



# KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT: HENRY 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**.<sup>1</sup> 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.
<b>Total Poverty</b> <sup>1</sup>	16.0%	12.3%
<b>Child Poverty</b> <sup>1</sup>	20.9%	16.8%
<b>Food Insecurity</b> <sup>2</sup> <i>(Actual ratings during COVID-19 may be higher)</i>	14.7%	11.7%

In 2018, an estimated **14.3%** of Henry County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **21.7%** were children younger than 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>3</sup> 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%**).<sup>4</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>3</sup>

In 2020, **29%** of Henry County's adult population was considered obese, and **24%** was considered physically inactive.<sup>5</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 2020, 1,171 contacts were made with Henry 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

### Gardening during COVID-19

In the spring of 2020, because of COVID-19, Cooperative Extension agents had to find new ways of reaching clientele. For safety reasons, in-person classes were postponed, and the Henry County Cooperative Extension needed to assist clientele remotely. After discussions with volunteers and receiving many gardening questions from clients, the Extension Office focused on gardening to help the residents of Henry County. This focus took a two-way path. The first path was to promote local foods through the Henry County Farmers' Market, and the second path was to provide information for Henry County residents to raise and preserve their own produce. The Henry County Cooperative Extension Office promoted the Farmers' Market frequently using the local newspapers and social media. Also, the Henry County Cooperative Extension Office trained vendors over the phone or Zoom about how to accept WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupons, manage the paperwork for the Henry County Farmers' Market, and even assisted in helping the Henry County Farmers' Market gain a few new vendors. Increased marketing for the Farmers' Market raised

awareness of local produce, and market sales increased during this time. The second aspect of the Extension Office's focus was on providing gardening information. More than 100 gardening bags including soil sample bags, seeds, "how to" information, recipes, and more were available free to the community. There were enough seeds distributed to cover a 20 ft. by 30 ft. area in squash, corn, and green beans. The Henry County Cooperative Extension Office also increased its social media presence by providing

gardening information and wrote numerous newspaper articles explaining how to raise and preserve produce. COVID-19 has caused issues, but the Extension Office worked to help residents access local produce through either the Henry County Farmers' Market or by growing the produce themselves.



#### 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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