



## 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 **4,251** Lawrence County residents lived in poverty, and **1,251** of those were children under 18. This represents a **4.1%** decrease in total poverty and **2.8%** 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, **41.1%** of Lawrence 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, **11,418** Lawrence County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN LAWRENCE COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, **97%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **95%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **91%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **68%** made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **98%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Food preservation class helps families reduce food waste and save money

According to the data collected by Kentucky HealthFacts.org, over one-third of Lawrence County's Population is in less than good health. This is an 11% higher rate than Kentucky's population of adults in the same category. With this knowledge in mind, the Lawrence County FCS Agent worked in collaboration with the Nutrition Education Program (NEP) to present a three-day Food Preservation Workshop. The workshops included educational information on: saving money, reducing food waste, limiting sugar and salt, following family traditions but using safe researched methods, and making a better tasting product. Participants learned the

pressure canning, water bath canning, freezing and drying methods of food preservation. Prior to this class, half (50%) of the participants reported using food preservation methods never or rarely. All (100%) of the participants chose to attend the program because of a desire to learn and most (75%) also participated because of interests in heritage skills and to save money.

There was some increase in self-reported skill levels from pre-test to posttest. The greatest gains were for the water bath canning and drying method, with 50% reporting an increased skill level from beginner to intermediate by the end of the class. All participants (100%)



agreed that they can identify the necessary equipment for home food preservation methods, can understand the differences between and identify the correct method for canning low acid and high acid foods, can identify research-based methods of home food preservation, can identify spoilage in home preserved products and have better skills in home food preservation methods following the program. All of the participants also reported growing gardens this year.

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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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