



# KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT: LARUE 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 14.6% of LaRue 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 39% of LaRue County's adult population have obesity and 32% 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, 2,444 contacts were made with LaRue County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## OUR RESULTS

### IN LARUE COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2021, **100%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **93%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **100%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **93%** made changes to be more physically active.



## OUR SUCCESS

### Promoting Healthy Habits for All

**L**aRue County has an obesity rate of 34.7% and a sedentary lifestyle rate of 28.9%, according to Kentuckyhealthfacts.org. The LaRue County Cooperative Extension Service EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) assistant conducted a series of nine classes with 12 LaRue County High School Functionally Mentally Disabled Students. The goal was improving their overall knowledge of nutrition, increasing physical activity, and teaching the importance of hygiene and hand-washing. Participants in this group have developmental or physical limitations. Classes on hand-

washing, basic cooking skills, MyPlate, portion control, beverage choices, and physical activity were taught to encourage a healthier lifestyle. One student has decreased his intake of sodas from five sodas per day to one. His parent stated: "I can see a difference in his attention span by reducing his intake of sodas, additionally he has dropped a few pounds." By sharing information regarding healthy diets, physical activity, and hygiene, students have improved their diets by reducing sweetened drinks, increased their physical activity, and are more aware of the necessity of hand-washing to stay healthy.



#### 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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