







**University of Kentucky**  
College of Agriculture, Food and Environment  
*Cooperative Extension Service*

Dear Community Member,

Thank you for your support and participation in the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service Community Needs Assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to better serve you through targeted educational programming.

The Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service is the outreach arm of the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and Kentucky State University College of Agriculture, Communities and Environment. With offices in all 120 counties of the Commonwealth, Extension provides practical, research-based educational programs and information.

Extension values community input into educational program development and has from its inception more than a century ago. Every four years, each Extension office prepares a plan of work that includes gathering information from community members as well as secondary data to inform the plan.

Our state is changing, and new areas of need are emerging. To standardize our plan of work process, a committee of Extension personnel and community members developed the community needs assessment process to formalize that data gathering portion.

We expected a large response and we were not disappointed. Over 38,000 people completed the survey. More than 500 interviews and focus groups were conducted. We will use this information to develop local plans of work in our counties as well as regional and statewide initiatives to make a positive impact in the lives of Kentuckians.

We look forward to continuing to serve you.

Sincerely,

University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service Administration

# ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW

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In the fall of 2018, the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service began a statewide assessment of community issues and priorities from across the Commonwealth. County Extension offices led the effort by collecting feedback from various county residents, stakeholders, and organizations. Each county collected feedback through surveys, focus groups, and interviews with community stakeholders. The goal of this project was to gain a better understanding of the needs and priorities facing communities in Kentucky. Gathering information from each county allowed both a broad view of state community issues and an opportunity to detail and address issues specific to counties. Utilizing the results, the University of Kentucky and Cooperative Extension Service can align resources and improve services and partnerships in response to the priority needs of each county. This report is a summary of the data collected in this county.

## Community Survey

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A community needs assessment survey was developed by a committee representing a mix of county Extension Agents, Extension Specialists from departments across the University of Kentucky, and community stakeholders. The assessment survey was shared with each county Extension office. In turn, Extension Agents invited county residents to participate in the community needs assessment survey. The survey was electronically distributed by social media and email, and was distributed on paper to individuals, groups and organizations to be completed.

## Focus Groups

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County Extension office staff convened community members in interactive focus groups in the fall of 2018. The focus group listening sessions were designed to allow community members to discuss their ideas on the future of the county in more detail than allowed on the survey. Participants in the focus groups were invited to discuss their vision for a more vibrant county, issues for the future, barriers to issue resolution, resources or information that would help the issues, and ideas for an improved future. A summarized reporting of the results of these listening sessions are included in this report.

## Interviews

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In addition to the survey and focus group sessions, county Extension Agents also conducted interviews with individuals in formal leadership roles in the county. The interview questioning followed a similar format to the focus groups, seeking information on pressing needs, long term needs, and exploring the role that Extension might serve to address future issues confronting the county.

## Secondary Data

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To complement the survey, focus groups, and interviews, detailed data profiles have been compiled for each county that correspond to topic areas covered in the survey. This information provides additional context to understand the role of identified issues in each county as well as historical data to highlight trends.

## Next Steps

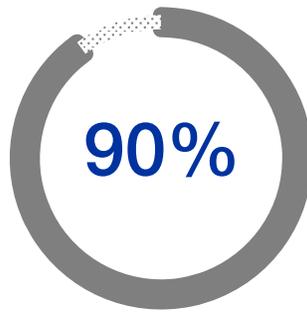
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This report summarizes the information collected for this county. The report and the included secondary data compilation can serve as a starting point for deeper investigation into the issues of concern and priority for community members. The University of Kentucky and Cooperative Extension Service will support the county in addressing the priorities identified through this assessment.

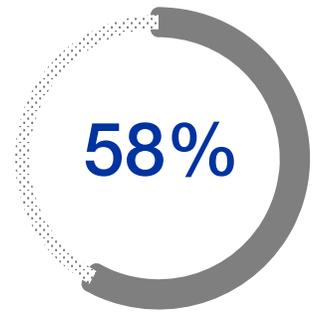
281 Respondents



are Female



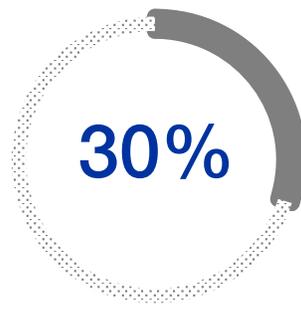
are White  
(non-Hispanic)



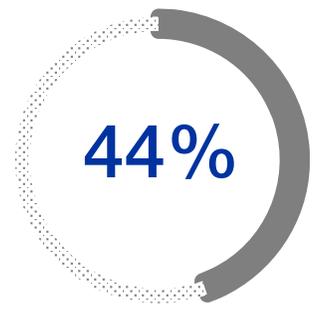
are 25-64 years old  
(working age)



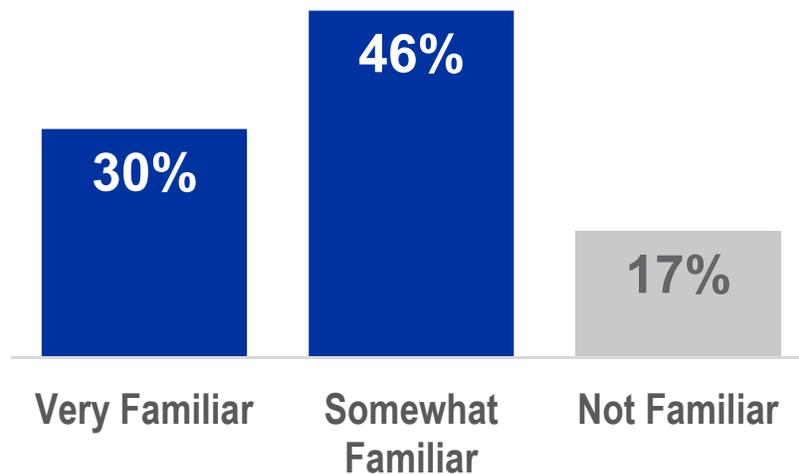
work or are  
self-employed



are retired



currently participate  
in Extension  
programming



Very Familiar      Somewhat Familiar      Not Familiar

respondent familiarity with Extension

## ISSUE IMPORTANCE

281 respondents ranked 62 community issues on a scale of “very important” to “not important.”

