



# KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT: PULASKI 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 **19.5%** of Pulaski County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **26.4%** 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, **37%** of Pulaski County's adult population was considered obese, and **33%** 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, 2,388 contacts were made with Pulaski County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## OUR RESULTS

### IN PULASKI COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2020, 100% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 98% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 94% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 95% made changes to be more physically active.



## OUR SUCCESS

### Nutrition information packets distributed

Since the start of the COVID-19 quarantine in early March 2020, strict restrictions on meetings with clientele were put into practice, and we were allowed no face-to-face meetings. As a way of being able to reach out, stay connected and provide continued programming, we prepared Nutrition Information Packets and distributed them to families in Pulaski County. The Pulaski County Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Education Program (SNAP-Ed) Assistant collaborated with other Extension Agents and several local agencies, including Somerset Housing Authority, Pulaski County Board of Education, Pulaski County Health Department, Pulaski County Public Library, along with local churches, food pantries, and recovery centers to get the packets distributed. The packets featured useful and relevant topics on COVID-19, hand-washing, home cleanliness, food safety, food storage, family fitness, cooking at home, and gardening. Other educational materials included Healthy at Home, Seasoned and ChopChop magazines, Wally Cat activity books, and Plate It Up! Kentucky Proud recipe cards. The use of social media posts and videos of recipe demonstrations

has furthered the outreach. We sent out biweekly packets with information serving parents, grandparents, and students during the months of April through June. We also distributed packets in Spanish upon request. To date, we have dispersed approximately 859 Nutrition Information Packets throughout the county with more than one half going home in school lunches and the summer feeding program. The SNAP-Ed Assistant discovered that stepping out of her comfort zone, by creating a new Pulaski County

Nutrition Education Program Facebook page, has allowed her to reach a larger and more diverse audience. To date, we have made 830 contacts via social media. We encouraged Pulaski County families receiving the packets to leave feedback. One grandmother shared, “We loved all of the information especially the growing squash activity.”



#### 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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