



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 **2,663** Simpson County residents lived in poverty, and **1,060** of those were children under 18. This represents a **11.6%** increase in total poverty and **28%** increase 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, **38.7%** of Simpson 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, **6,833** Simpson 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

Kids walk their way to increased literacy

In 2018, the Simpson County Family and Consumer Sciences Agent helped secure a grant for the county that was designated to promote kindergarten readiness in the areas of physical activity and nutrition. Simpson County received funds to hold family-friendly events that teach parents what children should know before they enter kindergarten. Given the strong connection between literacy and physical activity, the agent partnered with a local 4-H individual who had a strong desire to put a reading and walking trail at a local community park. The partnership resulted in the establishment of a 16-podium Walking Story Trail, which is approximately a half-mile in length and holds the pages of a book to be read along the way. Podiums were built and installed at the park, books were purchased that focused on the importance of physical activity and healthy eating, and an event was held inviting parents and preschoolers to walk the trail and do the activities with their children. Families also tasted three recipes prepared by the FCS agent. This event was attended by 60 families (125 people) and serviced by 20 volunteers. Parents and children alike were thrilled with the location and the unique venue that promotes both literacy and exercise.



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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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