



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: LESLIE 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 **30.8%** of Leslie County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **38.8%** 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, **41%** of Leslie County's adult population was considered obese, and **34%** 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, **11,308** contacts were made with Leslie 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

Partnerships sustaining nutrition

During early spring 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic affected Leslie County, and staying healthy at home became important to prevent the spread of this virus. Many studies indicate that more than 50% of Kentucky's families live below federal poverty lines. Data from Leslie County Schools indicates every child receives free lunch during school, but during this time, schools were not physically in session.

University of Kentucky 4-H Foundation offered mini-grants to assist Kentucky counties. Leslie County Cooperative Extension 4-H received one of these mini-grants to revive a community garden. Several families and socially distanced community members worked to get the garden plowed and planted. Leslie County Cooperative Extension through 4-H programming distributed fresh produce reaching 25 families suffering loss of foods during severe springtime storms.

Gardening programs began with 4-Hers getting seedlings and seeds and planting their gardens with families. Weekly Extension educational materials accompanied the gardening projects using both paper

copies, email, and messenger. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program provided starter gardening bags to 15 families. Partnering weekly with each elementary school with educational and informational materials like Healthy at Home newsletters and ChopChop magazines, we reached more than 300 families. Leslie County Extension also used social media to make available a variety of opportunities and activities for families to

better enjoy their time at home.

During these unusual and difficult times, communities working together with common goals of sustaining nutrition and empowering our youths and families is an important part of the Cooperative Extension mission.



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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