The table below lists all 62 community issues. The numerical value listed next to each issue represents the average rating across all respondents. Below is the scale used to determine the average rating:

Very important = 4      Important = 3      Not that important = 2      Not important = 1

The table is organized into two columns: the most important issue (on average) is listed at the top of the left column.

Category Legend:

▲ Health and Wellness      ♥ Youth and Families      ♦ Agriculture and Environment      ■ Jobs and Infrastructure      ● Community Vitality

3.71 ■ Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	3.45 ♥ Affordable, quality child care
3.67 ▲ Improved affordability of health care insurance	3.45 ♥ More senior citizen support programs
3.65 ▲ Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults	3.44 ▲ Availability of substance use prevention programs
3.65 ■ More jobs paying good wages with benefits	3.44 ▲ Availability of substance use treatment
3.64 ♦ Less illegal dumping and littering	3.43 ● More effective cooperation between community organizations
3.64 ▲ Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)	3.43 ● More active community volunteers
Improved access to quality affordable health care providers	
3.64 ▲ (medical, dental, etc.)	3.43 ♥ More child and partner abuse prevention resources
3.62 ■ Responsive emergency services	3.42 ♥ More support for relatives raising children of family members
3.6 ♦ Sustainability of family farms	3.41 ● More citizens helping to solve local issues
3.58 ▲ Safer use of prescription medications	3.41 ■ More qualified employees for existing or new jobs
3.57 ♥ More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	3.41 ▲ Better skills for selecting and preparing healthier food
3.56 ■ Increased support for small business	3.41 ♥ Better youth and adult career readiness
3.56 ■ Better roads and bridges	3.39 ▲ Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc.
3.55 ● More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future	3.38 ♦ Less pest, disease, and weed issues
3.54 ♦ More market opportunities for farmers	3.37 ■ Better utilities (water, sewer, etc.) to attract industry
3.54 ▲ More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods	3.35 ♦ More land available for food production
	More healthy snacks and food options at restaurants and
3.53 ▲ Improved availability of health care insurance	3.34 ▲ community events
3.53 ♥ More affordable, quality elder care options	3.34 ▲ More individual physical activity opportunities
	More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry
3.52 ♥ More support for families with mental and emotional health issues	3.32 ● attraction, etc.)
3.51 ♥ More support for families and individuals with special needs	3.32 ▲ Improved sidewalks and crosswalks
More youth life skills training (money management, life decision	
3.51 ♥ making, etc.)	3.3 ■ Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service
	Better employee “soft skills” training (communications, team
3.49 ● More pride in the community and its assets	3.3 ■ work, etc.)
Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings, and	
3.49 ♥ financial planning	3.26 ♦ More farm-related jobs
3.48 ■ Safe and accessible public water and sewer	3.25 ■ More part-time and summer job opportunities
Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage,	
3.48 ▲ preservation, etc.)	3.22 ■ More public transportation options
3.47 ♥ Stronger parenting and relationship building skills	3.17 ♦ More community gardens
3.47 ▲ More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food	3.16 ♦ More training for food gardening skills
3.47 ● More youth community leadership opportunities	3.13 ♦ Increased tree and forestry management
3.46 ♦ More profitable farms	3.08 ♦ More community parks and green spaces
3.46 ♦ More awareness and support for agriculture and agribusinesses	3.03 ♦ Better landscapes for improved home value
3.46 ♦ More crop and livestock production opportunities	2.98 ■ More tourism-related businesses

## TOP PRIORITY ISSUES

After respondents ranked the importance of issues in their community, they were asked to identify the top three priorities for their community in each issue category.

153 respondents chose issues by priority, and the resulting top three priorities for each issue category are listed below.

By prioritizing the issues, respondents are not just identifying how important each issue is for their community, but rather *which issues they would prioritize in their community*.

### Jobs & Infrastructure

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1. More jobs paying good wages and benefits
2. Trustworthy and effective law enforcement
3. Increased support for small businesses

### Agriculture & Environment

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1. Sustainability of family farms
2. More market opportunities for farmers
3. Less illegal dumping and littering

### Health & Wellness

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1. Improved access to quality, affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.)
2. Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)
3. Improved affordability of health care insurance

### Youth & Families

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1. More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)
2. More support for prevention of school violence and bullying
3. Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings and financial planning

### Community Vitality

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1. More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future
2. More citizens helping to solve local issues
3. More youth community leadership opportunities

The Allen County Extension Office convened community members in two interactive focus groups. The group participants consisted of a representation of bankers, parks and recreation, farmers and environmentalists. The conversations focused on identifying the priority issues facing the county and proposed ideas of what residents would like to see in the future. While focus groups only offer a small sample of attitudes within the county, they do provide insightful first-hand perspectives from residents. Responses from the focus groups are summarized below.

## Vision for a More Vibrant Community

When asked about their vision for a vibrant Allen county, the focus group participants spoke of:

- Well-trained workforce with high paying jobs
- Additional opportunities to educate students
- Increase availability of services and industry
- Strong parenting education
- Reducing drug usage
- Quality zoning
- Self-sufficient residents
- Increased community involvement by all residents
- Improved communication with all organizations

## Identified Priorities

- Environmental education
- Workforce development for youth
- County-wide zoning

## Priorities Discussion

Environmental education was identified as a persistent issue in the community. Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) education for farmers on soil erosion, understanding the implications of using land for production, and promoting warm season grasses for pastures was recognized.

