



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: ROBERTSON 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 **19.1%** of Robertson County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **28.9%** 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, **27%** of Robertson County's adult population was considered obese, and **30%** 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, 5,162 contacts were made with Robertson County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN KENTUCKY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2020, 96% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 75% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 92% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 83% made changes to be more physically active.



OUR SUCCESS

Robertson County senior citizens grow their own vegetables

Robertson County has many underserved audiences, one of which is senior citizens. Our senior center serves three meals a week to an average of 25 people. The center provides farmers' market vouchers that allow seniors to purchase fresh fruit and vegetables. Some wanted the opportunity to grow their own. In the summer of 2019, the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Agent reached out to the local senior citizens' center about putting two raised gardens by their building for the seniors to have access to fresh vegetables. They loved the idea! The ANR Agent began planning and put together two raised beds with the help of volunteers. The beds were three feet off the ground so the seniors would not have to bend over to care for the gardens. The Robertson County FFA Greenhouse donated the plants, so the only cost was the beds and the soil. We planted tomato, pepper (banana and bell), and cucumber plants that would be easy to grow and that the seniors would be able to enjoy once the vegetables were harvested. Over the course of the summer, the seniors gathered numerous harvests off those plants. They used the vegetables in their meals at the senior center and were able



to take some home with them. This project went over so well that they requested additional raised beds next year, and they already know what they want to plant. This was an easy project that made a huge impact on an underserved audience in our community. Because of the success, this project will continue to grow year after year.

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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