



## 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 **12,097** Knox County residents lived in poverty, and **3,375** of those were children under 18. This represents a **12.9%** increase in total poverty and **9.5%** 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, **43%** of Knox 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, 6,797 Knox County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN KNOX COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, **88%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **88%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **69%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **75%** made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **85%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Inspiring youth to make healthy choices

With the growing number of families eating on the run instead of cooking at home, many young adults lack basic cooking skills. Also, approximately four out of five children do not consume the recommended fruits and vegetables each day. In an effort to encourage more youth to get into the kitchen and to improve their diets, the Knox County 4-H Agent and FCS Agent teamed up to offer a three-day cooking camp. Twenty-three youth participated in the camp. Youth were taught basic cooking skills such as food and equipment safety, knife safety, safe food handling, proper cutting techniques, reading a recipe, how to measure properly and basic nutrition. In the process, they used basic learning skills such as math, science, and reading. This was a hands-on program and participants learned to make a variety of recipes. As a direct result of the program, several parents and participants have reported an increased interest in eating healthy and helping prepare meals at home. Many of the children went home and used their cooking skills and prepared one of the recipes. 100% of participants willingly tried the recipes and 100% of participants said they wanted to eat more fruits and vegetables.



University of Kentucky  
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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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