Focus group participants acknowledged youth workforce development was a pressing topic. Youth engagement with a variety of experiences could support youth development. Additionally, strengthening community pride in the youth population could be a positive move toward addressing this topic.

County-wide zoning was identified by both focus groups as a pressing issue in the community.

Participants provided numerous resources they felt would be useful to address issues in Allen County. They are encompassed in the following topics:

- Increasing awareness as to the role of various members in the community including the government, Extension, and focus group participants
- Community programs such as adopt a highway and career exploration
- Individual programs geared toward strong family structure, budgeting, financial, lawn care, and skills development
- Environmental programs focused on agriculture, private land conservation, forestry, woodland, and wildlife.

The County Extension agents conducted three separate interviews with elected leaders in Allen County. These interviews allowed deeper insight from the perspectives of people highly engaged in community activities. The interview followed a similar format to the focus groups, seeking information on pressing needs, long-term needs, and exploring ways that Extension might serve to address issues confronting the county. The interview perspectives are compiled and summarized to represent key discussion ideas.

## Identified Priorities

- Plan for community growth
- Increase community engagement
- Deal with repeat crime and drug offenders
- Support for agriculture industry

## Priorities Discussion

Key informant interviewees identified community growth as a pressing issue for Allen County. Upgrading the sewer, water, natural gas, and other infrastructure systems were mentioned as areas to address. Urban development and home market growth including an increased demand for houses and utility access were mentioned. There will be new families moving into the area and interviewees were concerned about being a bedroom-community. It is expected that there will be development challenges due to competing uses of land (industry, housing, and agriculture development).

Providing more public services and increasing public service help in the community was identified by a respondent as an immediate priority.

Another immediate priority recognized was the need for community-wide support to address repeat drug and crime offenders.

Support for the agriculture industry was recognized as a pressing topic in Allen County. Assisting the Mennonite Community, as well as support for tobacco, cattle, and potential hemp crops. Increased land values because of competing land-use demands was acknowledged.

Interviewed participants identified numerous resources the University of Kentucky and the Cooperative Extension Service could provide to help address issues including the following themes:

- Strong presence in youth development at home, school, Extension office, and community
- Individual personal development
- Current issues in agriculture
- Community involvement.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR SECONDARY DATA PROFILE

As part of the Community Assessment process, each county is provided with a profile of secondary data. The goal is to supplement the survey, focus groups and interviews with a wide range of secondary data. The data selected for the profiles correspond to the topics covered in the survey and a list of variables provided by the committee that designed the assessment process.

As counties begin to understand the results from their surveys, focus groups and interviews, these data provide an additional dimension to understanding the role of particular issues in each county.

### Profile Data

Data in each profile are organized as follows: county demographics; families and households; agriculture; jobs, economy and labor force; youth; and health and wellness. Because we all relate to data in different ways, within each section, the data are presented using three different formats:

- Tabular data
- Narrative
- Graphic

Comparison data over time or comparisons with the state as a whole are provided where space allowed.

**County Demographics**  
**Families and Households**  
**Agriculture**  
**Jobs, Economy and Labor Force**  
**Youth**  
**Health and Wellness**

### Finding More Data

If you need additional data, many sources are available. On the back page of each profile, we provide information for each of the data sources we used. We also provide a list of websites where you may access them.

For easy access to a wide array of data, visit [Kentucky: By The Numbers](#), the [Building Strong Families Profiles](#) from Family and Consumer Sciences Extension, and the [County Data Profiles](#) from the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK).

If you need help in finding more data or if you need assistance in understanding this secondary data profile, please feel free to contact Dr. Julie N. Zimmerman ([jzimm@uky.edu](mailto:jzimm@uky.edu)) in the Department of Community and Leadership Development.



# Allen County Data Profile

**Allen County's Data Profile** is provided by the **Kentucky: By The Numbers** program in the Department of Community and Leadership Development for the Community Assessments conducted by the University of Kentucky's Cooperative Extension Service. These secondary data profiles supplement the survey, focus groups, and key informant interviews conducted in each county across the state through the County Extension Offices and coordinated by Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky (CEDIK).

The overall goals for the Community Assessments are:

- To gain a better understanding of the county's pressing issues;
- To enhance Extension's place-based approach by providing information on locally relevant issues in counties;
- To gain a better understanding of how Extension can support important community change to improve Kentucky;
- To provide a statewide view of how top issues are distributed across the state.

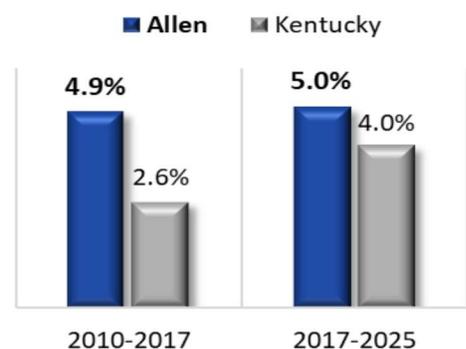
For more information on the Community Assessment process, visit <https://extension.ca.uky.edu/communityassessment>

For additional data or other data-related assistance, contact: Dr. Julie N. Zimmerman ([jjimm@uky.edu](mailto:jjimm@uky.edu))

## County Demographics

Population	2010 <sup>1</sup>	2017 <sup>2</sup>	2025 <sup>3</sup>
Total	19,956	20,933	21,983
Ages 65 and over	2,931		4,364
	<b>2010-2017<sup>4</sup></b>		
Net Migration (in/out)	696		
Race/Ethnicity	2010 <sup>1</sup>	2016 <sup>5</sup>	
White	19,213	19,678	
Black or African American	159	211	
Asian	31	59	
Other and 2 or more races	256	300	
Hispanic	297	383	

