



# KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT: GRANT 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 **16.4%** of Grant County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated **19** 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 **35%** of Grant County's adult population have obesity and **34%** 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, 1,123 contacts were made with Grant County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## OUR RESULTS

### IN GRANT COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2021, 100% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 81% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 100% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 81% made changes to be more physically active.



## OUR SUCCESS

### Cooking Virtually

With COVID-19 shutting down in-person classes, the Grant County NEP (Nutrition Education Program) assistant, along with the Family Resource Center director at Sherman Elementary, decided to offer a Virtual Youth Group via Zoom. Since 21% of children in Grant County live in poverty and 100% of children at Sherman Elementary receive free lunches, the Family Resource Center provided the groceries needed to prepare nutritious recipes. A total of 30 youths and their parents met with the NEP assistant and the Family Resource director for the classes and 26 completed the series. Sherman's ESL (English as a Second Language) instructor attended the classes as well to assist with Spanish-speaking families. Classes were offered in the evenings to allow parents and guardians to be home with the youths. Classes from

the Professor Popcorn curriculum were covered as well as knife skills, measuring skills, reading recipes, My Plate, physical activity, and kitchen and food safety. Recipes were chosen which included foods provided by the local pantries. Pairing specific recipes with foods received in food pantry boxes helped families try out and prepare healthy nutritious meals for their families. As a result of the classes, 92% of children improved their abilities to choose foods according to the Federal Dietary Recommendations, 69% improved their physical activity practices, and 50% used safe food handling practices more often. One participant stated, "It was fun to cook with my friends over Zoom; it was a lot more fun than our regular classes!" One of the parents stated, "We loved cooking as a family and having dinner ready when we were done. I learned as much as the kids."



#### 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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