



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 **3,484** Rockcastle County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **1,011** 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, **33.9%** of Rockcastle County's adult population were considered obese, and **35.5%** 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, 4,960 contacts were made with Rockcastle County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

Our Results

IN ROCKCASTLE COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 91% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 72% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 81% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 68% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 94% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

Our Success

Healthy Choices in Rockcastle County

According to the CDC, poor diet quality is a leading risk factor associated with death and disability in the U.S. Eating a diet rich in fruits and vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet can help protect against a number of serious and costly chronic diseases. The SNAP-Ed assistant in Rockcastle County provided a seven-week program at the Rockcastle Extension Office using the Healthy Choices curriculum. A lesson on planning meals was taught with a focus on vegetables. The goal was to help participants recognize the important role of vegetables in their diets. Seven participants completed the series. At the post evaluation, 86% reported they were eating vegetables more often each day. Through recipe tastings and weekly education, participants saw a need to increase vegetables in their daily diets to prevent chronic diseases.



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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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