



# KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT: GREEN 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 **18.0%** of Green County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated **23** 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 **36%** of Green County's adult population have obesity and **27%** 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, **1,858** contacts were made with Green County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## OUR RESULTS

### IN KENTUCKY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2021, **98%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **89%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **96%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **80%** made changes to be more physically active.



## OUR SUCCESS

### Garden Club Grows Healthier Nutrition Habits

**W**ith the pandemic keeping people at home more than ever, there was a greater interest from our families in learning gardening skills. The Cooperative Extension Service noticed an increase in questions related to different garden types, best management practices, and preservation techniques of personally raised vegetables. Green County 4-H applied for a Kentucky 4-H Foundation grant to establish a garden club for our youths and families. The \$620 grant was used to purchase seeds, transplants, and supplies that were used in the monthly educational meetings. Initially, 25 families committed, with many of the families having multiple youths participating in the program. Different types of gardens were discussed at the first educational meeting. Almost three-quarters of the families, 72%, chose to grow their vegetables in a raised bed or container garden, a new method for

them that was appropriate for their homes. The remaining families chose the traditional garden plot. A main educational focus of the meetings was to encourage the youths to try new vegetables. Most youths would try a small bite. Some of the new favorites by youths, who thought they did not like certain vegetables but in fact had never tried them, were asparagus, tomatoes, and zucchini. We encouraged the youths to send pictures of their gardens and the new vegetables they were growing. Another element of the Garden Club was integration with our community's farmers' market. Three youths sold their produce regularly at the farmers' market. The grant allowed the youths to participate in the market without having to pay the set-up fee which lowered the entry cost for the families. The families enjoyed the Garden Club as it is an activity in which the entire family can be involved.



#### 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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