

Kentucky Extension Community Assessment Statewide Report 2019



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

 University of
Kentucky
*College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment*





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. More than 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

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 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 that would aid the building of the 2020 Plan of Work process. 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 will align resources to improve services and partnerships in response to the priority needs of each county. This report is a summary of the data collected statewide.

Community Survey

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 via social media and email, and was distributed on paper to individuals, groups and organizations.

Focus Groups

County Extension office staff convened community members in interactive focus groups. 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 resolution, helpful information or resources, and ideas for an improved future. Summarized reporting of the results of these listening sessions are included in this report. The focus group protocol is detailed in Appendix C.

Interviews

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. Statewide and district-wide trends are provided in this report. The interview protocol is detailed in Appendix C.

Secondary Data

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 as well as historical data to highlight trends.

Next Steps

This report summarizes the information collected statewide, and by Extension district. 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 statewide. The University of Kentucky and Cooperative Extension Service will support counties in addressing the priorities identified through this assessment.

STATEWIDE SURVEY SUMMARY

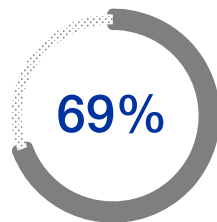
There were two primary methods of survey collection; paper surveys and an online Qualtrics survey that resulted in 31,470 usable responses. A copy of the paper survey can be found in Appendix B. What follows is a brief written summary of respondent demographics. See below for a visual summary of respondent demographics.

Over two-thirds of survey respondents are female. Six percent of respondents identified as non-white. Respondents are mainly working age, which means that they are between 25 and 64 years old (65% of all respondents). Just over half (56%) of the survey respondents work or are self-employed. One quarter of respondents are retired.

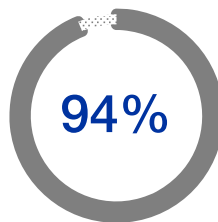
Emphasis was placed on County offices surveying community residents who are not currently participating in Extension programming. Statewide, only 44% of respondents were participating in Extension programming at the time they took the survey. When respondents were asked about their familiarity with Extension, just under one third responded that they were “very familiar,” half responded that they were “somewhat familiar,” and nineteen percent responded that they were “not familiar” with Extension.

Figure A. Statewide Survey Respondent Demographics.

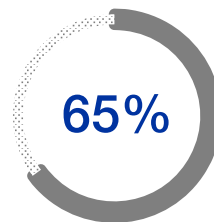
31,470 Respondents



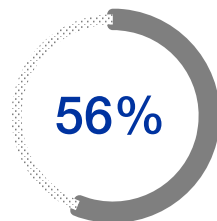
are Female



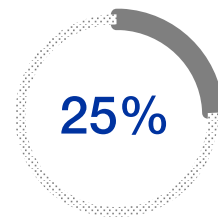
**are White
(non-Hispanic)**



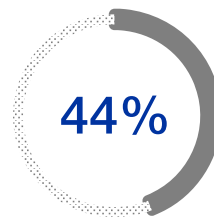
**are 25-64 years old
(working age)**



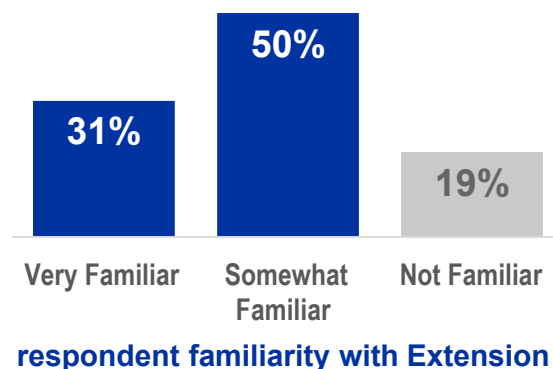
**work or are
self-employed**



are retired



**currently participate
in Extension
programming**



ISSUE IMPORTANCE

31,470 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

3.78 ■ More jobs paying good wages with benefits	3.51 ● More pride in the community and its assets
3.75 ■ Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	3.5 ■ Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service
3.72 ▲ Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)	3.49 ♥ More senior citizen support programs
3.72 ▲ Improved affordability of health care insurance	3.49 ● More youth community leadership opportunities
3.71 ■ Responsive emergency services	3.48 ● More citizens helping to solve local issues
Improved access to quality affordable health care providers	More awareness and support for agriculture and
3.69 ▲ (medical, dental, etc.)	3.47 ♦ agribusinesses
More youth life skills training (money management, life decision	
3.68 ♥ making, etc.)	3.47 ♦ More market opportunities for farmers
3.68 ▲ Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults	3.46 ■ More qualified employees for existing or new jobs
3.64 ▲ Improved availability of health care insurance	3.46 ● More effective cooperation between community organizations
Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings, and	
3.62 ♥ financial planning	3.46 ♦ More profitable farms
3.61 ▲ Safer use of prescription medications	3.45 ▲ Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc.
3.61 ♦ Less illegal dumping and littering	3.45 ▲ More individual physical activity opportunities
3.61 ■ Safe and accessible public water and sewer	3.44 ● More active community volunteers
3.59 ♥ More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	3.41 ▲ Better skills for selecting and preparing healthier food
	Better employee “soft skills” training (communications, team
3.59 ● More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future	3.41 ■ work, etc.)
3.58 ♥ Better youth and adult career readiness	3.39 ■ Better utilities (water, sewer, etc.) to attract industry
	More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry
3.58 ♥ More affordable, quality elder care options	3.39 ● attraction, etc.)
3.57 ▲ More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods	3.37 ♦ More crop and livestock production opportunities
	More healthy snacks and food options at restaurants and
3.57 ♥ More support for families with mental and emotional health issues	3.34 ▲ community events
3.57 ♥ Affordable, quality child care	3.34 ♦ Less pest, disease, and weed issues
3.56 ■ Better roads and bridges	3.33 ■ More part-time and summer job opportunities
3.56 ■ Increased support for small businesses	3.32 ▲ Improved sidewalks and crosswalks
3.55 ♦ Sustainability of family farms	3.31 ♦ More land available for food production
3.54 ♥ More support for families and individuals with special needs	3.19 ♦ More farm-related jobs
3.53 ♥ Stronger parenting and relationship building skills	3.17 ♦ Increased tree and forestry management
3.53 ▲ More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food	3.16 ♦ More training for food gardening skills
3.53 ♥ More child and partner abuse prevention resources	3.13 ■ More public transportation options
3.53 ▲ Availability of substance use treatment	3.12 ♦ More community parks and green spaces
3.52 ▲ Availability of substance use prevention programs	3.11 ♦ More community gardens
Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage,	
3.52 ▲ preservation, etc.)	3.08 ■ More tourism-related businesses
3.52 ♥ More support for relatives raising children of family members	3.03 ♦ Better landscapes for improved home value

