



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: LETCHER 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 **31.1%** of Letcher County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **36.0%** 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 Letcher 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, 5,138 contacts were made with Letcher 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

Even in a pandemic, Extension keeps serving Kentucky

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many changes and stresses for the people of Kentucky and the nation. Among the challenges was the need to stay home, and with it, the need to find ways to stay informed, healthy, and connected socially to others. To address the needs of our people and to stay true to our mission to serve Kentuckians with research-based information, the Letcher County Cooperative Extension Service Agriculture and Natural Resources Agent partnered with fellow agents in Harlan County and Wise County, Va., to offer daily Zoom sessions in the evenings. The sessions covered timely topics of seasonal gardening or farming interest (weed identification, forages, equine basics, etc.) as well as more diverse subjects relevant to the pandemic, such as food preservation and budgetary concerns. All total, 40 sessions served more than 700 clients while offering a sense of normalcy and continuing to serve the people we have been helping for more than 100 years.



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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