



## 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 **3,545** Lewis County residents lived in poverty, and **1,078** of those were children under 18. This represents a **1%** decrease in total poverty and **10.5%** 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, **39.2%** of Lewis 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, 9,672 Lewis County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN LEWIS COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, 100% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 78% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 97% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 78% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 90% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Helping senior citizens make healthy food choices

The most recent census information for Lewis County shows that 80% of the population is overweight or obese and only 7% of the county's residents consume the recommended daily intake of fruits and vegetables. Studies also show that 42% of county residents suffer from hypertension, putting Lewis County in the top 10 counties in Kentucky for heart disease. These statistics led the Lewis County Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program education assistant to partner with the Licking Valley Community Action Senior Center to present the Healthy Choices for Every Body curriculum to seniors. Seven required lessons were taught with an emphasis on healthier home-cooked meals rather than fast food. Fifteen participants in the class discovered how easy it was to prepare smaller portioned meals at home on a budget through: meal planning; purchasing larger packages of meats and separating into individual portions; and eating a variety of foods using the MyPlate plan. Of the participants, 73% reported an increase in overall diet quality; 87% reported an increase in fruit intake; and 80% reported a decrease in their intake of sugar-sweetened beverages. Also notable was a 72% increase in food resource management. One participant stated, "I can't believe I never thought of buying the family packs of meat since my kids have left. It is so much cheaper and saves me a lot of money each month."



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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