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. Not all respondents identified priorities; the results shown below represent over 21,000 statewide respondent priorities.

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*. When we look at the priorities identified, a different picture emerges from the data.

Example: *Trustworthy and effective law enforcement* was the second highest rated issue in importance for respondents statewide. However, only 8% of respondents who identified their top priorities, chose *trustworthy and effective law enforcement* as a top priority.

The resulting top three priorities for each issue category are listed below. Additional analysis of survey subgroup top priorities is available in Appendix A. Appendix A also contains the full list of the 62 issues and the percent of respondents who identified the issue as a top three issue in its respective category.

Jobs & Infrastructure

1. More jobs paying good wages with benefits (35%)
2. Trustworthy and effective law enforcement (8%)
3. More qualified employees for existing and new jobs (8%)

Agriculture & Environment

1. Less illegal dumping and littering (14%)
2. Sustainability of family farms (14%)
3. More market opportunities for farmers (13%)

Health & Wellness

1. Improved affordability of health care insurance (12%)
2. Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.) (12%)
3. Improved access to quality affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.) (9%)

Youth & Families

1. More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.) (19%)
2. Better youth and adult career readiness (12%)
3. More support for prevention of school violence and bullying (11%)

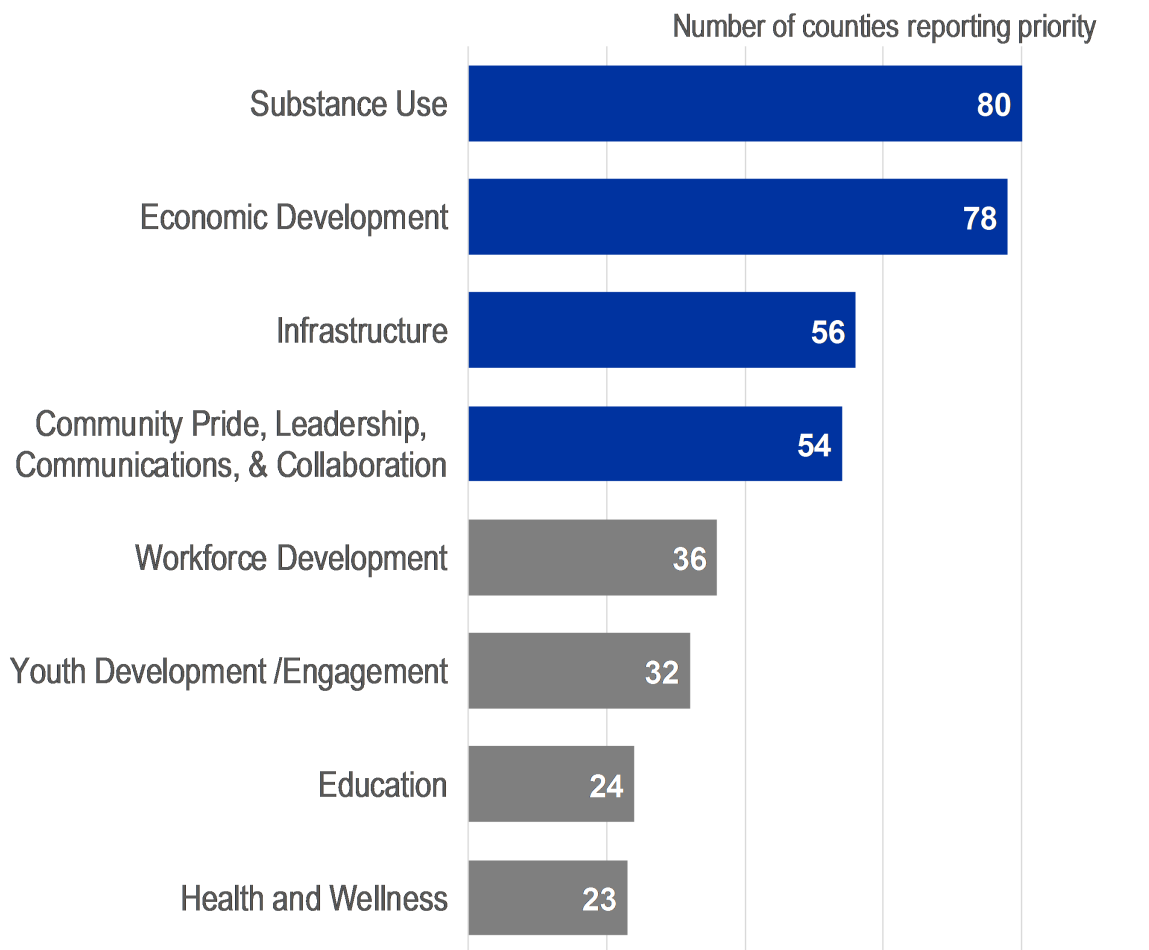
Community Vitality

1. More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future (24%)
2. More citizens helping to solve local issues (15%)
3. More pride in the community and its assets (14%)

FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW PRIORITIES

Approximately 500 focus groups and key informant interviews were held by Extension agents. Focus groups tended to be held with community members, and key informant interviews were held with those in community leadership roles (oftentimes elected officials). In 80 of the 115 counties, substance use was identified as a priority in focus group discussions. An overview of the top priority themes that emerged from community focus group discussions (n=115 counties) are provided in Figure B.

