



## Our Focus

The Kentucky Nutrition Education Program, as part of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service, encompasses two separate USDA programs: The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). Both programs utilize agents and assistants to provide educational opportunities for limited-resource individuals and families to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and change behaviors for improved health and well-being.

## Our Challenge

### Poverty

According to US Census estimates for 2017, the median household income in Kentucky is **\$48,332**, almost 20% lower than the U.S. median household income of **\$60,336**.<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>	17.1%	13.4%
<b>Child Poverty</b>	22.1%	18.4%
<b>Food Insecurity</b>	14.7%	12.3%

In 2017, an estimated **9,494** Bell County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **2,533** were children under 18.<sup>1</sup>

### Obesity

Today, about half of all Americans have one or more chronic diseases, often related to poor diet and physical inactivity.<sup>2</sup> These include high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and stroke.



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. The percentage of physically inactive Kentuckians was **34.4%**, ranking it as the most physically inactive state in the nation. 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 2015, **36.2%** of Bell County's adult population were considered obese, and **39.6%** were considered physically inactive.<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 2019, 13,433 contacts were made with Bell County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## Our Results

### IN BELL COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 100% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 97% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 98% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 100% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 96% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Germs — Not in My Classroom!

Due to children not knowing how to properly wash their hands, sickness and disease spread quickly in classrooms, causing high absenteeism. The Bell County Schools and the Family Resources and Youth Services Centers directors came to the SNAP-Ed assistant looking for solutions to minimize the passing of germs in their classrooms. Students in kindergarten through second grade were taught the importance of hand-washing. Incorporating the LEAP curriculum, reading “Germs, Germs, Germs,” and using glow germ powder and a black light to show students how well they washed their hands, the Bell County SNAP-Ed assistant informed students on the importance of keeping their hands germ-free. Students were also shown the correct hand-washing technique. Out of 152 students, only 18% washed their hands regularly upon entering the program. All of the students showed an improvement when exiting the program. One teacher stated: “I have seen an improvement in my student’s hand-washing techniques and eagerness to wash their hands to rid them of germs throughout the day.”



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#### SOURCES:

1. U.S. Census Bureau Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates
2. World Health Organization Media Centre
3. The State of Obesity Report 2019
4. 2019 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

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