



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 **3,991** Rockcastle County residents lived in poverty, and **1,179** of those were children under 18. This represents a **10%** decrease in total poverty and **10.8%** 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, **35.2%** of Rockcastle 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, 4,960 Rockcastle County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

Our Results

IN ROCKCASTLE COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, 93% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 93% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 81% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 76% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 92% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Senior citizens learn cooking skills resulting in an increase of vegetable consumption

Fruits and vegetables contribute important nutrients for the human body. Yet, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the average Kentuckian only eats vegetables one time per day. The USDA Dietary Guidelines recommends an average of 2 ½ cups from the vegetable group per day. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program assistant in Rockcastle County partnered with the local farmers market and senior citizens center to encourage participants to buy and consume more fruits and vegetables. A five-month series from the Healthy Choices for Every Body curriculum was taught to senior citizens to help them identify fresh produce and observe recipes that they could duplicate. Participants were able to experiment with several types of fresh produce and prepare healthy recipes. One food demonstration was conducted with the Crunchy Hawaiian Chicken Wraps. This recipe contains broccoli, carrots, spinach and pineapple. One participant stated, "I hate broccoli, carrots and spinach. I am not eating that." After reluctantly trying the wraps, however, the participant said, "I love these wraps, the vegetables are good like this." As a result of the class, 92.9% of the participants made an improvement in the nutritional quality of their diet.



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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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