



## 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 **5,098** Taylor County residents lived in poverty, and **1,603** of those were children under 18. This represents a **14.9%** increase in total poverty and **20.1%** 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, **33.7%** of Taylor 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, 3,529 Taylor County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN TAYLOR COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, 99% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 95% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 93% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 74% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 84% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Children increase fruit and vegetable intake through LEAP program

According to a new Kids Count Data Snapshot, about two-thirds (64%) of Kentucky children are not meeting an important benchmark: reading at grade level at the start of fourth grade. In addition, Kentucky is one of only 12 states where the reading proficiency gap between students from higher and lower income families widened by more than 30 percent from 2003 to 2013. Because the need for healthy reinforcements is so great, the Literacy, Eating and Activity for Preschoolers (LEAP) program was implemented in Taylor County. The program is a series of lessons using storybooks to teach children about eating more fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy products and whole grains, and about being physically active and staying healthy. The curriculum targets children ages preschool through third grade and their families. Each lesson includes a story and food tasting. A family newsletter with additional information and a recipe with suggested activities reinforce what is taught. The program was taught by the Family and Consumer Sciences agent and Nutrition Education Program assistant to Taylor County preschool and school-age children. Post-lesson observations and surveys showed: 95% of children demonstrated proper handwashing; 100% sampled a variety of foods that included fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy foods or whole grains; 91% were physically active for 30 minutes or more; and 90% could identify a new fruit or vegetable.



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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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