adhere to food safety recommendations following their K-State Research and Extension food safety training. Participants expressed specific commitments, with 91.67% emphasizing a heightened focus on handwashing, 87.5% pledging vigilant monitoring of food temperatures using thermometers, and 89.59% demonstrating increased awareness of potential cross-contamination risks and the safe handling of food left at room temperature. This training initiative has significantly empowered foodservice professionals, providing them with practical skills and fostering a commitment to elevating food safety standards in both professional and personal settings.

Public Value

Food safety education and training programs not only contribute to establishing a safer dining environment for Kansans but also hold the promise of reducing food borne illness related hospitalizations, lowering medical costs, and minimizing absenteeism from work due to illness.

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