



## 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 **14,386** Laurel County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **4,166** 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, **40.2%** of Laurel County's adult population were considered obese, and **33.2%** 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, 20,338 contacts were made with Laurel County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## Our Results

### IN LAUREL COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 93% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 67% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 91% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 89% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 94% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Senior Citizens Farmers' Market Vouchers Distributed

This past year, the Extension office coordinated with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture to receive the Senior Citizen Farmers Market Voucher program. The \$2,100 in vouchers were distributed to local senior citizens at the London/Laurel County Farmers Market on Saturdays in July. To ensure success and reach more seniors, transportation to the market was offered to many seniors. Also, in conjunction with the London/Laurel County Farmers Market and God's Pantry Food Bank, the Laurel County Family and Consumer Sciences, horticulture, and agriculture agents conducted an Annual Farmers Feast. During the locally sourced dinner event, the 200 participants were encouraged to meet their local farmers, who had set up sample tables. The event also included a silent auction and live auction of donated cakes and was used as a fundraiser for the God's Pantry Food Bank of Southeast Kentucky Regional Distribution Center. The center distributes food to needy families in 11 counties including Laurel County and surrounding counties. An app has also been set up to connect excess quality food items that restaurants and caterers have at the end of the day/event with county organizations that can distribute the food, such as homeless shelters, domestic violence shelters, and food banks.



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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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