**Percent Change Total Population<sup>6</sup>**  
2010-2017 and 2017-2025



- From 2010 to 2017, the total population in Allen County **increased** by **977** people.<sup>2</sup>
- Between April 2010 and June 2017, there was an estimated **net in migration** of **696** people.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2016, the composition of Allen County's population is estimated to be **95.4%** White, **1.0%** Black/African American, **0.3%** Asian, **1.5%** other and 2 or more races, and **1.9%** Hispanic.<sup>5</sup>
- From 2017 to 2025, the total population in Allen County is **projected to increase** by **1,050** people.<sup>3</sup>
- As baby boomers are entering retirement, between 2010 and 2025 the population ages 65 and over in Allen County are **projected to increase** by **48.9%** compared to 51.9% for the state as a whole.<sup>3</sup>



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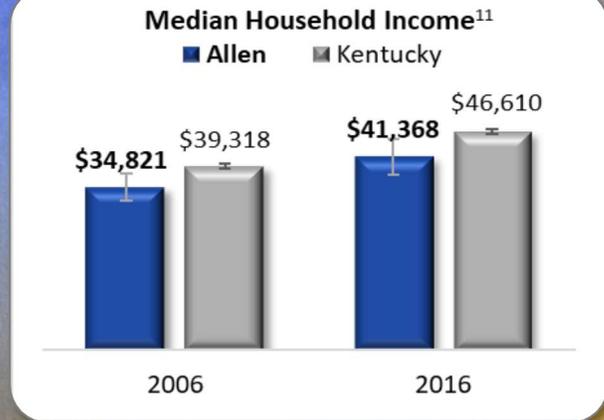
Allen County Extension Assessment 2019

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability. UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND KENTUCKY COUNTIES, COOPERATING

# Allen County Data Profile

## Families and Households

Families	2010 <sup>1</sup>	2012-2016 <sup>7</sup>
Married couple		
... with own children	1,644	1,771 (+/- 187)
Female householder		
... with own children	486	435 (+/- 139)
Male householder		
... with own children	176	191 (+/- 67)
Nonfamily households (live alone/unrelated)	2,296	2,144 (+/- 243)
<b>Poverty</b>		<b>2012-2016<sup>7</sup></b>
Percent of families with related children who are below poverty		20.5% (+/- 5.8%)
Percent 65 and over below poverty		15.9% (+/- 4.3%)

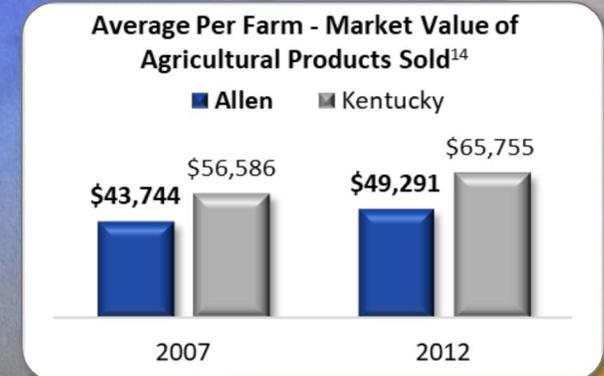


Grandparents living with and raising grandchildren <sup>3</sup>	2012-2016 <sup>7</sup>
	191 (+/- 99)

- In 2016, Allen County's official poverty rate was **18.6%** (15.0% - 22.2%), compared to 18.2% (17.9% - 18.6%) for the state as a whole.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2017, there were **5** child care centers in Allen County. Of these **4** were STARS certified.<sup>9</sup>
- Between 2012-2016, **7.4%** (+/-2.7%) of people ages 5 and over spoke a language other than English at home.<sup>7</sup>
- The Urban Institute estimates that **10%** people in Allen County with a credit bureau record in 2016 had student loan debt compared to 16% for the state.<sup>10</sup>

## Agriculture (Data from the 2017 Ag Census will be available in 2019)

Farms*	2007 <sup>12</sup>	2012 <sup>13</sup>
Total number of farms	1,208	1,080
Percent of land in farms	75.6%	66.1%
Average farm size (acres)	138	135
		<b>2012<sup>13</sup></b>
Income from agri-tourism and recreational services		\$34,000
Number of farms marketing products directly to retail outlets		46
Average value per farm of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption		\$9,381



Percent of Principal Operators	2012 <sup>13</sup>
... who are female	10.5%
... under age 35	8.1%
... farming as primary occupation	48.0%

- In 2012, the total market value of agricultural products sold in Allen County was **\$53,234,000**.<sup>13</sup>
- Of the total market value of agricultural products sold, **26.5%** was the value of crops and **73.5%** was the value of livestock, poultry, and their products.<sup>13</sup>
- The total farm production expenses (average per farm) was **\$46,880** compared to \$62,002 for the state.<sup>13</sup>
- In Allen County, there were **819** hired farm labor workers on **274** farms.<sup>13</sup>
- **91.9%** of farms were operated by a family or an individual compared to 91.0% for the state.<sup>13</sup>

\* A farm must sell at least \$5,000 to be defined as a farm operation.

