



# Nutrition Education Program

## 2017 Annual Report: Whitley 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 10,097 Whitley County residents lived in poverty, and 3,213 of them were children. This is a -1.5% decrease in total poverty and -7.9% 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, 10,119 Whitley County residents received SNAP benefits, a 21.2% 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, 9,395 Whitley County residents were considered obese, representing 36.3% (30.7%-42.2%) 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, **3,411** Whitley County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN WHITLEY COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2017, **96%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **77%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **80%** began to plan meals in advance more often and **74%** used the “Nutrition Facts” on food labels to make food choices more often. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **55%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Helping parents and children get a head start on healthy habits

**W**ith the initial collaboration efforts of Whitley County Elementary Family Resource Centers and Cooperative County Extension Office, Cradle School came into existence to help narrow the Kindergarten readiness gap along with addressing better food choices. According to the Stateofobesity.org (2016), and Childhealthdata.org (2016) 34.6% of Kentucky adults are obese and 37.1% of children are overweight or obese. Just why is Kindergarten readiness important? Because children can quickly fall behind their peers, and may continue to have trouble in school without extra academic support, thus possibly causing the child to drop out of school. With 64% of Kentucky children eligible for free or reduced-priced meals — a socioeconomic challenge was recognized as a barrier to student achievement. Cradle School began its first classes in January of 2015 and is now in its second year. The classes target parents and children preferably under the age of 5 years old. The first series of classes were geared solely from the LEAP Program curriculum where a story was read with the children and parents. In addition, there were numerous “hands-on” nutritional awareness conducted in the socialization skills. Cradle School offers parents and children “quality” time while addressing and educating both parent and child.



University of Kentucky  
Nutrition Education Program  
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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, accessed December 2017; 6. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), County Data Indicators, Obesity Prevalence

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