

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 **3,115** Mason County residents lived in poverty, and **1,196** of them were children. This is a **-2.9%** decrease in total poverty and **11.4%** 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, **3,404** Mason County residents received SNAP benefits, a **36.3%** 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, **3,853** Mason County residents were considered obese, representing **30.1% (34.6%-26.0%)** 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, **1,893** Mason County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

OUR RESULTS

IN MASON COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2016, **81%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **93%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **48%** began to plan meals in advance more often and **60%** used the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices more often. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **60%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

OUR SUCCESS

Mason County farmers market becomes community staple

According to research, shopping at farmers markets has been associated with increased food security and greater consumption of fruits and vegetables. Since 2013, the Mason County Farmer’ Market has made great strides in developing, marketing, and diversifying market products with the help and guidance of the Mason County Cooperative Extension Service.

The market has expanded to two additional locations, raised the WIC voucher redemption rate from 36% to 55%, and added eight new vendors, doubling its size. It now offers a variety of new value-added products. In a new initiative to promote and expand clientele, the market introduced farmers market gift cards. Customers can “gift healthy” by purchasing farmers market gift certificates. In its first year over \$800 worth of gift certificates

were sold and redeemed at the market. Next year, the Mason County Farmers Market Bucks will be introduced. Market Bucks will be sold to local businesses that will use them as health incentives for employees to eat fresh local produce.

Through the guidance and support of Mason County Cooperative Extension, the Mason County Farmers Market has become a staple in the community. One farmer said, “The Cooperative Extension Service in Mason County has helped so much in promoting the farmers market! It has doubled my Saturday sales, making it possible to send my son to college.” Local restaurants are now requesting local produce and other products from the farmers, and farmers are growing specific produce to fill those orders. Farmers have seen a significant increase in sales, and the market is thriving and continuing to grow.



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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