



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 **5,732** Muhlenberg County residents lived in poverty, and **1,643** of those were children under 18. This represents a **10.3%** decrease in total poverty and **15.5%** decrease 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, **36%** of Muhlenberg 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, 16,655 Muhlenberg County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

Our Results

IN MUHLENBERG COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, 98% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 92% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 97% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 90% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 83% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Extension program uses reading to promote healthy eating

According to the most recent studies, 33.5% of Kentucky youth are considered obese. Muhlenberg County has a youth obesity rate of 37%, slightly higher than the state average. Obesity often results in a higher risk of developing serious chronic diseases. In collaboration with the Muhlenberg County Public School System, the Family and Consumer Sciences agent and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program educator, the Nutrition Education Program partnered to address the childhood obesity problem in Muhlenberg County with Literacy, Eating and Activity for Primary (LEAP) program. The LEAP program was taught to all kindergarten and first-grade students in the county. Five hundred and one students participated and 94% of them showed improvements in one or more core areas. The core areas taught in LEAP are being active, recognizing healthy snacks, recognizing different food groups and handwashing. The students gained knowledge by reading a story with a healthy message, through activities that reinforce the healthy message, by making their own healthy snack and by trying new foods. LEAP newsletters were distributed weekly to students. They were encouraged to take them home and tell their families about the healthy choices they learned in class and about the delicious snacks they had tried. One kindergarten student stated, "I never knew I could make my own snacks."



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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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