

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 **6,949** Letcher County residents lived in poverty, and **1,833** of them were children. This is a **8.4%** increase in total poverty and **2.9%** 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, **7,298** Letcher County residents received SNAP benefits, a **22.2%** 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, **6,968** Letcher County residents were considered obese, representing **38.6% (43.6%-34.2%)** 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, **12,804** Letcher County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

OUR RESULTS

IN LETCHER COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2016, **92%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **58%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **47%** began to plan meals in advance more often and **57%** used the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices more often. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **57%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

OUR SUCCESS

Seniors make healthy lifestyle changes

Obesity rates have risen very quickly since the 1980s. The State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America 2015 reports that over 30% of the nation’s adults are obese. Another study from kentuckyhealthfacts.org reports that nearly 44% of adults in Letcher County are obese, 12% more than the state average.

The Letcher County SNAP-Education assistant taught limited-resource senior citizens how to prepare nutritious meals, how to handle foods safely, and how to utilize local food resources. In addition, the assistant provided tips for increasing physical activity and staying active as a senior adult.

Results of the post-test class evaluation indicated that all participating seniors planned healthier meals using MyPlate and used the Nutrition Facts label when shopping. Other outcomes include: 88% learned to plan meals ahead of time and use a grocery list to guide food selections, 77% improved in safe food handling practices and hand-washing behavior, and 71% reported a greater use of community food resources, such as food pantries.

Approximately seven months after completing the program, one of the participants said he had lost a significant amount of weight by following the lessons learned from the nutrition class and walking every day. He lost 80 pounds and is no longer taking many of his previous medications. This gentleman is 70 years old.



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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