



## 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 **2,550** Simpson County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **918** 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, **38.8%** of Simpson County's adult population were considered obese, and **26.3%** 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, **6,833** contacts were made with Simpson 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

### Blender Bike Makes Salsas and Smoothies

The Simpson County Cooperative Extension Service used the State Blender Bike to promote physical activity and nutrition throughout Simpson County last fall. Through the efforts of the 4-H agent and Family and Consumer Sciences agent, the Blender Bike reached 1,100 people through school and industry health fairs, classrooms, day cares, Head Start, a local church, Cooking with Kids, club meetings, the Boys and Girls Club, and Boofest, a community fall festival sponsored by the Fair Board. The Blender Bike demonstration emphasized the importance of being physically active and making wise, nutritious food choices as the keys to good health. Recipes prepared with the bike by volunteer riders included salsas and smoothies. The bike was an excellent marketing tool that drew people to the Extension booth at the health fairs and Boofest, with 90% participation rate. A sixth-grade special needs student was able to ride the bike by himself. His smile was priceless as he was able to be independent and physically active simultaneously. Bringing the Blender Bike to Simpson County demonstrated to county residents the importance of combining both physical activity and nutritious foods as the way to maintain good health.



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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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