Figure B. Top Priority Themes from Focus Groups (n=115 counties).



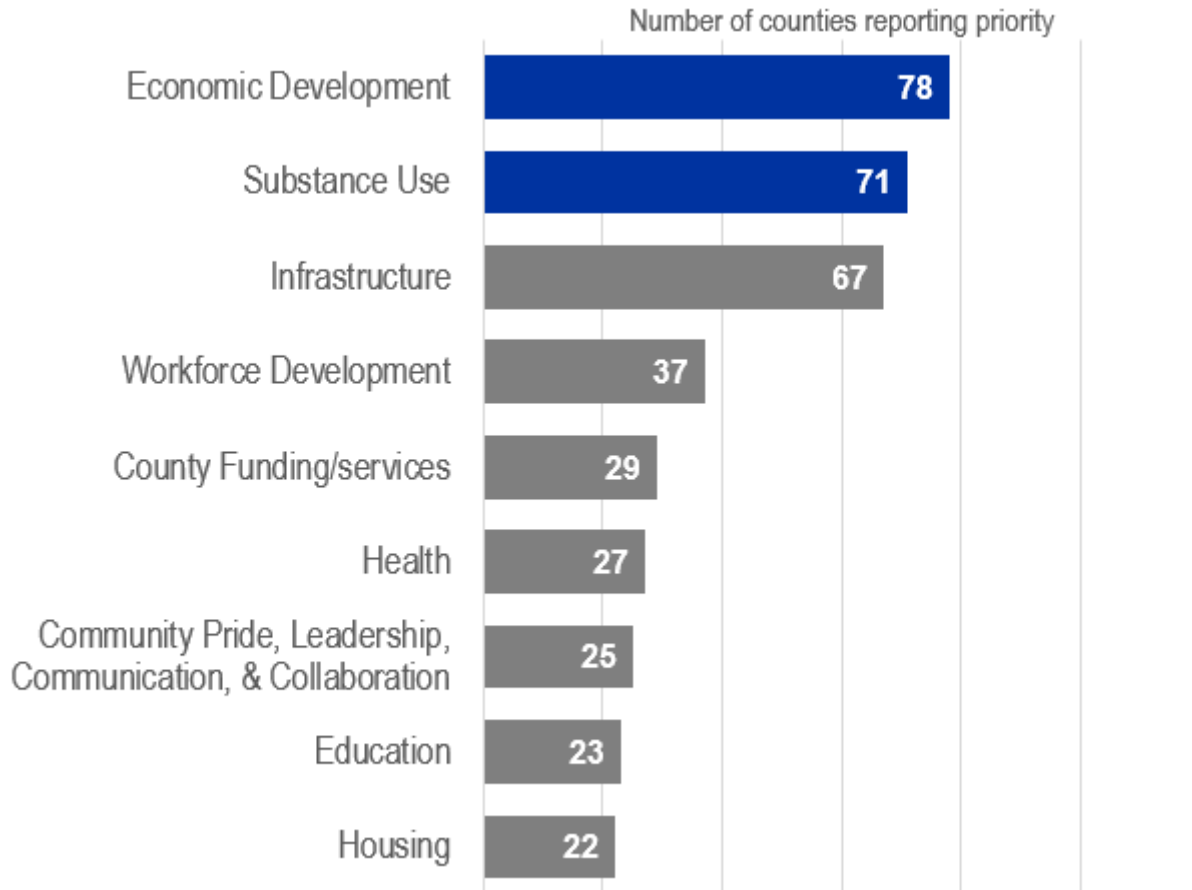
Common priorities voiced by both focus group and key informant interview participants included:

- Substance Use: prevention, treatment and recovery priorities; mental health concerns; access to care and support systems for both mental health and substance use.
- Economic Development and Workforce Development: youth soft skills development and workforce preparation; skilled workforce; small business creation and retention; diversified economic base; industrial attraction; tourism; agriculture.
- Infrastructure: quality water and sewer services; broadband access and adoption; fire and emergency services; roads and bridges; healthcare institutions.
- Community Pride, Leadership, Communication and Collaboration: youth retention and youth engagement; overall population shifts; quality leadership; building a sense of pride in community; county finances; trustworthy leadership.

FOCUS GROUP AND INTERVIEW PRIORITIES

An overview of the top priority themes that emerged from community leader interviews (n=115 counties) are provided in Figure C.

Figure C. Top Priority Themes from Interviews (n=115 counties).



Maps summarizing focus group and interview data are provided over the next three pages. The Kentucky maps have been divided by Extension districts, and include percentages of counties identifying each priority. Districts where at least two-thirds of the counties reported a priority are shaded in dark blue; districts that have between one- and two-thirds of their counties identifying a priority are shaded in lighter blue.

Substance Use

Figure D. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Substance Use as a Priority in Focus Groups (n=115 counties).

