



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2020 ANNUAL REPORT: WHITLEY 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 **25.7%** of Whitley County residents lived in poverty, and an estimated **33.9%** 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, **33%** of Whitley County's adult population was considered obese, and **36%** 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, 1,724 contacts were made with Whitley County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN WHITLEY COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2020, 96% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 93% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 85% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 81% made changes to be more physically active.



OUR SUCCESS

Fall victory gardens supported

For years, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) Assistant has tried to encourage the use of planting a garden at a rehab facility. The different directors of the facility would consider it, but it has never quite become a reality. This year, the entire Whitley County Extension Office staff collaborated in preparing Fall Victory Garden bags that were handed out at the office and the farmers' markets. This also helped the EFNEP Assistant get the rehab center's gardening project idea a step closer to becoming a reality. We delivered 26 Fall Victory Garden bags to the rehab facility. The bags included plants and seeds to grow fall vegetables along with other educational publications from the Extension Office. This developed so much interest that the director of the facility said she would definitely check into the feasibility and rules to possibly start a garden at the facility in the spring.



University of Kentucky
Nutrition Education Program
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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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