

## 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 **5,144** Johnson County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **1,450** 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, **43%** of Johnson County's adult population were considered obese, and **31.7%** 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, 4,766 contacts were made with Johnson County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## Our Results

### IN JOHNSON COUNTY

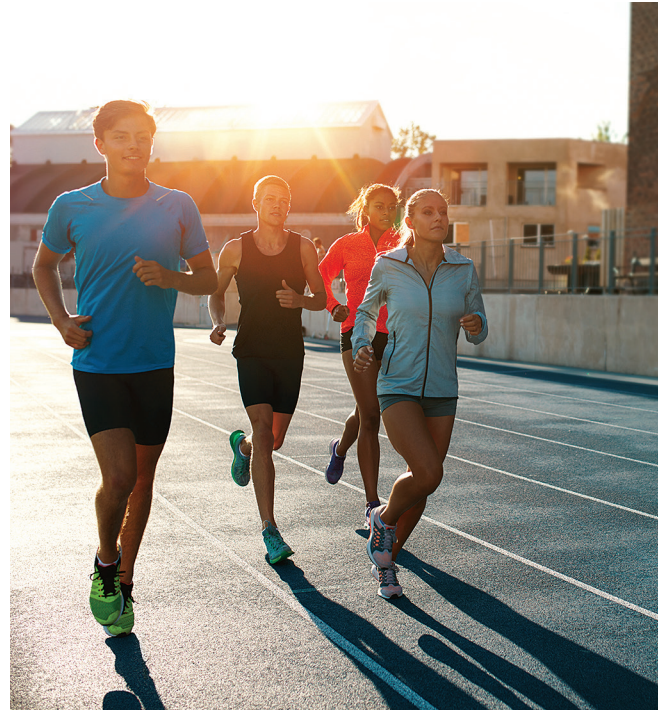
#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, **100%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **98%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **98%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **97%** 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 New Ways to Old Problems

The Johnson County SNAP-Ed senior assistant recently conducted a seven-lesson series with a local homemakers group. They were first asked to share any nutritional concerns. All have issues with chronic diseases that arose over time due to a poor diet. They voiced worries about the increasing number of health-related conditions that come with age. Over 50% of the group suffers from at least one chronic health condition for which they sought medical help, and of this number, 25% developed two or more chronic diseases that require medication. Of these homemakers, only a few exercised regularly. Over the course of the lessons, they learned to set goals, limit foods, plan meals, and read and understand nutrition labels. Calorie concerns were also addressed. Shared recipes focused on lowering saturated fats and reducing sodium and sugar intake. At the end, half the group was walking at least four days a week and all were reducing their saturated fats and sodium intake. They all looked forward to and collected the healthy recipes used in the lesson curriculum. Two women said they had lost weight and were gaining more energy every day. All were planning more outdoor activities in the community for the upcoming year.



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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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