# Allen County Data Profile

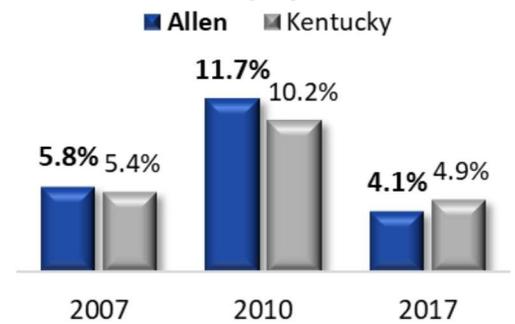
## Jobs, Economy, and Labor Force

Jobs and Businesses	2010	2016
Total Employment (# of jobs) <sup>15</sup>	7,277	8,103
Total Establishments (w/ employees) <sup>16</sup>	237	249
... % with 1-9 employees	75.5%	76.3%
... % with 10-20 employees	14.8%	13.3%
Total NonEmployer Establishments (w/o employees) <sup>17</sup>	1,326	1,477

Education	2012-2016 <sup>7</sup>
Percent of population 25 and over	
... with HS or higher	76.4% (+/- 2.6%)
... with bachelors or higher	13.6% (+/- 2.1%)

	Men	Women
Median Earnings (2012-16) <sup>7</sup>	\$29,267 (+/- \$3,936)	\$22,405 (+/- \$2,605)

Annual Unemployment Rate<sup>20</sup>



Avg Weekly Wage<sup>18</sup>

	2017
... All Industries (Private & Govt)	\$655
... Goods-producing (Private)	\$861
... Service-providing (Private)	\$541

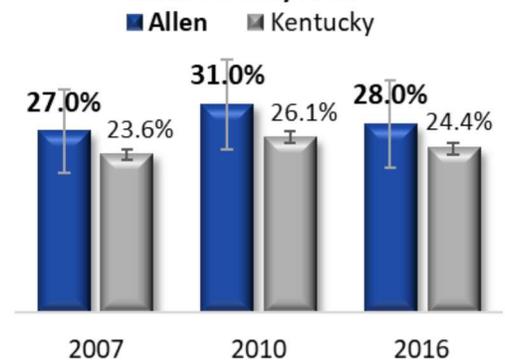
- In 2017, the number of private establishments covered by unemployment insurance in Allen County was **43** for goods-producing, **227** for service-providing, and **25** for hospitality & leisure.<sup>18</sup>
- Between 2012 and 2016, of the **8,219** (+/- 415) workers ages 16 and over, **52.7%** (+/- 3.6%) worked inside the county, **40.8%** (+/-1.7%) worked outside the county and **6.5%** (+/-1.7%) worked outside Kentucky.<sup>7</sup>
- Between 2012 and 2016, **3.5%** (+/-1.7%) of workers ages 16 and over who worked full-time year round were below poverty compared to 3.5% (+/- 0.1%) for the state as a whole.<sup>7</sup>
- **19.3%** of 2016 HS graduates in the county earned an industry certificate compared to 19.2% for the state.<sup>19</sup>

## Youth

Population by Age	2010 <sup>1</sup>	2017 <sup>2</sup>	2025 <sup>3</sup>
Under 5 years old	1,346	1,304	1,263
5-9 years old	1,323	1,384	1,372
10-14 years old	1,331	1,345	1,447
15-19 years old	1,421	1,330	1,440

Children by Relationship to Householder	2012-2016 <sup>7</sup>
... Own Children (Biological, Adopted, Stepchild)	4,395 (+/- 201)
... Grandchild	257 (+/- 121)
... Other Relative	142 (+/- 127)
... Foster/Unrelated	101 (+/- 81)

Child Poverty Rate<sup>23</sup>



**21.7%** of students entered KY public postsecondary institutions underprepared in one or more subjects (2015).<sup>21</sup>

- Between 2012-2016, there were an estimated **239** (+/-113) youth ages 5-17 who had a disability.<sup>7</sup>
- **49.6%** of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in Allen County scored proficient or distinguished on math in the 2015-16 school year compared to 47.7% for the state.<sup>22</sup>
- **1,607** (+/- 322) youth under age 18 lived in households that received supplemental security income (SSI), cash public assistance, or food stamps/SNAP in the past 12 months (2012-2016).<sup>7</sup>

# Allen County Data Profile

## Health and Wellness

### Percent of Adults

... reporting poor or fair health (2016) <sup>24</sup>	19.9% (19.1%-20.8%)
... with hypertension (2013-15) <sup>25</sup>	38.2% (25.7%-52.5%)
... with obesity (2014-16) <sup>25</sup>	38% (26.5%-51.9%)
... with diabetes (2014-16) <sup>25</sup>	19.0% (10.9%-30.9%)

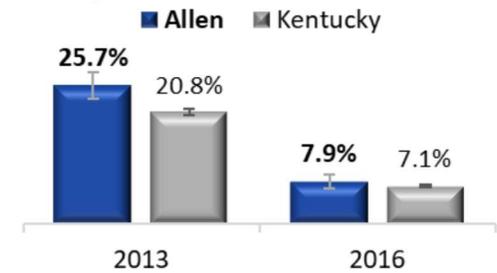
### Number of Individuals

... receiving SNAP (food stamps) (2017) <sup>26</sup>	2,820
... who are food insecure (2016 estimate) <sup>27</sup>	2,710

### Number of Overdoses<sup>28</sup>

	2008-2010	2015-2017
... fatal overdoses	10	12
... nonfatal overdoses	131	137

### Percent of Population Ages 18-64 who are Uninsured<sup>29</sup>



### Number of Care Providers<sup>24</sup>

... Primary Care Physicians (2015)	2
... Dentists (2016)	6
... Mental Health Providers (2017)	12

- The estimated food insecurity rate for Allen County is **13.3%**, compared to 15.5% for the state.<sup>27</sup>
- From 2010 to 2016, the number of grocery stores **increased** by **50.0%**, from **4** to **6** stores.<sup>16</sup>
- In 2013-2015, **34.2%** (27.5%-40.5%) of adults ages 20 and over reported no leisure time physical activity.<sup>24</sup>
- The Urban Institute estimates that **35%** of people in Allen County with a credit bureau record in 2016 had medical debt in collections compared to 27% for the state as a whole.<sup>10</sup>
- **19.9%** (10.9%-33.4%) of adults reported that there was a time in past year when they needed to see a doctor but could not because of the cost.<sup>25</sup>

