



## 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 their 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 where they live.

## Our Challenge

### Poverty

According to US Census estimates for 2016, the median household income in Kentucky is **\$46,610**, almost 20% lower than the U.S. median household income of **\$57,617**.<sup>1</sup> Kentucky also has higher percentages of poverty and food insecurity among its population compared to census estimate for the United States overall.

	Kentucky	U.S.
<b>Total Poverty</b>	17.2%	12.3%
<b>Child Poverty</b>	24.4%	19.5%
<b>Food Insecurity</b>	14.7%	11.8%

In 2016, an estimated **5,932** Carter County residents lived in poverty, and **1,885** of those were children under 18. This represents a **6.6%** increase in total poverty and **0.9%** decrease in child poverty since 2008.<sup>1</sup>

### Obesity

Today, about half of all Americans have one or more chronic diseases, often related to poor diet.<sup>2</sup> These include high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke which are often associated with obesity.



In 2017, the percentage of obese adults in Kentucky was **34.3%**, ranking it in the top 10 states for highest obesity rates in the country. Kentucky was also ranked in the top 10 for high percentages of adults with diabetes (**12.9%**) and adults with hypertension (**39.4%**).<sup>3</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>2</sup>

In 2014, **38.5%** of Carter County's adult population were considered obese.<sup>4</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 2018, **11,420** Carter County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN CARTER COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, **92%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **82%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **95%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **95%** made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **65%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Students learn (and enjoy!) healthy fruits and veggies

The adult obesity rate in Carter County is 46%, compared to the state average of 33%. The overweight percentage is 74%, compared to the state average of 68%. It has been shown that learning healthy lifestyle choices at a young age can combat such statistics. Therefore, the Carter County Nutrition Education Program assistant collaborated with the elementary schools in Carter County, teaching 186 first-graders about nutrition and healthy snacks. They read stories from the Literacy, Eating and Activity for Primary curriculum and, as a result, a majority of the students can now identify the MyPlate food groups and categorize foods from the stories into the appropriate group. The students also participated in physical activities, sampled fruits and vegetables that were new to them and planted a garden at their school. At the end of the program, the students reported an increase in consumption of fruits and vegetables.



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#### SOURCES:

1. U.S. Census Bureau Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates
2. 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
3. The State of Obesity Report 2018
4. 2018 County Health Rankings & Roadmap

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