



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**.¹ 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.
Total Poverty	17.2%	12.3%
Child Poverty	24.4%	19.5%
Food Insecurity	14.7%	11.8%

In 2016, an estimated 7,571 Graves County residents lived in poverty, and 2,620 of those were children under 18. This represents a 0.6% increase in total poverty and 6.4% increase in child poverty since 2008.¹

Obesity

Today, about half of all Americans have one or more chronic diseases, often related to poor diet.² 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%).³ 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.²

In 2014, 32.7% of Graves County's adult population were considered obese.⁴

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, 431 Graves County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

Our Results

IN KENTUCKY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, 95% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 91% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 90% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 83% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 83% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Families learn meal planning, budgeting and healthy eating

According to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) profile on Kentucky, 46.2% of adults report consuming fruit less than one time daily and 24.9% of adults reported consuming vegetables less than one time daily. The Graves County Cooperative Extension Service Nutrition Education Program paraprofessional, in partnership with the Eloise Fuller Apartments, presented a series of Healthy Choices for Every Body nutritional classes. Residents who attended learned about MyPlate guidelines, food safety, meal planning and budgeting, while also participating in group discussions and food recipe demonstrations. Participants received a kitchen tool accessory to help continue practicing at home the skills they learned during each session. According to the results of the pre-surveys and post-surveys: 91% of NEP participants made an improvement in the nutritional quality of their diet; 61% consumed a diet of higher quality because they planned meals using MyPlate, considered healthy choices and used the Nutrition Facts label; 46% demonstrated an improvement in safe food-handling practices and handwashing behavior; 50% learned to plan meals ahead of time and use a grocery list to guide food selections; and 73% showed improvement in food price comparison behavior.



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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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