



# Nutrition Education Program

## 2017 Annual Report: Simpson 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 2,610 Simpson County residents lived in poverty, and 996 of them were children. This is a 12.0% increase in total poverty and 20.0% 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, 2,403 Simpson County residents received SNAP benefits, a 33.8% 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, 4,615 Simpson County residents were considered obese, representing 35.4% (29.0%-42.5%) 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, **14,202** Simpson County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN SIMPSON COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2017, **100%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **90%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **43%** began to plan meals in advance more often and **76%** 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.

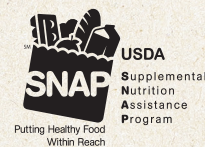
## Our Success

### Gaining confidence in the kitchen... and in life

**L**ow-income women are often reluctant to participate in the SNAP-Ed program because they are insecure, have low self-esteem or fear failure. Some lack social skills to help them fit into a group, and many lack the education to make them feel comfortable in a setting where reading and writing are required. It is difficult for the SNAP-Ed assistant to persuade these women to join the group and learn skills to improve their lives. In Simpson County, many of the SNAP-Ed program participants come through the monthly commodities distribution or local soup kitchen. Often these groups overlap, so the SNAP-Ed assistant can provide encouragement multiple times and win their trust. After they join a class, the women practice basic kitchen skills and learn about simple budgets. They experience positive encouragement without judgment and eat new foods without sacrificing their SNAP allotment just to see if the food is tasty. Many experience success for the first time, which gives them confidence, improved self-esteem and the desire to make further improvements. Five women have gained the confidence to get Habitat for Humanity homes (a sixth is in process) after completing the SNAP-Ed series. Through the series, they learned they could be successful and took a step forward for themselves and their families. These five women and their 11 children now live more positive, healthy lives.



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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