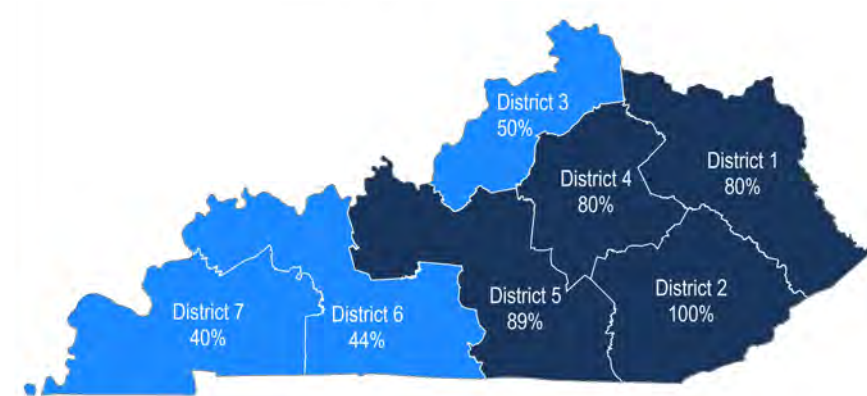
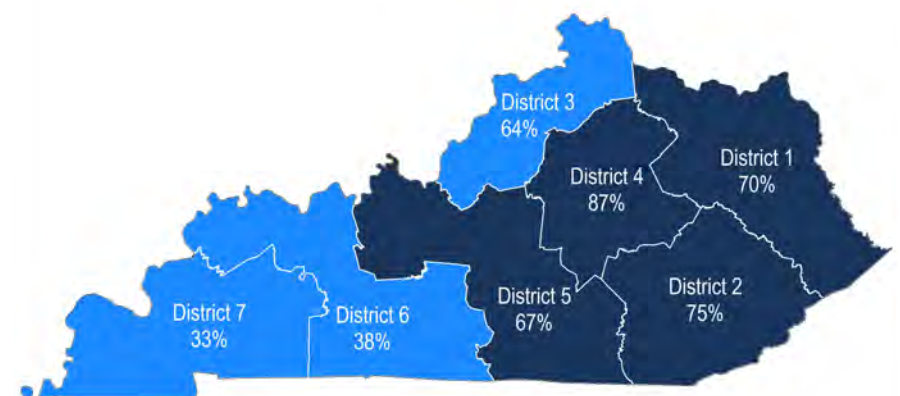


Figure E. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Substance Use as a Priority in Interviews (n=115 counties).



Economic Development

Figure F. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Economic Development as a Priority in Focus Groups (n=115 counties).

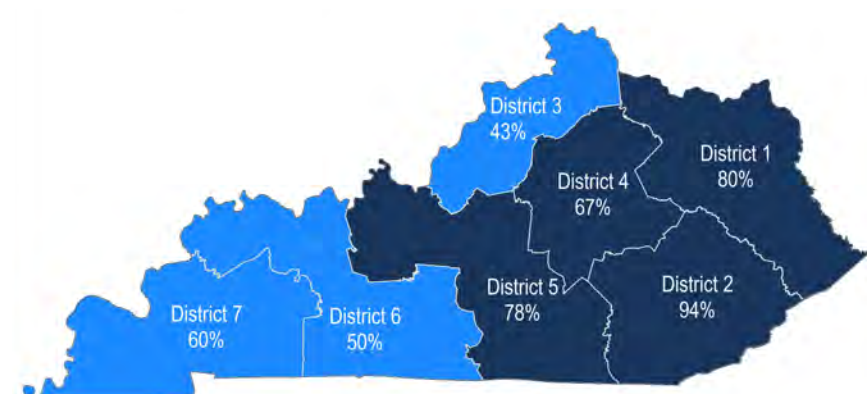
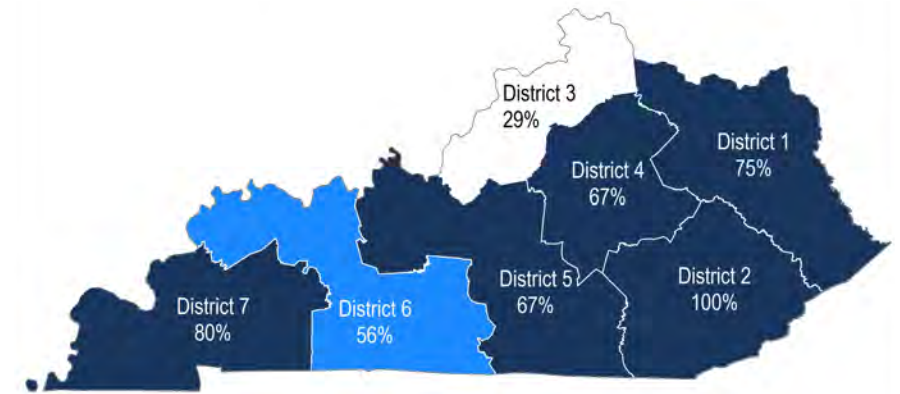


Figure G. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Economic Development as a Priority in Interviews (n=115 counties).



Infrastructure

Figure H. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Infrastructure as a Priority in Focus Groups (n=115 counties).

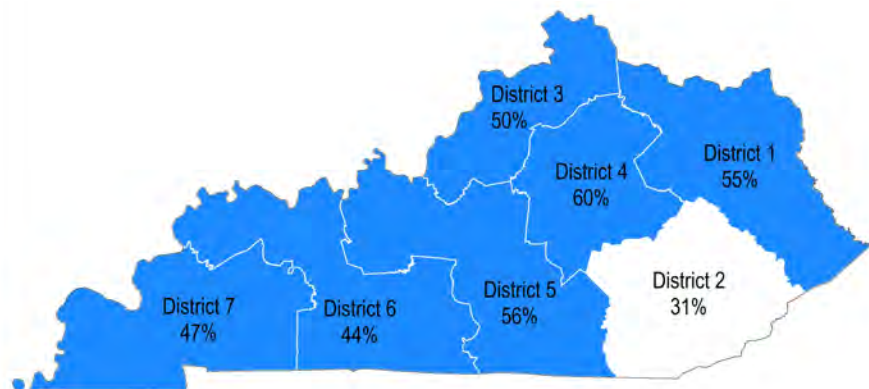
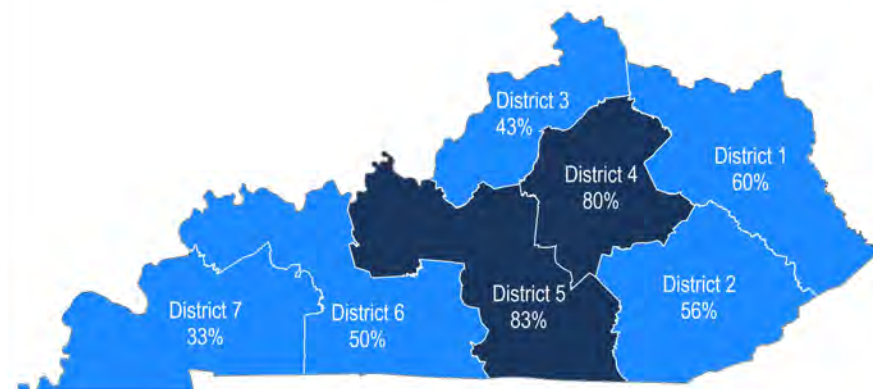


