



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: SIMPSON 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 **12.5%** of Simpson County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **21.5%** 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, **38%** of Simpson County's adult population was considered obese, and **24%** 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, **13,578** contacts were made with Simpson 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

Drive-Thru Container Garden Kits

The Simpson County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Development worked jointly to provide new programs during COVID-19. One opportunity was the Drive-Thru Container Garden Kits. This year, many people were interested in growing their own produce, enjoying a fun and educational family activity, and making the most of additional time they had on their hands. This provided an educational opportunity for Extension. The Agents and office staff recorded a video that demonstrated how to use the kit to grow a tomato plant. We posted the video to the county Facebook page and YouTube channel.

Agents and staff advertised that the kits would be given away from 3 to 5 p.m. on Tuesday, May 5th. The kits contained a Roma Tomato transplant, a 5-gallon bucket with pre-drilled drain holes, potting soil, a pair of gloves, SNAP tomato recipes, a Gardening In Small Spaces publication, and a UK tumbler. Tractor Supply Company donated the buckets and potting soil, and Western Kentucky University Agriculture Greenhouse donated all the tomato transplants. Advertising was done through the

Facebook page, on the local radio station, and by word of mouth.

Response for the kits was overwhelming. The kits were loaded and distributed within 20 minutes of the start time. The agents were able to obtain donations for a second distribution the following week. This time, we gave away 100 kits in 30 minutes! Many families posted pictures and added comments about their enjoyment and the learning

opportunities this provided.

One quote said, "Thank you for coordinating this activity to make it easy for my grandson and many others to do! Thank you to your sponsors for providing these items. Simpson County has a great Extension Service. Thank you to the folks who were loading these into our vehicles!"



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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This material was partially funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — SNAP.



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Food and Environment
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