



# KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT: LEWIS 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 **25.2%** of Lewis County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **33.1%** 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, **43%** of Lewis County's adult population was considered obese, and **37%** 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, 5,678 contacts were made with Lewis County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## OUR RESULTS

### IN LEWIS COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2020, 100% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 100% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 96% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 100% made changes to be more physically active.



## OUR SUCCESS

### Teaching nutrition virtually

One of the goals of the Nutrition Education Program (NEP) is to provide nutrition information to the residents of Kentucky. As a result of COVID-19, we altered delivery methods for the NEP drastically. The Lewis County Cooperative Extension Service staff worked together to ensure the community had ample opportunities to continue receiving educational material related to nutrition and health. With limited or no in-person instruction opportunities, the Lewis County NEP Assistant dove into the virtual world to teach nutrition. Using Facebook as the major platform, we created a page specifically for NEP educational materials beginning March 2020. The page grew to a following of 381 individuals from all demographics by August 2020. Using recipes from the Plan Eat Move website, ChopChop magazines, and tips for a variety of publication topics including cooking with kids, playing games with your children, and food science experiments, we reached 24,907 individuals during those five months. We also created a private group to which we presented the Healthy Choices for Every Body curriculum via Facebook Live.



This group contained 24 members. During the COVID-19 pandemic, NEP work changed drastically, calling for significant changes in delivery methods. Even with the logistical challenges, the information was presented and even exceeded the reach possible by in-person meetings. Different times call for different methods of community outreach and program delivery. Challenging times, such as a pandemic, resulted in everyone pulling together often outside their comfort zone to share the educational information and materials people needed to stay healthy and safe.

#### 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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