

NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR FOCUS

The Kentucky Nutrition Education Program works in all 120 counties to improve the lives of limited-resource Kentuckians through education and changes in behavior and in community. Through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) and the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service has agents and nutrition assistants across the state who are dedicated to improving lives in their communities.



OUR CHALLENGE

Poverty

In Kentucky, household median income is **\$45,215**, which is much lower than the U.S. median of **\$55,775**.¹ Kentucky has high rates of poverty and food insecurity when compared to the United States as a whole.¹

	Kentucky	U.S.
Total Poverty	18.5%	14.7%
Child Poverty	25.9%	20.7%
Food Insecurity	17.6%	13.7%
Very Low Food Secure	7.3%	5.4%

In 2014, an estimated **3,816** Allen County residents lived in poverty, and **1,396** of them were children. This is a **13.5%** increase in total poverty and **16.7%** increase in child poverty since 2007.²

SNAP benefits

Participation in the SNAP program among those who are eligible for its benefits is higher in Kentucky than in the U.S. as a whole.¹

In 2015, **3,089** Allen County residents received SNAP benefits, a **39.8%** increase since 2007.³

	Kentucky	U.S.
SNAP Participation	91%	83%



Obesity

Nearly half of all American adults experience one or more preventable, diet-related chronic conditions, such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.⁴ Kentucky has a high prevalence of hypertension, diabetes, and obesity, ranking in the top 10 when compared to other states.⁵ A large body of evidence shows that healthy eating habits and regular physical activity can help people achieve and maintain good health and reduce the risk of chronic disease throughout life.⁴

In 2013, **5,079** Allen County residents were considered obese, representing **33.9% (40.3%-27.8%)** of the county's population.⁶

OUR SOLUTION

Provide hands-on, nutrition education to limited-resource audiences, focusing on:

- Buying and preparing healthy foods
- Developing new meal planning and cooking skills
- Adopting new healthy lifestyle behaviors
- Managing SNAP resources

In 2016, 4,774 Allen County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

OUR RESULTS

IN ALLEN COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2016, **80%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **88%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **79%** began to plan meals in advance more often and **78%** used the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices more often. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **78%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

OUR SUCCESS

Community health action team springs into salads

Allen County obesity rates are heavily affected by poor dietary habits that do not reflect Dietary Guidelines for Americans for vegetable consumption. Clientele are unfamiliar with green leafy vegetables, which often have higher nutritive value per serving than other lettuce varieties. In order to change negative perceptions and increase consumption, nine demonstration workshops were conducted with 90 SNAP-Ed limited-resource families.

Workshops focused on spring salad preparation using seven locally grown varieties of salad greens, fresh asparagus, green onions, and salad tomatoes. Special focus was given to selection, storage, and alternative preparation techniques of fresh asparagus.

Funded by a \$1,500 grant from the Allen County Health Department,

each family received a market basket of spring salad green mix, 1 pound of fresh asparagus, a pint of cherry tomatoes, and a bunch of green onions.

Prior to the program, the majority of participants used iceberg lettuce as a primary salad green. After the program, survey questions revealed that 88 liked the spring green salad, 81 increased knowledge regarding the different varieties of salad greens and the nutritive value, 79 increased knowledge regarding the nutritive value in asparagus, and 61 indicated they would purchase fresh asparagus for family meals.

Follow-up surveys indicate all 87 participants had prepared the spring harvest salad for their family using the market basket vegetables and would purchase more asparagus and dark green salad greens for family meals.



SOURCES:

1. Frac.org/reports-and-resources/national-and-state-program-data-2, accessed December 2016
2. U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates
3. Kentucky Department for Public Health, Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Statewide Summaries, December 2007, 2013, 2015
4. 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
5. Stateofobesity.org, accessed September 2016
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), County Data Indicators, Obesity Prevalence

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