



# KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT: RUSSELL 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 23.2% of Russell 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 35% of Russell County’s adult population have obesity and 38% 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, **1,786** contacts were made with Russell 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

### Local Foods Feeding Local People

Russell County has always had a strong heritage in vegetable production, whether it be commercial or home garden production. This year, in conjunction with Russell County Health Department and a community volunteer, Russell County Cooperative Extension Service started another community garden in the county. More than 10 years ago, what began as a single garden has flourished into three community gardens. They are located at the Extension Office, a local volunteer's home, and Russell Springs First Baptist Church. The new community garden provides low-income families, minorities, and senior citizens with the opportunity to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as being a partner in helping members of the community secure more fresh and local foods. The garden at the Extension Office is used, in part, to provide citizens of the community a place to have a garden. With many senior citizens and minorities living in

apartments or other housing without land for a garden, our garden area provides them with a free place to grow their food. This year, the office garden also became a way to donate fresh fruit and vegetables back to the community. The garden at the Extension Office and the community volunteer garden will now donate fresh produce to the local food pantry and deliver it to the local housing districts as available. The church garden provides participants with fresh produce in exchange for their work in the garden, and all the extra produce is donated. This year, in Russell County, community gardens account for approximately half an acre of locally grown produce available for donation back to the community. The community gardens allow for Extension to also provide participants and citizens with healthy recipes for the local produce they receive by putting together packets of SNAP-Ed (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education) materials.



#### 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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