### Sources

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- Population Projections – Vintage 2016. Kentucky State Data Center.
- 2017 Population Estimates Components of Change. Kentucky State Data Center.
- 2016 Population Estimates. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
- Chart: 2010 Decennial Census, 2017 Population Estimates, Population Projections – Vintage 2016. Kentucky State Data Center.
- 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
- 2016 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE). U.S. Census Bureau.
- 2017 Early Childhood Profile. Kentucky Center for Statistics (Formerly KCEWS).
- Debt in America: An Interactive Map. Urban Institute.
- Chart: 2006 and 2016 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE). U.S. Census Bureau.
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- 2012 Census of Agriculture. U.S. Department of Agriculture.
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- County Business Patterns. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
- NonEmployer Statistics. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
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- 2018 High School Feedback Report. Kentucky Center for Statistics (Formerly KCEWS).
- Chart: 2007, 2010, and 2017 Annual Unemployment Rate. Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. Kids Count Data Center.
- 2017 Early Childhood Profile. Kentucky Center for Statistics (Formerly KCEWS).
- Chart: 2007, 2010, and 2016 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE). U.S. Census Bureau.
- 2018 County Health Rankings. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.
- Kentucky Health Facts. Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky.
- Food and Nutrition Service. U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Map the Meal Gap. Feeding America.
- Custom Data Request. Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC).
- Chart: 2013 and 2016 Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE). U.S. Census Bureau.

### Websites

- 2012 Census of Agriculture. <https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/>
- American FactFinder. <https://factfinder.census.gov>
- BEA Regional Economic Accounts. <https://apps.bea.gov/itable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=70&step=1>
- County Health Rankings. <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>
- Debt in America: An Interactive Map. <https://apps.urban.org/features/debt-interactive-map/>
- Food and Nutrition Service. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>
- Kentucky Center for Statistics (Formerly KCEWS). <https://kystats.ky.gov/>
- Kentucky Health Facts. <http://www.kentuckyhealthfacts.org/>
- Kentucky State Data Center. <https://factfinder.census.gov>
- Kids Count Data Center. <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>
- Local Area Unemployment Statistics. <https://www.bls.gov/lau/>
- Map the Meal Gap. <http://map.feedingamerica.org/>
- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). <https://www.bls.gov/cew/>
- Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE). <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sahie.html>
- Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE). <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/saie.html>

Additional data are also available at:

Kentucky: By The Numbers (<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/snar/index.htm>), the FCS Building Strong Families profiles (<http://hes.uky.edu/StrongFamilies>), and the CEDIK county profiles (<https://cedik.ca.uky.edu/CountyDataProfiles>).

Allen County Priority Responses  
153 Respondents

## Jobs and Infrastructure

More jobs paying good wages and benefits	29.64%
Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	11.43%
Increased support for small businesses	10.36%
Better roads and bridges	7.14%
Responsive emergency services	6.07%
More public transportation options	5.36%
Better employee "soft skills" training (communications, team work, etc.)	5%
Safe and accessible public water and sewer	4.29%
More tourism-related businesses	3.93%
More qualified employees for existing and new jobs	3.21%
More part-time and summer job opportunities	2.14%
Better utilities (water, sewer, etc.) to attract industry	2.14%
Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service	1.79%

## Agriculture and Environment

Sustainability of family farms	24.29%
More market opportunities for farmers	20.36%
Less illegal dumping and littering	18.35%
More training for food gardening skills	11.87%
More farm-related jobs	10.71%
More support for Kentucky agriculture and agribusiness	8.93%
More crop and livestock production opportunities	8.21%
More profitable farms	8.21%
More community parks and green spaces	7.91%
More community gardens	6.07%
Increased tree and forestry management	5.4%
Less pest, disease, and weed issues	5.36%
Better landscapes for improved home value	3.6%
More land available for food production	3.21%

## Health and Wellness

Improved access to quality, affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.)	11.87%
Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)	11.51%
Improved affordability of health care insurance	11.51%
Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults	9.35%
Availability of substance use treatment	8.63%
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food	8.27%
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods	7.91%
Better skills for selecting and preparing healthier food	6.47%
Availability of substance use prevention programs	5.76%
More healthy snack and food options at restaurants and community events	5.4%
Improved availability of health care insurance	4.68%
Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage, preservation, etc.)	4.32%
Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc.	4.32%
Safer use of prescription medications	4.32%
Improved sidewalks and crosswalks	2.88%
More individual physical activity opportunities	1.8%

## Youth and Families

More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)	17.27%
More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	16.55%
Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings and financial planning	14.39%
Better youth and adult career readiness	10.79%
More support for families with mental and emotional health issues	10.07%
Stronger parenting and relationship building skills	7.55%
More affordable, quality elder care options	6.47%
More support for relatives raising children of family members	6.47%
Affordable quality child care	6.47%
More child and partner abuse prevention resources	5.76%
More support for families and individuals with special needs	5.4%
More senior citizen support programs	4.32%

## Community Vitality

More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future	26.26%
More citizens helping to solve local issues	17.63%
More youth community leadership opportunities	16.55%
More pride in the community and its assets	10.79%
More active community volunteers	10.43%
More effective cooperation between community organizations	10.43%
More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.)	8.63%

## COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



DATE

NAME  
ADDRESS  
CITY, KY ZIP

### Cooperative Extension Service

(Your) County  
Street address  
City, KY zip-speed  
(000) 000-0000  
Fax: (000) 000-0000  
<http://extension.ca.uky.edu>

Re: \_\_\_\_\_ County Extension Community Survey

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The **Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service (Extension)** is the local outreach arm of the **University of Kentucky** College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and **Kentucky State University** College of Agriculture, Communities, and the Environment. The goal is to provide practical, research-based education that helps individuals, families and communities solve problems and improve lives. Extension provides value to communities through educational programs and information in areas like farming, gardening, parenting, budgeting, healthy living, and youth, community, and economic development.

