



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 **3,019** McLean County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **1,034** 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, **29.8%** of McLean County's adult population were considered obese, and **26.8%** 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, 1,239 contacts were made with McLean County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

Our Results

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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

Master Chef Comes to McLean County

In 2015, McLean County, a small rural farming community, was ranked 50th for obesity rates in Kentucky (KentuckyHealthFacts.org). Since then, the county has lost two of its three grocery stores, creating a food desert in most areas. Master Chef was created as an after-school program for middle school students to teach about nutrition, healthy lifestyles, and food safety. For the past two years, students have attended six after-school sessions to learn about food safety and prepare nutritious recipes they can make at home. The goal of the program is to provide basic knowledge and life skills to use with their families to improve overall health and nutrition. After a self-evaluation and observation, 98% of participants completed the checklist for how to read a recipe, measuring skills, using proper knife skills, cooking skills, identifying cooking equipment, and cleaning skills. The students were challenged to take recipes from the first semester of the program and make some at home for their families over winter break and post photos on social media. The number of youth attending the after-school 4-H Cooking Club and summer Super Star Chef Camp from the middle school has increased as a result of the program.



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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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