



## 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 **1,601** Spencer County residents lived in poverty, and **455** of those were children under 18. This represents a **5.7%** increase in total poverty and **7.5%** 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, **35.3%** of Spencer 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, 19,077 Spencer 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

### Young mothers learn to make healthy food choices

The Spencer County Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program education assistant collaborated with a family consumer science teacher at a local high school for young mothers and mothers-to-be to present the Healthy Choices for Every Body curriculum. The SNAP-Ed assistant taught the core curriculum as well as the Feeding Every Little Body unit. They recognized the MyPlate in the MyPlate for Every Body curriculum and discussed how to make healthier choices when feeding their children. Each time, the young moms prepared and cooked recipes that were assigned to the units. Most of the recipes that they prepared had fruits or vegetables in the ingredient list. During one of the lessons, the young moms complained about adding steamed squash to the Macaroni and Cheese Surprise recipe that they prepared. After they tried it, however, everyone wanted seconds. The SNAP-Ed assistant explained the importance of eating a variety of fruits and vegetables daily for themselves, as well as the importance of a healthy diet for their growing children. At the end of the program, 69% more often thought about healthy food choices when deciding what to feed their families, and 88% more often used the Nutrition Facts labels to make food choices. Nine out of the 12 young mothers improved on eating more than one kind of fruit each day; 11 of the 12 improved in eating more vegetables. One of the young moms told the SNAP-Ed assistant that she had lost several pounds since she gave up drinking regular sodas.



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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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