



# Nutrition Education Program

## 2017 Annual Report: Rockcastle 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.<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%	14.4%
<b>Child Poverty</b>	25%	19.8%
<b>Food Insecurity</b>	17.3%	13%
<b>Very Low Food Secure</b>	7.4%	5.2%

In 2014, an estimated 3,956 Rockcastle County residents lived in poverty, and 1,169 of them were children. This is a -9.6% decrease in total poverty and -8.5% decrease 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, 3,859 Rockcastle County residents received SNAP benefits, a 17.6% 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, 4,572 Rockcastle County residents were considered obese, representing 36.0% (29.8%-41.8%) 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 2017, 6,472 Rockcastle County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN ROCKCASTLE COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2017, 89% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 43% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 46% 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 86% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Sampling new foods in youth-gearred nutrition lessons

Each spring, second graders at Mount Vernon Elementary study foods as a part of their curriculum. For three weeks, they learn about different foods and how to make healthy food choices. Cooperative Extension partnered with the school in spring 2017 to teach in-depth nutrition classes during the foods unit. The FCS agent and NEP assistant taught a session on MyPlate for all five classes. They emphasized MyPlate’s recommendations like 5-a-Day and filling at least half the plate with fruits and vegetables. Students identified healthy choices within each food category. Students also were given six fruits to sample and were encouraged to try new foods as a way to add variety to their diet. All 105 students tried at least one fruit that they had never tasted before. In May 2017, the students ended the foods unit by going to a dairy farm. The FCS agent taught a session about yogurt during the field trip. The students tried a fruit and yogurt parfait. In a survey, 40 of the 105 students said they are eating more fruits as a way to have the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables and 59 said they are trying more new foods because of the tastings they had in the classroom sessions.



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](http://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](http://Stateofobesity.org), accessed December 2017; 6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), County Data Indicators, Obesity Prevalence

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