



OUR FOCUS

The Kentucky Nutrition Education Program (KYNEP or NEP) encompasses two separate USDA programs: The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). Both programs 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 2020, 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 overall and child poverty¹ and food insecurity² among its population compared to 2020 Census and Department of Agriculture estimates for the United States overall.

	Kentucky	U.S.
Total Poverty¹	16.0%	12.3%
Child Poverty¹	20.9%	16.8%
Food Insecurity²	13.8%	10.5%

In 2020, an estimated **35.5%** of Bell County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated **41** were residents under age 18.¹

Obesity and physical inactivity

Today, **60%** of all Americans live with at least one chronic disease. These include heart disease and stroke, cancer, and diabetes.³ These diseases are all associated with obesity and physical inactivity. In 2020, Kentucky ranked



in the top five states in the country for obesity with a rate of **36.6%** for adults.⁴ The percentage of physically inactive Kentuckians is **32%**, ranking it in the top seven most physically inactive states in the nation.⁵ A large amount of data show 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

The County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Kentucky report shows that **39%** of Bell County's adult population have obesity and **35%** were 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 2021, 2,833 contacts were made with Bell County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN BELL COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2021, **100%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **100%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **100%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **100%** made changes to be more physically active.



OUR SUCCESS

Gardening in Small Spaces

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many Bell County residents took interest in growing their own food through gardening. The Bell County SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) assistant used the 2020 Fall Victory Garden Campaign to help educate local families on how to grow fruits and vegetables in small spaces using small containers, raised beds or flower beds, and pallets. Seven families participated in the Victory Garden Campaign. The Bell County Cooperative Extension Service gave turnip, mustard, lettuce, carrot, and spinach seeds along with potting soil to the families to help start the gardens. A gardening calendar with timely garden tips

was provided to each family. This was the first time for half of these families to grow a garden. None of the participants had grown a garden in a small space. Three-quarters chose container gardens while the rest preferred raised beds or small flower beds. These families were so amazed at how easy it was to get started and grow vegetables in containers and other small areas. All of the families who participated harvested and enjoyed vegetables they planted. Children of the participating families also enjoyed growing and tasting their own homegrown, fresh vegetables. One person stated, "I never knew it was this easy plus it has cut back on my grocery bill. I will definitely do this again."



University of Kentucky Nutrition Education Program Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

SOURCES:

1. U.S. Census Bureau Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates 2020
2. United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service
3. CDC National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion 2019
4. The State of Obesity Report 2020
5. CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

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