Figure I. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Infrastructure as a Priority in Interviews (n=115 counties).



Workforce Development

Figure J. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Workforce Development as a Priority in Focus Groups (n=115 counties).

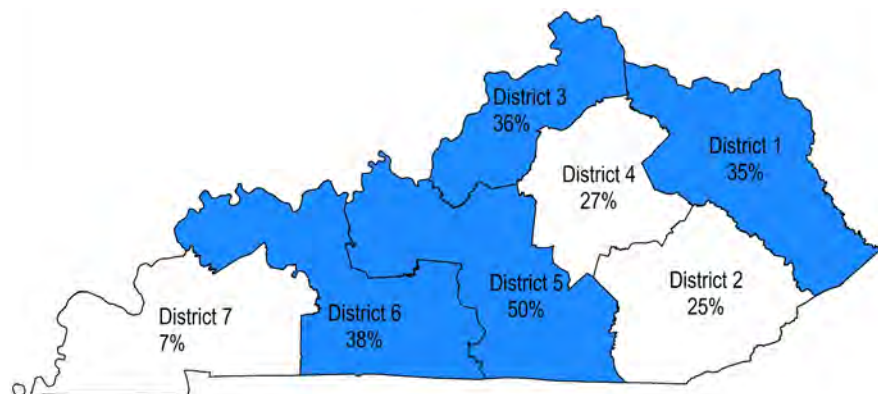
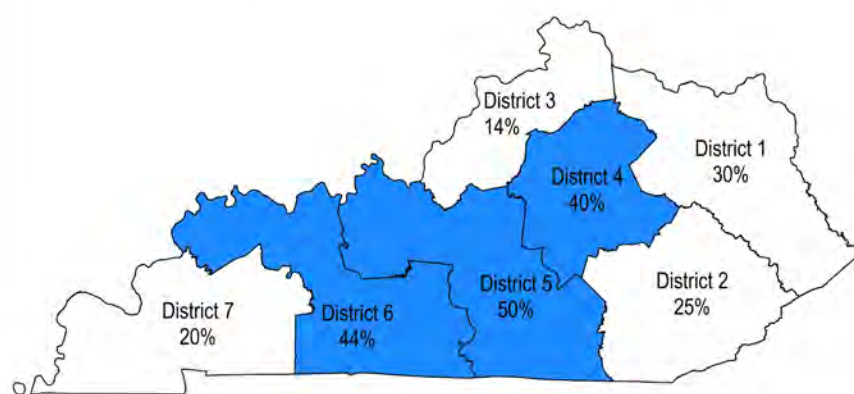


Figure K. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Workforce Development as a Priority in Interviews (n=115 counties).



Other Focus Group Priorities

Figure L. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Community Pride, Leadership, Communications, and Collaboration as a Priority in Focus Groups (n=115 counties).

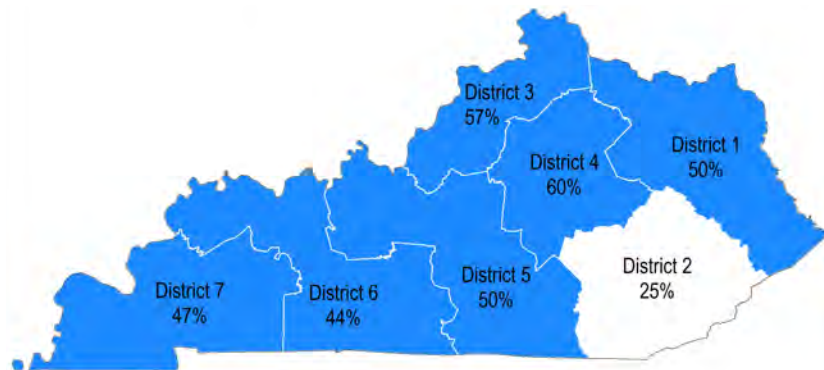


Figure N. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Education as a Priority in Focus Groups (n=115 counties).

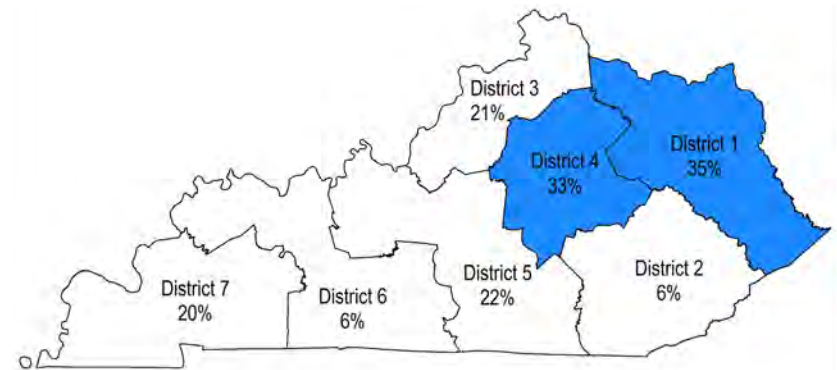


Figure M. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Youth Development/Engagement as a Priority in Focus Groups (n=115 counties).

