



KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

2021 ANNUAL REPORT: WHITLEY 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 23.6% of Whitley County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated 26 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 36% of Whitley County's adult population have obesity and 35% 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, 2,050 contacts were made with Whitley County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

OUR RESULTS

IN WHITLEY COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2021, 92% 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 100% made changes to be more physically active.



OUR SUCCESS

Crossing Hurdles

A community partner and local substance abuse rehabilitation facility experienced transition as they adjusted to three different directors throughout the past year. Despite the ongoing transition within the facility, the EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) assistant with the Whitley County Cooperative Extension Service continued serving as a strong community partner, delivering research-based nutrition education programs to this underserved audience. The program emphasizes the importance of sobriety and healthy eating. Program lessons were conducted weekly and consisted of lectures, food demonstrations, group discussions, and educational

materials for participants. According to Today's Dietitian, The Magazine for Nutrition Professionals, "Substance abuse generally leads to a lack of proper nutrition, either as a result of not eating enough throughout the day or eating foods that are low in necessary nutrients. It leads to vitamin and mineral deficiencies that threaten physical and mental health, damage vital organs and the nervous system, and decrease immunity." At the end of the 2021 federal program year, 25 clients graduated from this program. Of these 25 clients, 100% showed a positive change in any food group, 59% showed improvement in diet quality, 63% showed improvement in food resource management, and 54% showed improvement in food safety.



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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