



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 **10,026** Whitley County residents lived in poverty, and **3,347** of those were children under 18. This represents a **1.5%** decrease in total poverty and **5.7%** 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, **35.9%** of Whitley 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, 2,047 Whitley County residents with limited resources participated in nutrition education lessons.

Our Results

IN WHITLEY COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2018, **58%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **81%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **91%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **51%** made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **69%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Youth learn about healthy eating

With youth and families in mind, many struggle with choosing healthier options. This can be a result of a number of factors, including limited resources, unhealthy eating habits or lack of proper nutrition education. Through the collaborative efforts between the Cooperative Extension Service EFNEP (Expanded Food Nutrition Education Program) assistant, and the Comprehensive Care Youth Program Counselor, the summer youth program addressed these issues with the LEAP and Teen Cuisine Curriculum. During the eight classes with an average of 30 youth participants through the months of July and August, multiple "hands-on" activities included practicing food safety, learning how to read labels and recipes, preparing and sampling recipes. All of the youth that participated were able to increase their knowledge of being more healthy and self-sufficient in the kitchen. The youth loved the fact that they were not only learning various cooking skills, but were able to actually have their own apron as many of the youth looked forward to using it at home while cooking. All the youth also planned on preparing meals at home for their families after the end of the program.



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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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