



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 **1,370** Spencer County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **387** 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, **36.6%** of Spencer County's adult population were considered obese, and **26.2%** 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, 19,077 contacts were made with Spencer 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

Sophomores and Juniors Learn Nutrition and Cooking Skills

Society is getting away from teaching youth to cook due to prepackaged foods, fast food, and overly busy lifestyles. This is why the 4-H agent, agriculture agent, Family and Consumer Sciences agent, and program assistant partnered with the Spencer County High School FCS teacher to provide cooking and nutrition classes. The Extension office taught a monthly cooking and nutrition lesson that included a SNAP-Ed recipe, MyPlate information, and cooking instruction (hand-washing, knife skills, measuring skills, cooking, and baking). Each lesson was taught to two classes of sophomores and juniors. The benefits of learning how to cook include saving money, choosing healthier meals, learning to read and execute a recipe, and fostering relationships with family and friends by having dinner together. All of this has had long term positive effects on health, food choices, and culinary skills. The FCS teacher reported students are more invested in their diets since taking the class, volunteering to cook meals at home, and more interested in where their food is coming from. She also details that students are excited about the FCS program again and enrollment is up by 15%. More students are switching pathways and enrolling in foods and culinary courses.



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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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