



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 **2,147** Lee County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **625** 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, **38.7%** of Lee County's adult population were considered obese, and **32.8%** 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, 3,355 contacts were made with Lee County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

Our Results

IN LEE COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 97% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 76% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 83% 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 78% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Parents Learn Importance of Good Nutrition

In today's busy world, parents of young children face many obstacles when trying to make healthy choices for themselves and their families. Kentucky Health Facts, in conjunction with the CDC, reports adults in Lee County have a 46% obesity rate and 69% of adults are overweight, while only 2% are eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables. Also, 47% of Lee County adults reported no daily physical exercise. To combat these issues, the Lee County Cooperative Extension SNAP-Ed assistant partnered with the Lee County Head Start to offer Healthy Choices for Every Body lessons to its monthly parent group meetings. This program teaches parents of preschool-aged children ways to make healthier food and incorporate physical activity in their daily lives. At the end of seven lessons, graduated participants showed 100% improvement in one or more diet-quality indicators, including eating more fruits and vegetables, as well as 75% showing improved food safety habits and added physical activity each day. Participants were eager to discuss the lessons and share struggles and ideas for improvement. One mother stated: "I never realized how much salt and sugar I was eating. Now I am drinking more water and have almost quit drinking pop."



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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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