



# KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT: MCCRACKEN 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 **14.7%** of McCracken County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **21.7%** 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, **30%** of McCracken County's adult population was considered obese, and **28%** 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, **1,286** contacts were made with McCracken County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## OUR RESULTS

### IN MCCRACKEN COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2020, **100%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **93%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **97%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **86%** made changes to be more physically active.



## OUR SUCCESS

### Healthy Choices for Every Body improves diet

**W**ith Covid-19 shutting down in-person classes in March of 2020, the McCracken County Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed) Assistant decided continuing her partnership with the McCracken County Drug Courts meant that face-to-face meetings would no longer be safe. She needed to switch quickly to a virtual platform. Researched-based information from the Healthy Choices for Every Body curriculum taught participants how to access food and stretch food dollars during a pandemic.

A quick, private Facebook group proved to be the easiest way to share educational content. Facebook Live made it possible to provide an actual date and time to watch the videos and interact with the SNAP-Ed Assistant by using the comments section on the live page. On average, 24 adults watched each video live with others watching the recording after the video posted. The total average number of participants per video was 35. A post Qualtrics survey collected all participant data. This gave the SNAP-Ed assistant a way to track the progress of each participant. We posted two live videos weekly. After five months,

improvement was shown in multiple areas. The results revealed 79% ate more red, orange, and green vegetables; 74% more cooked dinner at home; 63% drank fewer regular sodas; 75.25% improved their overall food safety procedures; and 77.20% improved their food resource management.

One participant said, “The videos made me feel like I was getting out of the house without actually leaving home

and made me think of things I hadn’t thought of myself.” When asked to explain this she replied, “Your food safety video with the glow germ powder made me more self-aware of how often I touch other things like my clothing or the counter then touch the food again while preparing my food.”



**University of Kentucky  
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#### 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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