We are interested in better understanding the issues that are important to you in your community. In response, the Kentucky Cooperative Extension System can tailor new and existing programs to address the highest priority issues that directly impact you, your family and your community. You do NOT need to be familiar with Cooperative Extension to complete this survey. The survey should take no more than 15 minutes to complete and all of your responses will be completely anonymous and confidential.

**Please return this survey to (Local office name and address) by \_\_\_\_\_.**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact (local office name and phone number).

Sincerely,

**Cooperative Extension Service**  
Agriculture and Natural Resources  
Family and Consumer Sciences  
4-H Youth Development  
Community and Economic Development

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability. University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Kentucky Counties, Cooperating.  
LEXINGTON, KY 40546



Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

1. Please rate each of the following community issues on a scale of "Not Important" to "Very Important" by placing a check mark or "X" in the corresponding space. If you are uncertain if an issue is important to your community, select "I don't know."
2. After evaluating the importance of each issue within this category, please select the **TWO** issues you consider the highest priority for your community.

### Jobs and Public Infrastructure

	1.					2.	
	Not Important	Not that Important	Important	Very Important	I don't know	Select 2 issues	
More jobs paying good wages with benefits	<input type="radio"/>						
More tourism-related businesses	<input type="radio"/>						
Increased support for small businesses	<input type="radio"/>						
More part-time and summer job opportunities	<input type="radio"/>						
More qualified employees for existing or new jobs	<input type="radio"/>						
Better employee "soft skills" training (communications, team work, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>						
Better utilities (water, sewer, etc.) to attract industry	<input type="radio"/>						
Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service	<input type="radio"/>						
Safe and accessible public water and sewer	<input type="radio"/>						
Responsive emergency services	<input type="radio"/>						
Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	<input type="radio"/>						
Better roads and bridges	<input type="radio"/>						
More public transportation options	<input type="radio"/>						
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>						

### Agriculture and Environment

	Not Important	Not that Important	Important	Very Important	I don't know	Select 2 issues
More farm-related jobs	<input type="radio"/>					
More market opportunities for farmers	<input type="radio"/>					
More crop and livestock production opportunities	<input type="radio"/>					
More profitable farms	<input type="radio"/>					
Sustainability of family farms	<input type="radio"/>					
More awareness and support for agriculture and agribusinesses	<input type="radio"/>					
More land available for food production	<input type="radio"/>					
Less pest, disease and weed issues	<input type="radio"/>					
More community gardens	<input type="radio"/>					

*This section continues on the next page.*

**Please rate each of the following community issues** on a scale of "Not Important" to "Very Important" by placing a check mark or "X" in the corresponding space. If you are uncertain if an issue is important to your community, select "I don't know." After evaluating the importance of each issue within this category, **please select the TWO issues** you consider the highest priority for your community.

### **Agriculture and Environment, continued**

	Not Important	Not that Important	Important	Very Important	I don't know		Select 2 issues
More training for food gardening skills	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More community parks and green spaces	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Increase tree and forestry management	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Less illegal dumping and littering	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Better landscapes for improved home value	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				

### **Health and Wellness**

	Not Important	Not that Important	Important	Very Important	I don't know		Select 2 issues
Better skills for selecting and preparing healthier food	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More healthy snacks and food options at restaurants and community events	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage, preservation, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Improved access to quality affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Improved availability of health care insurance	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Improved affordability of health care insurance	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Safer use of prescription medications	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More individual physical activity opportunities	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc.	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Improved sidewalks and crosswalks	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Availability of substance use prevention programs	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Availability of substance use treatment	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				

**Please rate each of the following community issues** on a scale of "Not Important" to "Very Important" by placing a check mark or "X" in the corresponding space. If you are uncertain if an issue is important to your community, select "I don't know." After evaluating the importance of each issue within this category, **please select the TWO issues** you consider the highest priority for your community.

### Youth and Families

	Not Important	Not that Important	Important	Very Important	I don't know		Select 2 issues
Better youth and adult career readiness	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings and financial planning	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More support for families with mental and emotional health issues	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More support for families and individuals with special needs	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More support for relatives raising children of family members	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More child and partner abuse prevention resources	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Stronger parenting and relationship building skills	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Affordable quality child care	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More senior citizen support programs	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More affordable, quality elder care options	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				

### Overall Community Vitality

	Not Important	Not that Important	Important	Very Important	I don't know		Select 2 issues
More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More youth community leadership opportunities	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More citizens helping to solve local issues	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More effective cooperation between community organizations	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More active community volunteers	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More pride in the community and its assets	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				

## Demographics

<b>Please select your age:</b>	<b>Under 18</b>	<b>18-24</b>	<b>25-44</b>	<b>45-64</b>	<b>65 and over</b>
	<input type="radio"/>				

<b>Please select your gender?</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Non-binary</b>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<b>Please select your Race/Ethnicity?</b>	
White, Non-Hispanic	<input type="radio"/>
African-American	<input type="radio"/>
Hispanic, Latino	<input type="radio"/>
Asian-American	<input type="radio"/>
Two or more races	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>

<b>What is the highest level of education?</b>	
Some high school	<input type="radio"/>
High school degree	<input type="radio"/>
Some college	<input type="radio"/>
Associate's degree	<input type="radio"/>
Bachelor's degree	<input type="radio"/>
Advanced degree(Masters, Doctorate, JD, MD, etc)	<input type="radio"/>

