

PARTNERING TO ADVANCE THE HEALTH OF KENTUCKIANS

EXTENSION IMPACT BRIEF #7 | FALL 2025



A vibrant Kentucky economy hinges on the health of its people. Kentucky experiences a high prevalence of chronic conditions including diabetes, cancer, occupational fatalities, and mental health concerns. To address these challenges, UK Extension engages in strategic partnerships within and outside the university to develop and implement evidence-based programs to advance the health of Kentuckians.

UK Extension partners with UK Healthcare and the **Healthy Kentucky Initiative (HKI)** to implement various community-engaged interventions to promote positive health behaviors. Community health awareness outreach such as HKI's **Be Healthy Bash** and UK King's Daughters' **Healthy Hoopla** bring health vendors together to provide health education and demonstrations, health screenings, and preventative vaccines to participants in the community.

BE HEALTHY BASH IMPACT

(Fayette County 2024-2025)

52 Vendors

880 Kentuckians
attended

658+ preventive
health services
provided

101 individuals completed the evaluation, of which:

98% reported that
BHB provided helpful
information they plan
to use to improve their
health and wellbeing.

98% reported that the
education and activities
were relevant to their
personal and family
needs.

96% reported increased
confidence in their ability
to improve their health
after attending.

97% intend to apply the
knowledge and skills they
gained to make healthier
choices.

QUESTION, PERSUADE, REFER (QPR)

UK Extension's partnership with HKI also enhances Kentuckians' access to essential mental health resources through programs like **Question, Persuade, Refer, (QPR)**, an online suicide crisis intervention program, which provides high-quality interactive training on identifying a person facing a mental health crisis and how to intervene by connecting the person to available mental health resources.

2,775 Kentuckians have
completed the online
QPR training

UK Extension has
promoted QPR to **61**
Kentucky counties

CODE RED UNIVERSAL SAFETY PLANNING INSTRUCTOR TRAININGS

HKI provided funding and resources for five **CODE RED Universal Safety Planning** instructor training sessions, enabling participating Extension staff to disseminate CODE RED to audiences across the state. The program increases an individual's capacity to recognize and respond to their own mental health challenges with appropriate coping strategies and resources.

**CODE RED CERTIFIED AGENTS IN
90 OF 120 KENTUCKY COUNTIES**

KENTUCKY FARMER MODEL (KFM)

Recognizing the complex, interrelated occupational health and safety challenges faced by Kentucky farmers and the effects on their physical and mental health, UK Extension, in collaboration with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture and partners across the Commonwealth, championed the **Kentucky Farmer Model (KFM)** to advance farmer well-being through focused practical health and safety education.

20 KENTUCKIANS PERSONALLY CREDITED KFM WITH SAVING THEIR LIVES AND/OR SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVING THEIR HEALTH

Under this initiative, the **Farmer Health and Safety Program** reduces stigma around mental health, promotes preventive screenings, and provides guidance on injury prevention. **First Aid on the Farm** further supports farmers by teaching essential responses to common farm injuries. In 2025, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture solidified this commitment by establishing the [Raising Hope Safety, Health, and Rescue Division](#)—recognizing the critical link between farmer well-being and the prosperity of Kentucky agriculture.

COMMUNITY-BASED NUTRITION EDUCATION

The University of Kentucky Nutrition Education Program has strategically partnered with several community-based organizations including food pantries and recovery centers to improve the diet quality and overall nutrition of Kentuckians.

COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERSHIPS TO PROMOTE NUTRITION

2,365 community partnership sites delivered nutrition and health education.

98% of Kentuckians participating in NEP programs demonstrated improvement in their diet quality.

RECOVERY GARDENS

1,249 pounds of produce were harvested from 12 recovery gardens in 2024.

412 one-cup servings of vegetables harvested, resulting in approximately \$3,000 in savings for participating centers.

COOK WILD KENTUCKY

Food access and nutrition are critical to the health of Kentuckians. In partnership with Feeding Kentucky, Kentucky Hunters for the Hungry, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, and Kentucky Department of Agriculture, UK Extension developed **Cook Wild Kentucky** to increase Kentucky food pantry participants' and families' access to alternative protein sources.

86,707 recipes cards distributed since 2021.

6,376 Kentuckians attended tasting events since 2021.

15,328 pounds of venison donated to local food pantries since 2021, of which 2,096 pounds were donated in 2024 alone.

85 recipe tasting events were held with more than 1,900 participants in 2024.

YOUTH BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

UK Extension youth behavioral health initiatives include the **4-H Camp Behavioral Health Program**, a partnership with the College of Social Work, designed to integrate behavioral health support into the 4-H summer camp experience. The program addresses a crucial gap in campers' social, emotional and behavioral health by placing College of Social Work graduate students at UK Extension's 4-H camping facilities during the summer, ensuring consistent mental health support for campers.

5 FELLOWS PROVIDED BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT AND REPORTED ADDRESSING BEHAVIORS WITH 95 YOUTH IN 4-H CAMPS (IN 2024 AND 2025).

OUTCOMES OF UK EXTENSION YOUTH PROGRAMS

469 adopted strategies to support/promote mental health and wellbeing in their community.

1,318 reported an increased knowledge of how to respond to mental health concerns.

452 adopted self-care strategies to improve their own mental health and wellbeing.

