



## 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 **5,659** Knott County residents lived in poverty, and **1,489** of those were children under 18. This represents a **10.7%** increase in total poverty and **7.4%** increase 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, **39.5%** of Knott 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, **11,816** Knott County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN KNOTT COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, **97%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **93%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **87%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **81%** made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **76%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Teens become confident in the kitchen and try new foods

In a joint effort between the Nutrition Education Program Assistant and the Knott County Extension Service Family and Consumer Science Agent, a summer cooking camp that focused on using "Teen Cuisine," a cooking and nutrition education curriculum to promote healthy eating habits, was held at the Knott County Extension office. The curriculum is designed to give youth hands-on experience in the kitchen, while teaching the importance of a healthy, well-balanced diet following MyPlate recommendations.

During the class, 12 youth participants focused on making half their plate a colorful assortment of fruits and vegetables. Activities involved youth following healthy

recipes while learning to wash, cut, and cook their own vegetables. When teens weren't cooking, they learned the important role fruits and vegetables play in a well-balanced diet, and how to identify and distinguish between good and bad fats. They also learned how to interpret the nutrition facts label to avoid added sugars. 80% of participants indicated that they had never cooked vegetables before. Data from pre and post nutrition education surveys, conducted at the beginning and end of class respectively, showed a remarkable 85% increase in daily vegetable consumption. 60% drank low-fat milk more often and chose to consume less sugary drinks. Whole grain intake improved overall by 40%. When asked about physical activity,



50% recorded being more active and spent less time using electronic devices. 100% of the group answered questions on the post nutrition survey representing they had become more aware and understood healthy choices when deciding what to eat. One teen participant shared that he didn't know he liked broccoli until trying it in one of the recipes. The program was a great opportunity for teens to become comfortable in the kitchen, try new healthy foods and learn valuable nutritional information to help them live a healthier lifestyle.

University of Kentucky  
Nutrition Education Program  
Family and Consumer Sciences Extension



#### 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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