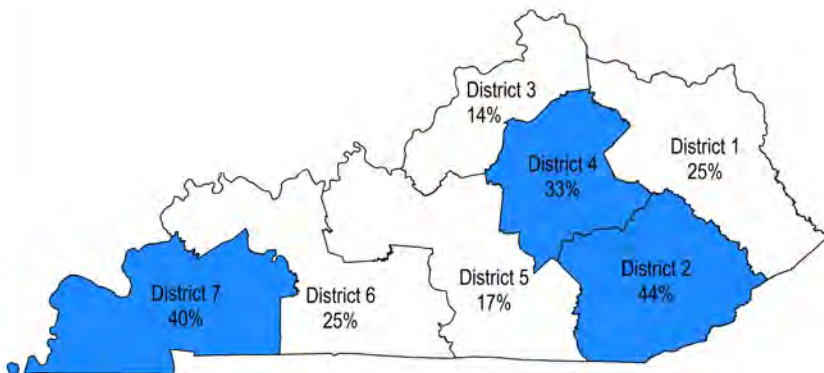
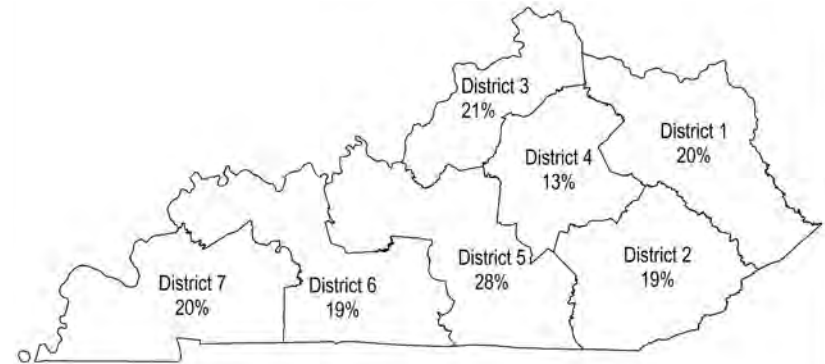


Figure O. Percent of Counties by Extension District Reporting Health and Wellness as a Priority in Focus Groups (n=115 counties).





Kentucky Data Profile

Kentucky's State 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)

State Demographics

Population	2010 ¹	2017 ²	2025 ³
Total	4,339,367	4,454,189	4,634,415
Ages 65 and over	578,227		878,212
	2010-2017⁴		
Net Migration (in/out)	32,605		
Race/Ethnicity	2010 ¹	2016 ⁵	
White	3,750,091	3,770,240	
Black or African American	334,712	357,930	
Asian	49,004	64,571	
Other and 2 or more races	72,724	88,713	
Hispanic	132,836	155,520	

Percent Change Total Population⁶
2010-2017 and 2017-2025



- From 2010 to 2017, the total population in Kentucky **increased** by **114,822** people.²
- Between April 2010 and June 2017, there was an estimated **net in migration** of **32,605** people.⁴
- In 2016, the composition of Kentucky's population is estimated to be **85.0%** White, **8.1%** Black/African American, **1.5%** Asian, **2.0%** other and 2 or more races, and **3.5%** Hispanic.⁵
- From 2017 to 2025, the total population in Kentucky is **projected** to **increase** by **180,226** people.³
- As baby boomers are entering retirement, between 2010 and 2025 the population ages 65 and over in Kentucky are **projected** to **increase** by **51.9%**.³

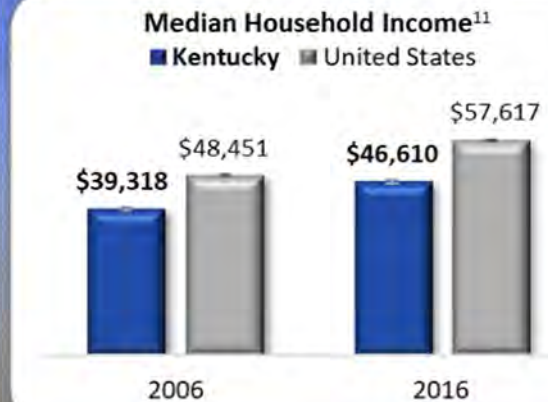


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Families and Households

Families	2010 ¹	2012-2016 ⁷
Married couple		
... with own children	329,086	310,792 (+/- 4,585)
Female householder		
... with own children	121,891	121,349 (+/- 2,371)
Male householder		
... with own children	41,976	40,177 (+/- 1,375)
Nonfamily households (live alone/unrelated)	570,060	581,566 (+/- 4,327)
Poverty		2012-2016⁷
Percent of families with related children who are below poverty		22.3% (+/- 0.5%)
Percent 65 and over below poverty		11.4% (+/- 0.3%)

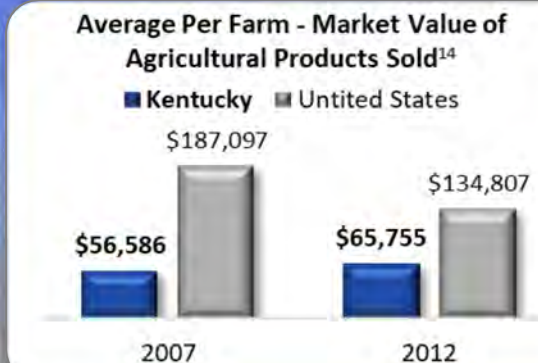


Grandparents living with and raising grandchildren ³	2012-2016⁷ 56,001 (+/- 1,944)
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- In 2016, Kentucky's official poverty rate was **18.2%** (17.8% - 18.6%), compared to 14.0% (13.9% - 14.1%) for the nation as a whole.⁸
- In 2017, there were **2,205** child care centers in Kentucky. Of these **1,466** were STARS certified.⁹
- Between 2012-2016, **5.2%** (+/- 0.1%) of people ages 5 and over spoke a language other than English at home.⁷
- The Urban Institute estimates that **16%** of people in Kentucky with a credit bureau record in 2016 had student loan debt, which is the same for the nation as a whole.¹⁰

