



## 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 **2,457** Todd County residents lived in poverty, and **895** of those were children under 18. This represents a **12.7%** increase in total poverty and **3.9%** 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, **34.7%** of Todd 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, 6,793 Todd County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

## Our Results

### IN TODD COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, 100% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 86% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 86% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 81% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 89% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Increased nutrition knowledge though gardening

The Todd County Nutrition Education Program (NEP) Assistant and the Todd County Extension Agent for Agriculture along with the Family and Consumer Sciences internship student partnered together to plant a community garden at the Todd County Public Housing. The extension staff worked with the residence to place large pots around different locations in common areas for the community to share in growing fresh vegetables.

Participants in the nutrition classes conducted by the NEP assistant helped plant squash, bell peppers, and tomatoes. Throughout the summer, the participants watered and picked the produce. They prepared the fresh produce using recipes and techniques they learned in class through the Healthy Choices for Every Body curriculum. At the end of the summer, participants had the following results:

78% of the participants improved daily physical activities. The diet quality of participants improved 53.8%, which includes a 63% improvement in eating more fruit, vegetables and dark greens. The community enjoyed having access to fresh vegetables during the summer. Several residents decided to join the Healthy Choices for Every Body nutrition classes as a result, too, of working with the community garden.



University of Kentucky  
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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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