



# KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT: BREATHITT COUNTY

### 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.<sup>1</sup> Kentucky also has higher percentages of overall and child poverty<sup>1</sup> and food insecurity<sup>2</sup> among its population compared to 2020 Census and Department of Agriculture estimates for the United States overall.

	Kentucky	U.S.
<b>Total Poverty<sup>1</sup></b>	16.0%	12.3%
<b>Child Poverty<sup>1</sup></b>	20.9%	16.8%
<b>Food Insecurity<sup>2</sup></b>	13.8%	10.5%

In 2020, an estimated 34.4% of Breathitt County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated 38 were residents under age 18.<sup>1</sup>

#### 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> The percentage of physically inactive Kentuckians is 32%, ranking it in the top seven most physically inactive states in the nation.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

The County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Kentucky report shows that 40% of Breathitt County's adult population have obesity and 36% were physically inactive.<sup>5</sup>

## 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, 4,026 contacts were made with Breathitt County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## OUR RESULTS

### IN BREATHITT 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

### Food Box Distribution Program

According to the 2019 Census Bureau Quick Facts for Breathitt County, the median household income is \$27,344, meaning 30% of the county population lives in poverty. Those living in poverty often struggle to provide adequate nutrition and food to their families, which directly affects the health of those families. With the COVID-19 pandemic affecting existing food relief efforts in the county, Extension personnel began looking for ways to fill the gap between those in poverty and their basic needs. To assist individuals and families suffering from food insecurity, the Breathitt County FCS agent, in partnership with the Robinson Center for Appalachia Resource Sustainability (RCARS) and God's Pantry of Central Kentucky, set up a monthly food distribution for the county. As a part of this program, food is delivered via God's Pantry's delivery system once a month. The food is then boxed and distributed by Extension staff from the Breathitt County office and RCARS.

Initially assisting 144 households with food insecurity through a drive-thru distribution service, the program has expanded to helping more than 200 households during the spring months. All COVID-19 safety protocols have been in place to keep workers and participants safe during food distribution. An estimated 400 residents of Breathitt County are positively impacted each month by the food distribution program. Items such as fresh produce and protein sources allow participants to provide food for their families and nutrition as well. Participants have even commented, "This really helps to provide for my family. Thank you so much for this wonderful program." The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted food insecurity issues within Breathitt County. The food distribution program through the Breathitt County office, RCARS, and God's Pantry has served as an effective strategy to help reduce food insecurity and increase nutrition among participants.



#### 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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