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

Farms*	2007 ¹²	2012 ¹³
Total number of farms	85,260	77,064
Percent of land in farms	55.4%	51.6%
Average farm size (acres)	164	169
		2012¹³
Income from agri-tourism and recreational services		\$7,039,000
Number of farms marketing products directly to retail outlets		1,341
Average value per farm of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption		\$4,781



Percent of Principal Operators	2012¹³
... who are female	10.6%
... under age 35	5.8%
... farming as primary occupation	41.7%

- In 2012, the total market value of agricultural products sold in Kentucky was **\$5,067,334,000**.¹³
- Of the total market value of agricultural products sold, **45.0%** was the value of crops and **55.0%** was the value of livestock, poultry, and their products.¹³
- The total farm production expenses (average per farm) was **\$62,002** compared to \$155,947 for the nation.¹³
- In Kentucky there were **68,586** hired farm labor workers on **19,586** farms.¹³
- **91.0%** of farms were operated by a family or an individual, which is the same for the nation as a whole.¹³

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

State Data Profile

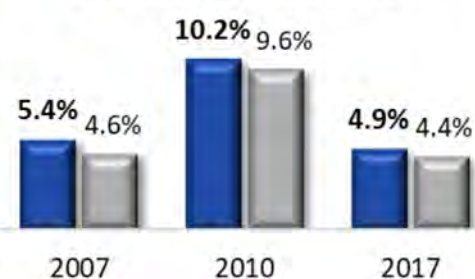
Jobs, Economy, and Labor Force

Jobs and Businesses	2010	2016
Total Employment (# of jobs) ¹⁵	2,325,921	2,497,911
Total Establishments (w/ employees) ¹⁶	90,771	92,000
... % with 1-9 employees	70.9%	70.5%
... % with 10-20 employees	14.5%	13.7%
Total NonEmployer Establishments (w/o employees) ¹⁷	272,455	285,053

Education	2012-2016⁷
Percent of population 25 and over	
... with HS or higher	84.6% (+/- 0.2%)
... with bachelors or higher	22.7% (+/- 0.2%)
	Men Women
Median Earnings (2012-16) ⁷	\$32,723 (+/- \$411) \$23,082 (+/- \$206)

Annual Unemployment Rate²⁰

■ Kentucky ■ United States



Avg Weekly Wage¹⁸

2017

... All Industries (Private & Govt)	\$869
... Goods-producing (Private)	\$1,094
... Service-providing (Private)	\$803

- In 2017, the number of private establishments covered by unemployment insurance in Kentucky was **15,291** for goods-producing, **100,361** for service-providing, and **10,063** for hospitality & leisure.¹⁸
- Between 2012 and 2016, of the **1,886,629** (+/- 6,749) workers ages 16 +, **68.4%** (+/- 0.2%) worked inside their county of residence, **25.1%** (+/- 0.1%) worked outside the county and **6.5%** (+/- 0.1%) worked outside Kentucky.⁷
- Between 2012 and 2016, **3.5%** (+/- 0.1%) of workers ages 16 and over who worked full-time year round were below poverty compared to 3.0% (+/- 0.1%) for the nation as a whole.⁷
- **19.2%** of 2016 HS graduates in Kentucky earned an industry certificate.¹⁹

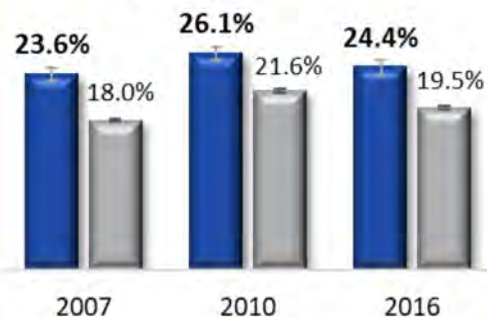
Youth

Population by Age	2010¹	2017²	2025³
Under 5 years old	282,367	276,883	283,010
5-9 years old	282,888	277,064	289,406
10-14 years old	284,154	284,346	289,501
15-19 years old	296,795	287,470	295,183

Children by Relationship to Householder	2012-2016⁷
... Own Children (Biological, Adopted, Stepchild)	871,810 (+/- 2,983)
... Grandchild	91,693 (+/- 2,367)
... Other Relative	22,662 (+/- 1,253)
... Foster/Unrelated	24,210 (+/- 1,532)

Child Poverty Rate²³

■ Kentucky ■ United States



21.1% of students entered KY public postsecondary institutions underprepared in one or more subjects (2015).²¹

- Between 2012-2016, there were an estimated **53,331** (+/- 1,386) youth ages 5-17 who had a disability.⁷
- **47.7%** of 3rd grade students in Kentucky scored proficient or distinguished on math in the 2015-2016 school year.²²
- **325,375** (+/- 5,202) 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).⁷

State Data Profile

Health and Wellness

Percent of Adults

... reporting poor or fair health (2016) ²⁴	21.3% (20.1%-22.5%)
... with hypertension (2013-15) ²⁵	39.0% (38.0%-40.1%)
... with obesity (2014-16) ²⁵	33% (32.5%-34.3%)
... with diabetes (2014-16) ²⁵	13.0% (12.5%-13.6%)

Number of Individuals

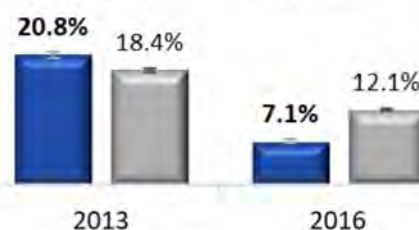
... receiving SNAP (food stamps) (2017) ²⁶	650,275
... who are food insecure (2016 estimate) ²⁷	685,830

