



# KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT: LEE 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 **34.4%** of Lee County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **43.7%** 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, **40%** of Lee County's adult population was considered obese, and **33%** 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, 3,233 contacts were made with Lee County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## OUR RESULTS

### IN LEE COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2020, **88%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **63%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **100%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **50%** made changes to be more physically active.



## OUR SUCCESS

### Cooking through the Calendar in Lee County

In 2017, 40% of Lee County residents were considered obese, and approximately 21% of Kentucky youths from ages 10 to 17 were obese, according to the State of Obesity Report. Research indicates that children involved in prepping and cooking their own meals are more likely to choose healthier foods. In January 2019, the Agent for Family and Consumer Sciences Education and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed) Assistant started Cooking through the Calendar in Lee County. Each month, the calendar provided a different recipe to cook that month. To reach youths and working adults, we taught the program in the evening. Because of the large response, we taught a second Cooking through the Calendar class in the morning. Participants read and interpreted the recipes, used a variety of measuring tools, and matched the correct measuring tools with the various ingredients. Each person demonstrated food safety and proper knife skills as they prepared recipes. Each session included a nutrition lesson related to the recipe and a discussion of ways to be physically active.

Since Lee County is a very rural area with limited produce at the local grocery stores, the class grew some of the ingredients in raised bed gardens at the Cooperative Extension office. At the end of our year-long class, 50 Lee County residents had participated in one or more of the classes. All participants reported preparing healthier home-cooked meals with 82% preparing the recipes from class at home. Most participants (86%) increased

fruit and vegetable consumption, and 71% increased dark green vegetable consumption. Additionally, 71% of participants use a meat thermometer more often to ensure food safety, 86% made small changes to be more active, and 71% strengthen muscles more days of the week.



#### 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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