



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: HARLAN COUNTY

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 U.S. Census estimates for 2019, the median household income in Kentucky is **\$52,256**, 20% lower than the U.S. median household income of **\$65,712**.¹ Kentucky also has higher percentages of poverty and food insecurity among its population compared to census estimates for the United States overall.

	Kentucky	U.S.
Total Poverty ¹	16.0%	12.3%
Child Poverty ¹	20.9%	16.8%
Food Insecurity ² <i>(Actual ratings during COVID-19 may be higher)</i>	14.7%	11.7%

In 2018, an estimated **33.4%** of Harlan County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **43.6%** were children younger than 18.¹

Obesity

Today, about half of all Americans have one or more chronic diseases, often related to poor diet and physical inactivity.³ These include high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, and stroke.



In 2019, the percentage of obese adults in Kentucky was **36.5%**, ranking it in the top 10 states for highest obesity rates in the country. The percentage of physically inactive Kentuckians was **30.6%**, ranking it among the top five most physically inactive states in the nation. Kentucky was also ranked in the top 10 for high percentages of adults with diabetes (**13.3%**) and adults with hypertension (**40.9%**).⁴ 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.³

In 2020, **32%** of Harlan County's adult population was considered obese, and **33%** was considered physically inactive.⁵

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 2020, **8,445** contacts were made with Harlan County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN KENTUCKY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2020, **96%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **75%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **92%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **83%** made changes to be more physically active.



OUR SUCCESS

Garden in a Grab and Go bag

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Harlan County Cooperative Extension service was faced with a challenge to meet the needs of the community without using in-person methods. A great opportunity was presented by the 4-H Program with Grab and Go Bags. After publishing on social media the importance of raising vegetable gardens to offset the unavailability of produce in the supermarkets, Harlan County 4-H prepared 110 Vegetable Garden in a Bag kits for 110 families. Each Grab and Go Bag contained a variety of seeds: beans, corn, peas, carrots, onions, squash, tomatoes, peppers, mustard, lettuce, and cucumbers. Each family received an assortment of herbs including parsley, rosemary, dill, thyme, sage, and others. We also included peat pellets, cups, sandwich bags (for green house), and instructions for starting the seeds at home in a windowsill garden. Also included were instructions on windowsill gardens and a Grow Your Own Tomatoes publication. Families signed up for the Vegetable Garden in A Bag by calling the Extension Office or messaging on social media. Families' names were written on the bags, and bags were placed on the 4-H Annex Front



Porch. As an extra bonus, we placed a variety of flower seed packets in the Garden in A Bag. More than 70% of participants said they had not planted gardens before, but felt it was necessary during the pandemic and wanted their children involved in the process.

**University of Kentucky
Nutrition Education Program
Family and Consumer Sciences Extension**

SOURCES:

1. U.S. Census Bureau Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates
2. America's Health Rankings 2019
3. World Health Organization Media Centre
4. The State of Obesity Report 2019
5. 2019 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

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