

McCracken 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 **15.2%** of McCracken County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated **21.7%** 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 **38%** of McCracken County's adult population have obesity and **30%** 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, **5,252** contacts were made with McCracken County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

Our Results

IN MCCRACKEN COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2023, **92%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **80%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **72%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **72%** made changes to be more physically active.



Our Success

Teen Cuisine makes life skills easier

The McCracken County Cooperative Extension Service NEP assistant joined with the Paducah Tilghman High School Community Work Transition Program. The program is for youths with cognitive disabilities. Students, along with their teacher, attended a six-session series of Teen Cuisine.

The youths worked on new kitchen skills such as measuring and reading recipes. They also learned how to make healthy choices with MyPlate and food safety habits.

We tracked these changes during the six sessions:

- **100%** ate more vegetables and whole-grain foods, washed their hands before eating, and made progress on being more active each day,
- **75%** drank milk more often and chose

lower fat foods when offered, and

- **50%** drank less sugary drinks while adding more fruit daily.

Each week, we taught new life skills using both electric and gas stoves, microwave ovens, and proper hand-washing of dishes after each use. The teacher said one student's parent noted their student was helping in the kitchen more and washing dishes at home.

Along with learning a lot of new skills, they enjoyed making their own lunches during each session. One youth in the group brought a packed lunch to each session and ate from it after trying only one bite of the foods made. Over time, he didn't eat from his lunchbox and ate more foods cooked by the group. During the last class, he didn't bring a packed lunch and enjoyed homemade pizzas!



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



**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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