

Bell County

2023 NEP REPORT

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 2022, the median household income in Kentucky is **\$59,341**, 21% lower than the U.S. median household income of **\$74,755**.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.

	KY	U.S.
Total Poverty¹	16.3%	12.6%
Child Poverty¹	20.6%	16.3%
Food Insecurity²	14.0%	10.2%

In 2022, an estimated **30.4%** of Bell County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated **40.2%** of children under age 18 lived in poverty.¹

Obesity and physical inactivity

Today, 6 in 10 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. The most recent data show that the percentage of adults who have obesity in Kentucky is 37%,



ranking it in the top 10 states for high obesity rates in the country.⁴ The percentage of physically inactive Kentuckians is 29%, ranking it in the top eight most physically inactive states in the nation.⁴ A large amount of data shows 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 **44%** of Bell County’s adult population have obesity and **40%** were physically inactive.⁴

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, and
- Managing SNAP resources.

In 2023, 5,746 contacts were made with Bell County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

Our Results

IN BELL COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2023, 100% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 100% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 95% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 95% made changes to be more physically active.



Our Success

Using wild game to help food insecurity

The Nutrition Education Program (NEP) assistant along the Bell County Cooperative Extension agents hosted a new county program. Cook Wild Kentucky is a series of healthy recipes that feature wild game. NEP, Feeding Kentucky, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Kentucky Hunters for the Hungry worked on the program. It teaches how to prepare wild game donated from local hunters to food banks. The program covers topics such as regulations and how to harvest safely. We taught the Cook Wild program once a quarter and chose topics related to the type of hunting in season. Class members were able to sample new healthy ways of cooking wild game. Eleven men and three women came to this program. One group member said, "I am so thankful for this program. I have learned so much. I'm excited to cook our harvest now that I have recipes."



**University of Kentucky
Nutrition Education Program
Family and Consumer Sciences Extension**

SOURCES:

1. U.S. Census Bureau Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates
2. United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service
3. CDC National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
4. County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

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