



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: METCALFE 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 **23.3%** of Metcalfe County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **37.0%** 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, **34%** of Metcalfe County's adult population was considered obese, and **33%** 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, 3,390 contacts were made with Metcalfe County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN METCALFE COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2020, 100% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 97% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 94% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 94% made changes to be more physically active.



OUR SUCCESS

Go Bag program helps Metcalfe County families

The COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges as Extension offices were forced to work remotely. Child poverty is prevalent in this rural county, with 37% of children living in poverty, according to www.kidscounty.org. Metcalfe County Extension did not want to lose connection with families so we made this as an opportunity to create new programming. The Metcalfe County 4-H Agent and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed) Assistant developed the new Go Bag program. This program was a joint effort for outreach to 50 families each week. Each bag included educational material relevant to youths and adults such as hand-washing information, food safety, new recipes, ideas for being physically active, and tips for dealing with stress and conflict. The bags also included activities such as materials to make a mask and how to make a smoothie. Families also received kitchen items like spatulas, measuring spoons, and colanders. Some weeks, we included footballs or kites. Other weeks, the bags had free garden plants and gardening resources. The bags were a huge success for the community. We used Facebook to



advertise the bags, and people came to know that Mondays would be Go Bag days. Some of the posts reached more than 500 people. One mom who faithfully picked up a Go Bag each week said, "The kids decided we needed a garden this year ... (but here is the best part) - we all four got out there together and created and planted our own garden! It was time spent together outdoors and yesterday we picked our very first squash and zucchini! The smiles and excitement was worth every bit of it! We got most of our plants from the Metcalfe County Extension. Thank you so much for doing that! And even for dropping us a couple bags when we didn't make it to town!"

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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