



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 **14,306** Hardin County residents lived in poverty, and **4,780** of those were children under 18. This represents a **22.6%** increase in total poverty and **4.4%** 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, **34.7%** of Hardin 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, **10,191** Hardin County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

Our Results

IN HARDIN COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, **80%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **45%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **45%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **39%** made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **48%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Students try new foods and learn healthy eating habits

When a local elementary school principal called Hardin County Family and Consumer Sciences looking for something to get her students to be healthier, TRYathalon was born. TRYathalon is a way to encourage youth to try new foods - fruits and vegetables in particular. The FCS program spent three days talking to the youth about MyPlate, the importance of eating healthier, a balanced diet and not giving up on new foods after trying them only one time. The children were then told about a school-wide competition. Each time the FCS program was at their school, they would have the opportunity to try a new fruit or vegetable. They did not have to try the food, but if they did they would earn a point for their classroom. At the end of the school year, the classroom that had the most students trying new foods would earn an end-of-the-year party. On the first day of the competition, 332 of the 368 students in attendance were willing to try zucchini, most for the first time. On the second day, 371 of the 394 students in attendance were willing to try blackberries, almost half for the first time. On the third day, 357 of the 389 students in attendance were willing to try bell peppers, also many for the first time. The TRYathalon continued throughout the school year with the first-place classroom — a group of second-graders – earning gold medals and the class party. Those second-graders received 100% on all four visits.



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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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