



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: RUSSELL 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 **21.6%** of Russell County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **30.5%** 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, **32%** of Russell County's adult population was considered obese, and **34%** 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, 2,742 contacts were made with Russell 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

Good nutrition matters

Local leadership councils identified nutrition education and healthy lifestyles as educational priorities for youths to help combat the obesity crisis in the state. According to the Trust for America's Healthy Survey and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Kentucky's obesity rate for children ages 10 to 17 has increased to more than 21%. Instructing children with the aspects of healthy nutritional choices at a young age is critical to addressing issues of weight. The 4-H Agent presented a series of five activities based on MyPlate to 157 third grade youths in the Russell County School System. The activities were based on the Professor Popcorn curriculum. The youths learned about the five food groups on MyPlate and were able to sample foods at most of the meetings. They identified foods within each group, discussed serving sizes, and discussed the location of these items in a grocery store. After the program, we gave the youths a survey to see what changes they had made because of the program. A vast majority (83%) of the youth ate more vegetables, and 94% ate more fruit now than before the program. Approximately 50% of the youths had tried a new



fruit or vegetable with some of the more popular foods that had been tried being star fruit, oranges, dragon fruit, and carrots. Almost all (95%) of the youths said that they eat breakfast, and 91% said that they did physical activities most days of the week. Finally, 88% of the youths said that they ate more healthy foods now than they did before the program.

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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