

Muhlenberg 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 **21.7%** of Muhlenberg County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated **27.1%** 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 **40%** of Muhlenberg County’s adult population have obesity and **32%** 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, **18,206** contacts were made with Muhlenberg County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

Our Results

IN MUHLENBERG COUNTY

Lifestyle improvements

In 2023, **99%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **91%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **85%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **85%** made changes to be more physically active.



Our Success

Big Blue Power of Produce tokens improve access to fruits, veggies

The Muhlenberg County Nutrition Education Program, the Muhlenberg County Health Department, and the Muhlenberg County farmers' market started a program to boost eating fruits and veggies. The group asked for a Health Equity Grant from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. We received a \$10,000 grant for the Big Blue Power of Produce program. Of this amount, we used \$9,000 to pay back local market vendors for their harvest.

We gave tokens to the low-income audiences at nutrition classes and teaching events in the county. Recipients could use the tokens to buy fresh fruits and vegetables at the farmers' market. This broke down the wall of cost and being easy to find.

More people came to programs to get the tokens. So in return, more people learned about fresh fruits and vegetables as they used their tokens at the farmers' market.

These tokens are more than just an easy way to shop for fresh produce. They are a means to make our county strong and enjoy the best that local farming has to offer.



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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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This material was partially funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — SNAP.



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