



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 **3,127** Meade County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **942** 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, **36.2%** of Meade County's adult population were considered obese, and **26.6%** 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, **6,829** contacts were made with Meade County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

Our Results

IN MEADE COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, **99%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **87%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **100%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **100%** made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with **88%** improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Preschoolers Learn Gardening Skills and Taste Their Rewards

Educational efforts continued in the Meade County Preschool program through nutrition, fine motor, and critical thinking skills development. Producing food was introduced in September to the eight classes. The Agriculture and Natural Resources and Family and Consumer Sciences agent worked with the children to plant lettuce seeds to introduce how food grows. Nearly 150 children participated, using tweezers to plant lettuce seeds in grow trays. The students were instructed on how to care for the plants. Students also learned how good nutrition helps their own bodies' growth. Students later planted carrot seeds, and the FCS agent planted radish seeds to introduce root vegetables. The book "Tops and Bottoms" was utilized to engage the students with a relatable story on how to grow a garden, and each class now has a gardener. The final program in April combined the three vegetables into a salad so the children could experience all the vegetables they learned to grow and how they could be used together to add color and variety to their food. Overall the children liked the salad, and many experienced radishes for the first time.



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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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