



Nutrition Education Program

2017 Annual Report: Letcher County

Our Focus

The 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 \$46,659, which is much lower than the U.S. median of \$57,617.¹ 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%	14.4%
Child Poverty	25%	19.8%
Food Insecurity	17.3%	13%
Very Low Food Secure	7.4%	5.2%

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% (34.2%-43.6%) 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 2017, **11,842** Letcher County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

Our Results

IN LETCHER COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2017, **95%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **75%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **70%** began to plan meals in advance more often and **70%** used the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices more often. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **81%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Healthy Choices for Every Body

A number of statistics led the Letcher County Extension SNAP program assistant to offer an eight-week Healthy Choices for Every Body program to encourage eligible participants to eat healthier on a limited budget. Among the statistics that inspired the assistant were projections that Kentucky will spend \$6 billion in 2018 on health care costs tied to obesity and Kentucky’s rating as 5th in the nation in terms of number of adults who are obese. The program taught students how to plan meals, compare prices, use a grocery list, make healthy food choices and keep food safe. Food demonstrations were part of each class and participants received an incentive related to that day’s lesson. Program evaluations showed that students, who were age 43 to 71, were 80% better at using nutrition labels to make healthier food choices. They also made a 78% improvement in thinking about healthy food choices and showed a 70% improvement in shopping with a grocery list and food safety. Among participants’ comments were, “I checked the food labels before I decided which food to purchase” and “I stopped drinking regular soda and I’ve changed to diet soda and I drink more water.”



University of Kentucky
Nutrition Education Program
Family and Consumer Sciences Extension



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SOURCES: 1. Frac.org/reports-and-resources/national-and-state-program-data-2, accessed December 2017; 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 December 2017; 6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), County Data Indicators, Obesity Prevalence

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