



## 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 26.1% of Perry County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated 32 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 43% of Perry County's adult population have obesity and 37% 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, 3,570 contacts were made with Perry County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## OUR RESULTS

### IN PERRY COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2021, 99% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 96% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 97% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 85% made changes to be more physically active.



## OUR SUCCESS

### Youth and Food Deserts

Perry County SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) assistant collaborated with the Perry County elementary school to teach youths about good nutrition, making healthy food choices, and food in general. Accessing fresh foods is more difficult for those living in locations labeled as a "food desert." A series of six lessons were taught using the University of Kentucky Nutrition Education Program Farm 2 School curriculum. Because of the pandemic, Google Classroom was used for teaching students. Students learned how good nutrition

plays a role in health, correct food serving sizes, where food comes from and how it is grown, and food safety guidelines when handling, preparing, and storing food. Entry and exit surveys showed the impact of this program. Exit surveys indicated 70% of students showed an improvement in one or all categories. Upon conclusion of the series, students reported knowing to take a cooler to transport food safely, that growing fruits and vegetables does not take a large amount of space, and that buying fresh produce at the farmers' market when in season would help their families' food dollars go farther.



#### 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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