



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 **2,581** Union County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **592** 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, **32.6%** of Union County's adult population were considered obese, and **32%** 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, 2,574 contacts were made with Union 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

Super Star Chef Comes to Union County

Last summer, Super Star Chef, a three-day camp for students designed to teach kitchen safety, food safety, nutrition concepts, and physical activity, was held in Union County to help fight obesity. In addition, the students learned food preparation skills. Eight rising fourth- through eighth-graders participated in the program. Overall, comparisons of student responses to the assessment instrument showed the program enhanced understanding of the nutrition concepts covered. The average total score on the test increased from 5.25 in the pretest to 11 in the post-test (out of a maximum of 13). The test also included seven items that measured students' cooking self-efficacy, and analysis showed that students' total corresponding score increased from 29 in the pretest to 31.38 in the post-test (out of a maximum of 36). Additionally, the post-test included a self-assessment of students' intentions to make healthy nutritional choices and be more physically active after participating in the Super Star Chef Program. All of the students reported they can identify healthy foods, plan to drink more water every day, and plan to drink less soda. Most (87.5%) also planned to be more physically active, eat more fruits and vegetables, and try new foods.



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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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