

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 **14,610** Laurel County residents lived in poverty, and **4,832** of them were children. This is a **17.7%** increase in total poverty and **17.1%** 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, **12,899** Laurel County residents received SNAP benefits, a **24.3%** 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, **16,765** Laurel County residents were considered obese, representing **37.8% (42.3%-33.9%)** 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, **14,063** Laurel County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

OUR RESULTS

IN LAUREL COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2016, **99%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **80%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **58%** began to plan meals in advance more often and **65%** used the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices more often. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **65%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

OUR SUCCESS

Seniors change more than cooking behavior

The percentage of seniors living in Laurel County has increased from 12.9% in 2010 to 15.4% in 2015 (U.S. Census Bureau). Adjusting to life changes in the senior years, such as losing a spouse or downsizing, can be challenging. Many Laurel County seniors live on a tight budget, but some continue out of habit to cook larger meals than they currently require. This results in depleted resources and food waste. Others may not try to cook at all and snack unhealthily rather than eating healthy meals. Poor nutrition, isolation, and depression are common concerns for this population.

To address this challenge, the Laurel County Nutrition Education Program (NEP) paraprofessional meets monthly with the residents of a Laurel County senior adult residential apartment complex to conduct hands-on cooking

classes in the community room. Using recipes from the NEP calendar and Kentucky Proud recipe cards, senior learn how to prepare affordable healthy foods and increase their daily consumption of fruits and vegetables. They are also taught meal planning and food preservation techniques to save money and food.

Participation in the classes has been a catalyst for seniors to be more social, and some have formed walking groups for physical activity. With the help of the local Extension Horticulture agent, several class members have planted a garden, and others have developed a food sharing club, where each member makes a full recipe then shares portions with other members. The cooking classes have resulted in so much more than healthy eating on a budget for this group of senior adults.



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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