



## 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 **3,256** McLean County residents lived in poverty, and **1,096** of those were children under 18. This represents a **1.4%** increase in total poverty and **7.9%** 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, **30.9%** of McLean 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, 1,239 McLean County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN KENTUCKY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, 95% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 91% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 90% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 83% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 83% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Teaching skills that will last a lifetime

According to the American Heart Association, teaching youth how to prepare their own food will give them a skill they can use for a lifetime. With this in mind, the McLean County Family and Consumer Sciences agent, along with the local Family Resource and Youth Service Center, hosted the Super Star Chef Day Camp at the McLean County Cooperative Extension Service office. This three-day camp was conducted by the Summer Super Star Chef team at the University of Kentucky's Cooperative Extension Nutrition Education Program. Twenty-one children ages 9 to 18 attended the camp. They received lessons on the food groups and MyPlate guidelines, as well as participating in daily cooking lessons and working together in groups to prepare healthy foods. Youth were taught basic cooking skills, such as food and equipment safety, safe food handling, reading a recipe, how to measure properly and basic nutrition. Students completed a pre-test and a post-test. At the end of the program, they improved their skills in handwashing, correctly handling a knife and reading a nutrition label. Furthermore, 100% of students enrolled in the program learned the amount of fruits and vegetables they should have on their plate, 80% reported asking their family to keep fruit and cut-up vegetables in a place where they can reach them, and 100% reported learning how to correctly read a recipe. Several parents reported that their children prepared the recipes at home for their families.



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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