<b>Please select the option that best describes your current employment status:</b>						
Retired	Unemployed	Self-employed	Do not work	Work full-time	Work part-time	Student
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<b>How familiar are you with the programs and services of the Cooperative Extension Service?</b>		
Very familiar <input type="radio"/>	Somewhat familiar <input type="radio"/>	Not familiar <input type="radio"/>

<b>Do you, or someone in your family, currently participate in any Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service program?</b>	
Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>

<b>What county do you live?</b>	<b>Do you live in the county seat?</b>
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>

<b>What other comments and/or suggestions do you have about important issues in your county?</b>
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>
<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black;"/>

## FOCUS GROUP PROCESS

Focus groups are a commonly used method for gathering feedback or perspectives from a sampling of stakeholders. For this initiative, county Extension educators convened two or more small group meetings of community members to facilitate discussion on community priorities. Participants were invited to discuss their vision for a more vibrant county, issues the county is experiencing, barriers to issue resolution, resources or information that would help address the issues, and ideas for an improved future.

The questions were not intended to focus solely on Extension related priorities. Rather, the questions sought to learn about what county residents were concerned about and how those issues impact residents. The focus group also sought to learn what quality of life issues residents are most interested in addressing.

## FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

- What is your vision for a more vibrant county?
- Based on your experiences, what would you say are the most pressing issues for this county in the next four years?
  - Follow up questions: How do these issues affect you or your neighbors? What other quality of life aspects does this issue affect?
- Based on your experiences, what barriers prevent us from addressing these issues?
- What type of information or resources would help to address the issues?
- Given everything discussed, what final thoughts would you add on being a vibrant county? Have we left anything out?

## INTERVIEW PROCESS

County Extension Educators were asked to conduct interviews with individuals in formal leadership roles in each county. These could include elected or appointed government leadership, public service or business organizational leaders, or leaders of healthcare or education institutions. The interview questioning followed a similar format to the focus groups, seeking perspectives on pressing needs, long term needs, and exploring the role that Extension might serve to address future issues confronting the county.

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Based on your experiences, what would you say are the most pressing issues for this county in the next year?
- Based on your experiences, what would you say are the most pressing issues for this county in the next four years?
- What do you see as the broad (county wide) implications of the priorities you have identified?
- Based on your experience, what barriers obstruct addressing the issues?
- What type of information or resources could the University of Kentucky/Extension provide to help address these issues?

## UNDERSTANDING SECONDARY DATA RELIABILITY

A key issue in understanding the secondary data profiles is to be aware of the ways in which sources report the reliability of their data. Both margins of error (+/- ##) and confidence intervals (### - ###) tells us the range within which the estimate most likely falls. The American Community Survey provides a margin of error for each estimate. Health data often report a confidence interval as do estimates on poverty and income from the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates and those on health insurance from the Small Area Health Insurance Estimates.

Because their reliability can vary, we always need to look at the margin of error or confidence interval when we use data from these sources.

While we might not realize it, we encounter margins of error every time we hear about a poll in the news. When we see poll results and they say “plus or minus 5 points,” they are telling us the margin of error.

One way to think about margins of error or confidence intervals is to think of them as our “grain of salt.” We often use this phrase when we need to be cautious about taking something at face value. For instance, if the estimate is 30 (+/- 25), you will want to use a larger “grain of salt” than if your estimate is 30 (+/- 1).



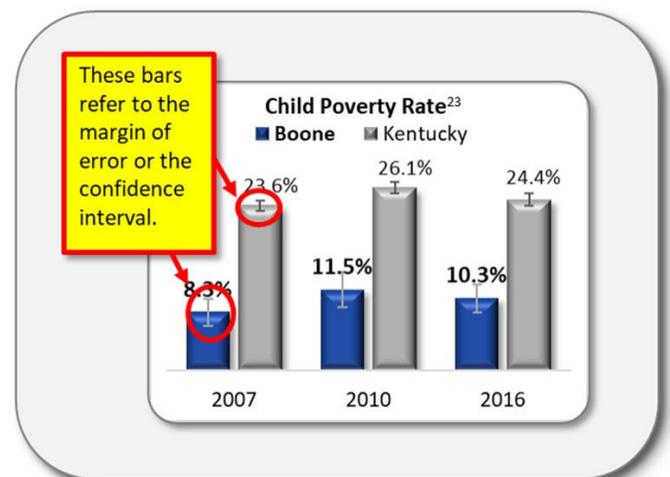
We can also think of margins of error and confidence intervals as “wobble room.” The larger the range, the more “wobble room” there is for the estimate. In other words, when the margin of error is smaller, the estimate is more precise or the focus is sharper. When the margin of error is larger, the estimate is more ‘fuzzy’ or ‘blurry.’

While a confidence interval gives us the actual range, for margins of error (or simply MOE) the plus/minus number gives us the information we need to determine the range. Since the estimate is generally the midpoint, finding the range represented by the margin of error is as straightforward as it seems.

To find the top of the range, add the margin of error to your number. To find the bottom of the range, subtract the margin of error from your number. (Remember, since confidence intervals already give the range, the math is already done.)

In the secondary data profiles, you will see the margins of error (+/- ##) or confidence intervals (### - ###) when they are part of the original data source. You will also see these reflected in the charts. They are called error bars. They look like the letter “I” and are located at the top of each bar.

One reason that margins of error and confidence intervals are important is because there will be times when they can be VERY large. This is especially the case for small groups or small places. Remember that “grain of salt?” The larger the range represented by the margin of error or confidence interval, the more cautious we need to be when it comes to interpreting the data.



# *It starts with us*

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, or physical or mental disability. UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND KENTUCKY COUNTIES, COOPERATING