



Nutrition Education Program

2017 Annual Report: Mason 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.



University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service

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 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% (26.0%-34.6%) 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, 3,872 Mason County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

Our Results

IN MASON COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2017, 91% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 79% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 56% began to plan meals in advance more often and 77% used the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices more often. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 79% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

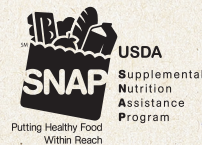
Our Success

Container gardening and nutrition go hand in hand

Mason County’s poverty rate is 19.5%. Often, people living in poverty have poor health, partly because they don’t have access to or money for healthier food options. The Mason County horticulture agent and the SNAP-Ed assistant partnered with the Maysville Housing Authority to offer a six-part series on container gardening and nutrition. SNAP-Ed curriculum and UK plant science information were the basis for the program, which was taught in the spring to 17 participants who receive SNAP benefits and live in Housing Authority properties. They learned about cool-weather crops including onions, collard greens, broccoli, herbs, snap beans and sweet potatoes, all of which can be grown in containers or small spaces. To date, all participants have planted a container garden. It was the first time 60% of the participants had grown their own food. Participants said that they enjoyed the program and learned a lot. One participant said that her green beans were growing well and that she planned to cook them for her son. Participants also learned about the food groups, the benefits of eating recommended servings of fruits and vegetables, and how to prepare vegetables to retain the nutritional value. Because they now know how to garden in containers, participants can grow vegetables several times a year.



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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