



## 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 **1,282** Gallatin County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **458** 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, **38.2%** of Gallatin County's adult population were considered obese, and **29.2%** 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, 4,295 contacts were made with Gallatin County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## Our Results

### IN GALLATIN COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, **100%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **100%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **100%** 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 **00%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Blessings in a Backpack

The goal of ChooseMyPlate, an evidence-based program, is to help Americans make smarter food choices and promote overall health. Nearly 70% of children in Gallatin County (one in 120 residents) are living in high poverty areas (Kids Count). Gallatin County Schools offered Blessing in a Backpack, a program where children take home food for the weekend to make sure they do not go hungry. Every week throughout the 2018-19 school year, 144 kindergarteners through fifth-graders participated, as compared to 127 in the 2017-18 school year, according to the Gallatin County Family Resource coordinator. A similar program is offered for higher grades. The entire school system offers free breakfast, second-chance breakfast, lunch, and supper. With only one small grocery store, Gallatin County is considered a “food desert.” The Gallatin County School administration asked Gallatin County 4-H to offer health-related enrichment for the elementary schools. Approximately 600 students received hands-on information on MyPlate, how to properly wash their hands, and made and tried new recipes. Because of this program, approximately 150 children reported in a survey they are now making simple nutritious after-school snacks, and 85% can name the various food groups and explain the need for balanced meals.



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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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