When you support Extension, foreign-born residents develop communication and cultural skills that enhance lifestyles and improve communities.

Boone County reaches approximately 35 adult English as Second Language (ESL) students each month during the food preparation programs.

Extension Teaches Life Skills to English as Second Language Learners (ESL)

During hands-on food preparation classes, ESL learners improve speaking, reading comprehension, and writing skills to improve their communication, and resulting in acculturation or acceptance by others.
Northern Kentucky continues to experience rapid population growth and anticipates the population growing approximately 18% per decade. This includes a growing number of foreign-born residents from the Americas, Asia and Africa. People of Hispanic birth represents 3.9% of the population and people from Asia 2.3% of the Boone County population.

Boone County Cooperative Extension Service collaborates with the Boone County English as a Second Language (ESL) program to provide monthly hands-on cooking classes for adult participants. Topics taught included food safety, incorporating more fruits and vegetables in the eating pattern, safe use of knives and knife skills, how to read and use common American recipes, and Kentucky foods and culture. Participants also practiced reading, speaking, and comprehending English.

ESL instructors teach recipes in advance of the class and taught lessons related to recipes during one or two sessions prior to the cooking experience. During the program, ESL students read ingredients and instructions aloud while the Extension agent demonstrates the preparation of the recipe. Some ESL students began attending other Cooperative Extension Service events outside of the ESL programs, demonstrating their increasing comfort within the community.

Since starting hands-on cooking classes in 2016, more than 400 adults from all over the world have prepared foods using common measurements and ingredients found in Kentucky. Not only have participants experienced new foods and cooking methods, they practiced different cultural norms including males and females cooking and cleaning in the kitchen and understanding measurements from the metric system. Each year, Boone County Extension facilitates a wide variety of program to increase cultural understanding.

ESL participants improve reading and comprehension skills as they learn to prepare healthy, economical recipes.

ESL participants develop food safety knowledge and skills that are different from their native countries. The ESL instructor looks on as her student cut a red potato for Kale Potato Soup.

Boone County English as a Second Language Instructor