

# Mason 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**.<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.

	KY	U.S.
<b>Total Poverty<sup>1</sup></b>	16.3%	12.6%
<b>Child Poverty<sup>1</sup></b>	20.6%	16.3%
<b>Food Insecurity<sup>2</sup></b>	14.0%	10.2%

In 2022, an estimated **20.1%** of Mason County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated **25.7%** of children under age 18 lived in poverty.<sup>1</sup>

#### 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> The percentage of physically inactive Kentuckians is 29%, ranking it in the top eight most physically inactive states in the nation.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup>

The County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Kentucky report shows that **39%** of Mason County’s adult population have obesity and **31%** were physically inactive.<sup>4</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, and
- Managing SNAP resources.

In 2023, 4,784 contacts were made with Mason County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## Our Results

### IN MASON COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2023, 99% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 94% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 75% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 75% made changes to be more physically active.



## Our Success

### Empowering lives and nourishing hope

The Nutrition Education Program (NEP) and Women's Crisis Center worked together to change lives through an approach to nutrition, hopes, and dreams. This success story highlights the clear-cut impact it had on countless women to form their own toughness and help them to reclaim their lives with self-worth and purpose.

Proper nutrition plays a vital role to restore both physical and mental well-being. The Mason County NEP assistant began a seven-week Healthy Choices for Every Body class. Seven women and one employee from a complex to prevent violence attended. The class involved skill-building ideas such as cooking, nutrition, how to budget, and food safety. Teaching

women useful skills allowed them to grow in self-confidence. It also helped them feel free and boosted their chance of finding a job. This could, at last, break the cycle of crisis for them.

The class discussed food needs and empowered women to make informed choices. It helped them get back control over their health. At the end of the class, all of the members ate more fruits and vegetables. All of them now compared food prices and planned meals before going to the store. And all of the class members learned to budget to have enough money to get food for their family.

One woman said the recipes didn't appeal to her until she tried them. After she tried them, she liked each one and would make them again.



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**UK Cooperative  
Extension Service**

#### 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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