



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2021 ANNUAL REPORT: SIMPSON 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 15.6% of Simpson County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated 19 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 39% of Simpson County’s adult population have obesity and 29% 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, 1,583 contacts were made with Simpson County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN SIMPSON COUNTY

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

Gardening Programs Encourage Homegrown Food

The Simpson County Extension Agents worked jointly to provide new programs during COVID-19, with home vegetable gardening resources being in high demand. The 4-H agent partnered with Community Education teaching 25 youths how to make fresh salsa or pizza sauce from the garden. The gardens included herbs, peppers, tomatoes, and onions, along with flowers to attract bees for pollination. Extension agents offered community Squash Container Gardening Kits complete with squash seeds, growing instructions, a 5-gallon bucket with pre-drilled drain holes, potting soil, a SNAP-Ed vegetable brush, Plate It Up! recipes, a 2021 NEP recipe calendar, and a Gardening in Small Spaces UK publication. Buckets and potting soil were donated and valued at more than \$1,000. About

100 squash container garden kits were distributed. An instructional video was recorded and uploaded to the Simpson County Extension YouTube channel. The Extension agents participated in an employee health fair, giving out squash seeds and home gardening information to 45 employees. In addition, a fourth grade teacher in Simpson County reached out requesting a container garden program for her classroom. She had a student who didn't always have enough food to eat at home and wanted to teach her how to garden. As a result, the agent partnered with Community Education to plant lettuce container gardens with 26 students in this classroom. The container gardens were taken home and cared for by the students, including teaching the students how to harvest their lettuce.



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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