



## 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 **4,881** Montgomery County residents lived in poverty, and **1,636** of those were children under 18. This represents a **5.5%** increase in total poverty and **14.8%** 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, **32.6%** of Montgomery 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, 4,557 Montgomery 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

### Inspiring youth to make healthy choices

The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends that children ages 6-13 should consume 1½- to 3-cup servings of fruits and vegetables daily. But in the most recent National Youth Risk Behavior Survey, it was shown that only 44.6% of Kentucky adolescents consumed more than one serving of fruit daily and only 42.7% consumed more than one serving of vegetables. In an effort to increase fruit and vegetable consumption in elementary school students, the Montgomery County Family and Consumer Sciences agent partnered with the local health department and family resource coordinator to offer a healthy reward to classes that showed good nutrition behavior. Instead of an unhealthy reward such as sugar-sweetened beverages, students made a healthy snack that included fruits or vegetables that may not be commonly found in households. Many students were given the opportunity to try foods that they may have not tried before. Students were later surveyed and 68% stated they had not tried one or more of the foods provided in the healthy reward (kiwi, yogurt, bananas, etc.). Over 90% of the students surveyed stated they would eat one or more of the foods tried during the program and would ask their guardians to purchase these items. Due to the popularity of the program, interest was sparked at one school to grow a garden. In the spring of 2018, classes were planted and cared for six raised-bed gardens. Produce from the garden was used throughout the summer for learning opportunities.



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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