

## 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**.<sup>1</sup> Kentucky has high rates of poverty and food insecurity when compared to the United States as a whole.<sup>1</sup>

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

In 2014, an estimated **11,214** McCracken County residents lived in poverty, and **3,628** of them were children. This is a **21.5%** increase in total poverty and **13.3%** increase in child poverty since 2007.<sup>2</sup>

#### 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.<sup>1</sup>

In 2015, **9,270** McCracken County residents received SNAP benefits, a **31.9%** increase since 2007.<sup>3</sup>

	Kentucky	U.S.
<b>SNAP Participation</b>	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.<sup>4</sup> Kentucky has a high prevalence of hypertension, diabetes, and obesity, ranking in the top 10 when compared to other states.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

In 2013, **16,760** McCracken County residents were considered obese, representing **33.7%** (**38.0%-29.8%**) of the county's population.<sup>6</sup>

## 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, **24,363** McCracken County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## OUR RESULTS

### IN MCCRACKEN COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2016, **98%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **53%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **61%** began to plan meals in advance more often and **47%** used the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices more often. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **47%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## OUR SUCCESS

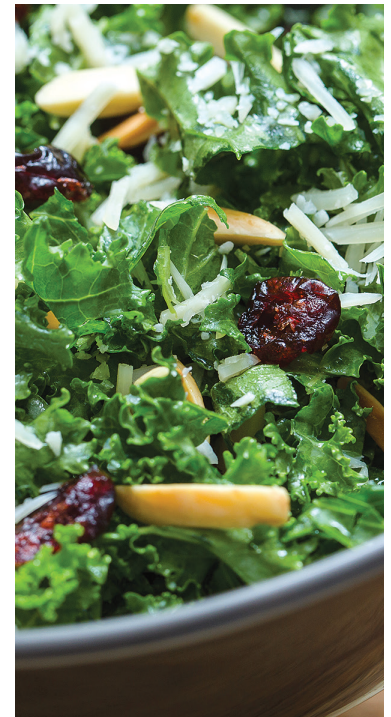
### Fresh produce

Preparing and consuming fresh produce has been found to fight diseases such as cancer, heart disease, and diabetes, but at the same time home food preparation rates have decreased since the last century. Today, Americans do not eat the recommended amount of vegetables, and many do not know how to prepare them. In McCracken County, the local Feeding America Food Pantry offers fresh produce, but often clients report they do not know how to prepare it. The McCracken County Extension Office partnered with the food bank to provide weekly Nutrition Education classes for food bank clients.

The Nutrition Education SNAP-Ed Program assistant provided recipe samples for tasting in addition to teaching classes. The eight-week classes were well attended by 10 adult food bank clients. The recipes

incorporated fresh produce available at the pantry that week. This allowed clients to stretch their family food budget while filling their plates with fresh produce that is normally lacking in their diets. Other class topics included MyPlate guidelines, resource management, and food safety.

In addition to learning how to cook family meals using healthy fresh produce that they otherwise would never have attempted, many participants changed their food safety behavior. When participants were told that leaving frozen food to thaw on the counter was an unsafe food practice they exclaimed, “I had no idea! I have done that my whole life.” The food pantry representative was very enthusiastic about the progress clients made with food resource management and invited the SNAP-Ed Program assistant to hold a future session with new clients.



#### SOURCES:

1. [Frac.org/reports-and-resources/national-and-state-program-data-2](http://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](http://Stateofobesity.org), accessed September 2016
6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), County Data Indicators, Obesity Prevalence

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