



## 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 **1,609** Menifee County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **461** 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, **32.8%** of Menifee County's adult population were considered obese, and **31.3%** 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, 962 contacts were made with Menifee County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## Our Results

### IN MENIFEE COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 94% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 78% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 82% 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 94% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Nutrition LEAPs into Menifee County

The CDC reports that only 9% of students eat the required amount of fruits, and only 2% eat the required amount of vegetables needed for healthy living.

Having access to fruits and vegetables is one of the limiting factors for consumption. To promote making healthier food choices and overall good health, the Menifee County SNAP-Ed assistant taught six LEAP lessons to students in grades K- 2 at Botts Elementary after-school program. LEAP lessons involve reading a book to students and providing a food sample related to the book's theme. Physical activity is also incorporated into the lesson to promote good health. Pre- and post-evaluations showed student improvements as follows: 60% hand-washing skills; 57% vegetable identification; 44% choosing healthy snacks; and 32% physical activity. During one of the lessons, the SNAP-Ed assistant provided mangos as a snack for students. All the students said they were going home and asking their parents to buy mangos for them. However, one of the students went home and asked them to buy some "flamingo" (mango) like he had eaten during a LEAP lesson. The parent later contacted the school to ask what "flamingo" the student had eaten during the after-school 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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