



## 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 **7,559** Jessamine County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **2,601** 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, **32.6%** of Jessamine County's adult population were considered obese, and **28%** 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, 5,932 contacts were made with Jessamine County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## Our Results

### IN KENTUCKY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 93% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 89% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 74% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 74% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 99% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Learning to Cook

A three-day cooking class was offered to 42 students ages 9-13 at North Central 4-H Camp by the Jessamine County Family and Consumer Sciences agent and SNAP-Ed assistant. Students learned to read a recipe, measure ingredients with correct measuring tools, and safely use kitchen utensils. In addition to basic principles of cooking, students learned to work together to prepare the recipes. Teamwork is a critical skill that is advantageous to develop at a young age. Seven students even indicated it was their favorite part of the class. Students also learned the science involved when making pizza dough with yeast and making homemade ice cream. The main goal was to provide students with the knowledge and skills to prepare meals on their own. These skills will follow them into adulthood. If cooking is in their toolbox, they will feel confident preparing meals at home, which are usually healthier. As a result of this class, 75% of students said they planned to make at least one of the recipes at home. Seeing the excitement on the students' faces after preparing a recipe and hearing them say they are going to share these recipes with their parents made the cooking class a success.



University of Kentucky  
Nutrition Education Program  
Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

 University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service

#### 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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