



## 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 **4,361** Russell County residents lived in poverty, and **1,436** of those were children under 18. This represents a **8.5%** increase in total poverty and **18.8%** 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, **34.9%** of Russell 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, 4,677 Russell County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN RUSSELL COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, **98%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **94%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **92%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **95%** made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **89%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Russell County tackles tobacco-use through nutrition

According to data from Kentucky Health Facts (2014-2016), 36% of adults in Russell County smoke. Smoking can contribute to many chronic health conditions such as cancer, heart disease, stroke, and respiratory issues. In order to address this, a ten-week Healthy Choices for Every Body program was conducted by the Russell County Cooperative Extension Service SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) assistant for SNAP-eligible individuals in collaboration with the Russell County Health Department. The focus included nutritional education and information on smoking cessation led by a local health educator. Extension conducted weekly sessions on topics such as food safety, food resource management, and food preparation. During the program, participants learned how to improve their overall health by increasing their water intake and consuming more fruits and vegetables, which is vital while going through the detox process. There were thirteen participants, ranging in age from thirty to sixty-eight. Reports indicate that all (100%) of the participants made positive changes in their diet quality and 85% of participants improved their resource management practices. One participant shared, "I have more energy and food tastes better since I stopped smoking."



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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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