



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: MUHLENBERG 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 **17.4%** of Muhlenberg County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **22.7%** 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, **36%** of Muhlenberg 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, 15,659 contacts were made with Muhlenberg County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN MUHLENBURG COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2020, 100% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 90% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 90% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 88% made changes to be more physically active.



OUR SUCCESS

Healthy Choices for Every Body improves diet

The Muhlenberg County Cooperative Extension Service provides practical education by helping individuals, families, and communities solve problems, develop skills, and build a better future. The county population is 30,816 with an adult poverty rate at 19.6%. The Muhlenberg County Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed) Assistant taught 66 limited-resource families how to serve more nutritious meals, keep foods safe, and use local food resources effectively. All of the families that completed the minimum number of Healthy Choices for Every Body lessons made an improvement in the nutrition quality of their diet. Families enrolled in the program showed a 50.5% improvement in food resource management skills, with 73% learning to plan meals ahead of time and 50% stating they used a grocery list more often to guide food selections. More than half (54%) of families tried to compare food prices more often, and 60% of families cooked dinner at home more times per week. Overall, 50% of the program families showed improvement in their food safety behaviors, with 85% of families using a meat thermometer properly. Almost half



(40%) of families made improvements in food security, with 25% of participating families being able to use community food resources, such as food pantries, less often because of increased food resource management skills. Upon the completion of the program, 69% of adults reported they were making small changes to be more physically active. The SNAP-Ed Program in Muhlenberg County enlisted the help of 13 community agencies and 55 community volunteers to reach out to limited-resource families to improve skills and change behaviors necessary to achieve good health and well-being for families in Muhlenberg County.

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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