



## 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 **9,179** Boyd County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **2,851** 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, **40.5%** of Boyd County's adult population were considered obese, and **28.7%** 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, **13,029** contacts were made with Boyd County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## Our Results

### IN BOYD COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, **99%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **75%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **96%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **94%** made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **93%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Learning Early about Gardening

**T**he Boyd County Extension agent for horticulture partnered with the Nutrition Education Program assistant in Boyd County to teach Head Start students and first-graders how to raise their own vegetables. This lesson came after a six-week “Organ Annie” program about how healthy eating affects our major organs. Leaf lettuce was grown so the kids would see pretty quick results from planting seeds. The horticulture agent went into each classroom that had participated in the Organ Annie program and taught the kids about plants. Each child then planted lettuce seeds in his or her own flowerpot, which they left in the classroom to observe how quickly the seeds germinated and started to grow. Each student was given a growth chart to fill in each week and a coloring book of vegetables. One kindergartener was so excited about this program that she encouraged her parents to build a small raised bed so she could grow her own vegetables. She has now raised peppers, tomatoes, broccoli, and lettuce to have at meals at home and has already told her parents that next year she wants a bigger garden to raise more vegetables.



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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

This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.



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