



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 **13,782** Laurel County residents lived in poverty, and **4,310** of those were children under 18. This represents a **20.5%** increase in total poverty and **11.8%** 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, **39.9%** of Laurel 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, **20,338** Laurel County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

Our Results

IN LAUREL COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, **98%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **89%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **95%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **66%** made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **88%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

100% of students identified better food choices

Childhood obesity is an issue in children and adults in Laurel County, Kentucky. Many children are unaware of the difference between healthy foods and foods which offer little but empty calories. The Laurel County Expanded Food and Nutrition Program assistant partnered with the Laurel County Public Schools and the East Bernstadt Independent Schools to teach kindergarten students about MyPlate recommendations and guidelines for healthy eating. The assistant came to visit multiple classrooms six times throughout the school year. The students learned about the different food groups and tried new foods each time. They were excited to try new foods and were surprised to find many they liked. These foods included spinach, fresh pineapple, kiwi, honeydew, celery and frozen yogurt.

At the end of the lessons, 100% of the students could identify better food choices; 81% could identify dairy foods, and 70% could identify vegetables. The children had fun and also learned new ways to incorporate physical activity. Learning to love new foods which are healthy can help them to choose better options which can lead to lifelong health. By eating more nutritious foods and getting more physical activity, it can also help combat childhood obesity and adult obesity.



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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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