



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 **2,093** LaRue County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **663** 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, **37.7%** of LaRue County's adult population were considered obese, and **29.2%** 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, 4,722 contacts were made with LaRue County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

Our Results

IN LARUE COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 95% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 76% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 97% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 98% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 93% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Summer Food Safety

Cool School is a weeklong summer school program coordinated by LaRue County Family Resource Youth Service Center. The LaRue County Extension Service Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program assistant conducted a series of classes with 120 LaRue County Elementary School first- through fifth-graders. The goal was to improve their eating habits and increase awareness of food safety. Classes on MyPlate, food safety, and hand-washing were taught to encourage a healthier lifestyle. Students participated in hands-on activities to encourage proper hand-washing techniques and prepared their own healthy snacks using a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Students were willing to sample a wide variety of fruits and vegetables they had not tried before. One student commented: "I didn't know that I liked pineapple until today." As a result, 90% showed improvement in diet quality, and 57% showed improvement in food safety knowledge.



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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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