



## 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 **1,663** Fulton County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **555** 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, **34.9%** of Fulton County's adult population were considered obese, and **29.5%** 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, 3,711 contacts were made with Fulton County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## Our Results

### IN KENTUCKY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 97% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 83% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 92% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 90% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 87% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Improved Summer Food Service Program

According to the 2017 Kentucky Kids Count, 22.4% of Fulton County children live in food insecure households. A study by Feeding America shows a link between nutrition and cognitive development, providing evidence that inadequate nutrition negatively affects brain development. When school is out, food insecure families can have difficulty providing adequate nutrition for their children. In 2011, 87.8% of children in Fulton County were eligible for free and reduced school meals. The goal was to increase the number of children, under the age of 19, who received a Summer Food Service meal on weekdays when school wasn't in session. Extension partnered with the Fulton County and Fulton Independent School Districts, the Purchase Area Health Department, Delta Corporation, and the Housing Authority to access \$69,000 from the Rural Child Poverty Nutrition Fund of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The funds were used to improve the Summer Food Service Program over a three-year period (2015 to 2018). Feeding sites were established at schools, Housing Authority locations, food pantries, and First United Methodist Church. Each location planned activities for the children that included exercise, games, gardening, and nutritional programs. The past three years 6,372 meals have been served to children in Fulton County.



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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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