



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**.¹ 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. |
|------------------------|----------|-------|
| Total Poverty | 17.1% | 13.4% |
| Child Poverty | 22.1% | 18.4% |
| Food Insecurity | 14.7% | 12.3% |

In 2017, an estimated **9,789** Knox County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **2,654** were children under 18.¹

Obesity

Today, about half of all Americans have one or more chronic diseases, often related to poor diet and physical inactivity.² 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%**).³ 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.²

In 2015, **39.8%** of Knox County's adult population were considered obese, and **32.9%** were considered physically inactive.⁴

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, 6,797 contacts were made with Knox County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

Our Results

IN KNOX COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 100% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 79% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 81% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 81% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 92% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Life-Altering Changes

According to Kentucky Health Facts, heart disease causes 230 deaths in Knox County per 100,000 population. According to Green Foods and Your Heart, eating leafy green and cruciferous vegetables may reduce the incidence of several types of cardiovascular disease. Evidence from scientific studies shows that increasing the intake of vegetables and fruit can reduce the risk of hypertension, coronary heart disease, and stroke. The Nutrition Education Program assistant presented the Healthy Choices for Every Body program to the parents of the children who attended a local preschool. The participants were eager to learn and made life-altering changes that will not only affect themselves but their children for generations to come. By the end of the program 50% of the participants were eating dark green vegetables, 100% were eating vegetables more often each day, 50% were making small changes to be more active, and 100% were doing muscle strengthening exercises.



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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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