



## 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 **514** Robertson County residents lived in poverty, and **141** of those were children under 18. This represents a **4.7%** increase in total poverty and **6%** 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, **34.8%** of Robertson 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, **859** Robertson 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

### Farmers market serves as a fresh way for senior citizens to consume more produce

Robertson County is a low income county of 2,191 residents. Approximately 24% live below the poverty level and have trouble accessing nutritious food. Senior citizens make up over 14% of the county's population and many have limited transportation access. The Farmers Market in Mt. Olivet is within walking distance of many residents in town and has become a vital part of their food network. Robertson County Extension Service has become a part of this connection. The Family and Consumer Science Agent has worked together with the farmers to assist in encouraging those visiting the market to purchase fruits and vegetables by providing

access to nutritional information and recipes. Preparation of those recipes using local produce and encouraging attendees to sample the prepared items has been met with great success. This collaboration helps to promote the incorporation of fresh produce into the diets of senior citizens throughout the community by providing easier access to those foods and showing imaginative ways to prepare items, thus encouraging purchase of foods that may previously had gone untried. The Robertson County Extension Office provided funding in 2018 for the construction of a shelter house for the Farmers Market merchants. Attended by over 70 interested shoppers, the Grand



opening event had fresh produce for sale as well as information provided by Extension and support from the Robertson County Public Library and the Robertson County Health Department. This was a successful venture for those involved, as approximately \$600 in Senior vouchers were spent at the market on Grand Opening Day alone.

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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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