



## 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 **2,162** Todd County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **797** 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, **36.6%** of Todd County's adult population were considered obese, and **40.2%** 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, 6,793 contacts were made with Todd County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## Our Results

### IN TODD COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2019, 95% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 71% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 66% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 75% made changes to be more physically active. Youth participants also experienced behavior changes, with 91% improving their ability to choose healthy foods.

## Our Success

### Choosing Healthy Food

According to the CDC, Kentucky youth have one of the highest rates of obesity in the country and more than a quarter of the state's children live in poverty and more than half receive free lunch. The Todd County Nutrition Education Program assistant met with a Todd County Central High School Family Consumer Sciences group and presented Teen Cuisine lessons to the group. The NEP assistant showed the teens how to choose affordable healthy food and how to compare food prices by unit price. Teens enjoyed preparing healthy recipes, working on food safety experiments, and learning to increase their physical activity. At the completion of the class, 100% youth improved their ability to choose healthier foods. Eighty-eight percent of the youth adopted and practiced two or more food selection behavior(s) consistent with federal Dietary Guideline recommendations, while 63% of youth adopted and practiced three or more food selection behavior(s) consistent with those recommendations. The Todd County NEP assistant will continue to work with youth to help them learn to eat healthy on a budget and, hopefully, reduce the level of obesity in our county.



University of Kentucky  
Nutrition Education Program  
Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

 University of Kentucky  
College of Agriculture,  
Food and Environment  
Cooperative Extension Service

#### 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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