



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2021 ANNUAL REPORT: METCALFE 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 \$65,712.¹ 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 23.2% of Metcalfe County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated 32 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 34% of Metcalfe County's adult population have obesity and 32% 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, 1,725 contacts were made with Metcalfe County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN METCALFE COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2021, **100%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **96%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **100%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **86%** made changes to be more physically active.



OUR SUCCESS

Popping Up with Success

The COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges as Extension was no longer able to conduct programming in Metcalfe County schools. Child poverty is prevalent in this rural county, with 37% of children considered to be living in poverty according to www.kidscounty.org. Almost a quarter of all children in Metcalfe County are living in food insecure households. The SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) assistant did not want to lose connection with students and used this opportunity to create a new avenue of programming. The SNAP-Ed assistant contacted the fourth grade teachers at the elementary school to see if they were interested in conducting virtual programming. Indeed, the teachers agreed that nutrition education remained as important as ever with their students and agreed to work to help facilitate virtual lessons. NEP (Nutrition

Education Program) released an updated virtual curriculum for Professor Popcorn that the SNAP-Ed assistant used. Lessons covered food safety, learning the food groups and how to make healthier choices, as well as physical activity components. The SNAP-Ed assistant met six times virtually with the fourth grade students who attended school in person. At the end of the lessons, evaluations showed an improvement in food safety, with exit data reports stating students were 30% more likely to wash a fruit or vegetable before eating. Students had an 80% improvement in their ability to choose healthy foods according to federal dietary guidelines. Additionally, 70% of the students reported decreased hours of screen time. These classes are still effective, even being virtual. One fourth grade teacher stated, "We're just so glad to get to do this with you. The kids really seemed to enjoy it, even if you couldn't be there in person."



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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