



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: LAUREL 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 **20.6%** of Laurel County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **29.4%** 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, **39%** of Laurel County's adult population was considered obese, and **35%** 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, 3,270 contacts were made with Laurel County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN LAUREL COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2020, 95% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 95% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 91% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 91% made changes to be more physically active.



OUR SUCCESS

Classes help recovery center clients

In March 2020, COVID-19 hit our community shutting down many businesses. The Laurel County Cooperative Extension service quickly addressed the need to have media trainings to help Nutrition Education Program Assistants reach their clients. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) Assistant enrolled in these trainings to learn how to reach clients with online media channels to continue to address the needs of the community. The assistant set up a nutrition education Facebook page and learned how to use Zoom virtual classroom to reach clients. Having a resource to provide services to New Hope, a substance use outpatient recovery center, was vital to the recovery process.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported an increase in deaths from overdose in Kentucky in 2017. The United States National Library of Medicine states that a person suffering from substance abuse is more likely to relapse when they have poor eating habits. The EFNEP assistant continued to provide nutrition classes, twice a month to a morning and evening class and served 26 outpatient clients at the New Hope recovery center.



The Healthy Choices for Every Body Curriculum was used to cover many nutrition topics including MyPlate, meal planning, fats, sugars, sodium, food budgeting, breakfast, and other topics. Being able to continue reaching clientele is important to their successes. Teaching remotely is a challenge but one client said, “You made the classes fun and I learned a lot.”

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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