



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 **6,798** Letcher County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **1,814** 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, **38.9%** of Letcher County's adult population were considered obese, and **35.2%** 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, 16,307 contacts were made with Letcher County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

Our Results

IN KENTUCKY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 97% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 83% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 92% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 90% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 87% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Super Star Chef Comes to Letcher County

Childhood and adult obesity rates are rising in Kentucky. A growing number of families eat on the run. As a result, many children don't receive the needed basic cooking skills and don't consume the USDA recommended fruits and vegetables each day. To help fight childhood obesity, improve diets, and encourage healthy cooking among youth, the Letcher County Family and Consumer Sciences agent offered the Super Star Chef day camp. For three days, youth ages 9 to 18 learned basic cooking skills such as food and kitchen safety, safe food-handling knife skills, basic nutrition, and how to prepare a healthy meal. In total, the 11 youth who participated were more willing to try new fruits and vegetables and were excited about preparing meals at home. Students and their parents reported the children demonstrated at home the skills learned in the class. A pretest and post-test were administered. As a result of the program: 100% learned how to prevent cross contamination and food safety; 91% demonstrated how to read a recipe and measure ingredients; 84% increased their consumption of fruits and vegetables; and 97% learned to make healthier food choices when eating out.



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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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