

# Union 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 **17.2%** of Union County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated **25.4%** 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 **40%** of Union County's adult population have obesity and **32%** 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, 579 contacts were made with Union County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.



## Our Success

### Updated Nutrition Education Program curriculum available to SNAP-Educators across the U.S.

**H**ealthy Choices for Every Body (HCEB) is a direct education intervention designed to improve diet quality, food preparation skills, physical activity, and food safety practices, as well as enhance food security and food resource management skills.

The curriculum consists of a series of lessons focused on developing knowledge, skills, and behavior changes. It incorporates lessons and activities that recognize participants' experiences, skills, and knowledge; explain why, what, and how the nutrition education concepts presented relate to real-life situations; and include active learning activities, hands-on practice, and

demonstrations to help participants understand and apply content.

In Kentucky, HCEB is the primary adult curriculum for KYNEP and provides standardized educational programming across the state for adult participants.

As part of the National SNAP-Ed Toolkit, the curriculum has also been used by universities, health departments, and nonprofit organizations across the U.S. over the years.

In 2021, KYNEP updated the HCEB curriculum to reflect changes in dietary guidance, the Nutrition Facts label, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) evaluation. In 2022 and 2023,

**37%**  
of Kentucky adults are obese, ranking the state in the top 10 in the U.S. for obesity.

Source: County Health Rankings and Roadmaps

Kentucky SNAP-Ed and EFNEP assistants piloted the updated curriculum.

**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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