Number of Overdoses²⁸

	2008-2010	2015-2017
... fatal overdoses	2,489	4,111
... nonfatal overdoses	35,621	54,492

Percent of Population Ages 18-64 who are Uninsured²⁹

■ Kentucky ■ United States



Number of Care Providers²⁴

... Primary Care Physicians (2015)	2,937
... Dentists (2016)	2,843
... Mental Health Providers (2017)	8,454

- The estimated food insecurity rate for Kentucky is **15.5%**, compared to 12.9% for the nation.²⁷
- From 2010 to 2016, the number of grocery stores **decreased** by **9.7%**, from **1120** to **1011** stores.¹⁶
- In 2013-2015, **28.1%** of adults ages 20 and over reported no leisure time physical activity.²⁴
- The Urban Institute estimates that **27%** of people in Kentucky with a credit bureau record in 2016 had medical debt in collections compared to 18% for the nation as a whole.¹⁰
- **13.4%** (12.8%-14.1%) 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.²⁵

Sources

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- 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.
- 2007 Census of Agriculture. U.S. Department of Agriculture.
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- Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education. Kids Count Data Center.
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- 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.
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- 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/>

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<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>

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Kentucky Health Facts. <http://www.kentuckyhealthfacts.org/>

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

Statewide Priority Responses

Jobs and Infrastructure (22,641 respondents)

More jobs paying good wages with benefits	35.2%
Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	7.7%
More qualified employees for existing and new jobs	7.6%
Better roads and bridges	6.8%
Increased support for small business	6.3%
Responsive emergency services	6.1%
Access to affordable, reliable high speed internet service	5.8%
Better employee soft skills training (communications, team work, etc.)	5.5%
Safe and accessible public water and sewer	4.9%
More tourism-related businesses	4.1%
Better utilities (water, sewer, etc.) to attract industry	3.9%
More public transportation options	3.2%
More part-time and summer job opportunities	2.8%

Agriculture and Environment (21,032 respondents)

Less illegal dumping and littering	14.0%
Sustainability of family farms	13.7%
More market opportunities for farmers	13.1%
More awareness and support for agriculture and agribusinesses	8.0%
More profitable farms	7.5%
More training for food gardening skills	7.0%
More community parks and green spaces	6.7%
More crop and livestock production opportunities	5.9%
More farm related jobs	5.8%
Increased tree and forestry management	4.5%
Less pest, disease and weed issues	4.0%
More community gardens	3.9%
More land available for food production	2.9%
Better landscapes for improved home value	2.9%

Health and Wellness (22,321 respondents)

Improved affordability of health care insurance	12.4%
Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)	12.2%
Improved access to quality affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.)	9.4%
Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults	7.2%
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods	6.8%
Availability of substance use prevention programs	6.7%
Availability of substance use treatment	6.6%
Better skills for selecting and preparing healthier food	6.3%
More sources for buying safe, affordable fresh food	6.0%
Improved availability of health care insurance	5.0%
More healthy snacks and food options at restaurants and community events	4.9%
Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc.	4.5%
Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage, preservation, etc.)	4.5%
Safer use of prescription medications	4.0%
Improved sidewalks and crosswalks	1.8%
More individual physical activity opportunities	1.7%

Youth and Families (22,081 respondents)

More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)	19.0%
Better youth and adult career readiness	11.7%
More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	11.3%
Better family skills in reducing debt increasing savings and financial planning	11.2%
More support for families with mental and emotional health issues	7.9%
Affordable quality child care	7.2%
More affordable, quality elder care options	7.0%
Stronger parenting and relationship building skills	6.3%
More support for relatives raising children of family members	5.8%
More support for families and individuals with special needs	4.4%
More child and partner abuse prevention resources	4.2%
More senior citizen support programs	4.1%

Community Vitality (21,159 respondents)

More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future	24.1%
More citizens helping to solve local issues	15.4%
More pride in the community and its assets	14.4%
More youth community leadership opportunities	13.9%
More effective cooperation between community organizations	11.6%
More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.)	10.9%
More active community volunteers	9.6%

Analysis of Survey Subgroup Priorities

		Familiarity with Extension			Rurality		Gender		Age			State Average
		Very Familiar	Somewhat Familiar	Not Familiar	Most Urban Counties	Most Rural Counties	Female	Male	Under 25	25-64	65 and over	
Jobs and Infrastructure	More jobs paying good wages with benefits	35.6%	35.3%	32.9%	25.3%	39.2%	35.6%	33.6%	28.5%	37.4%	33.1%	35.2%
	Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	6.5%	8.2%	9.0%	10.1%	7.0%	8.0%	7.1%	9.9%	6.9%	8.6%	7.7%
	More qualified employees for existing or new jobs	8.9%	7.7%	5.3%	6.2%	6.6%	7.2%	8.7%	4.9%	7.9%	8.8%	7.6%
	Better roads and bridges	7.0%	6.7%	6.9%	10.0%	6.3%	6.4%	7.9%	7.5%	6.3%	7.7%	6.8%
	Responsive emergency services	4.7%	6.2%	8.8%	8.8%	6.3%	6.4%	5.7%	10.4%	5.2%	5.6%	6.1%
Agriculture and Environment	Less illegal dumping and littering	12.5%	14.2%	16.6%	12.8%	14.3%	14.0%	14.4%	18.4%	12.4%	15.5%	14.0%
	Sustainability of family farms	15.1%	14.1%	9.6%	15.2%	12.3%	14.1%	12.4%	7.1%	15.4%	13.6%	13.7%
	More market opportunities for farmers	14.7%	13.1%	9.9%	11.8%	12.3%	12.7%	13.8%	7.9%	14.0%	14.5%	13.1%
	More community parks and green spaces	5.7%	6.7%	8.5%	9.3%	6.3%	7.2%	5.6%	8.3%	6.8%	5.3%	6.7%
	More farm related jobs	5.6%	5.7%	6.4%	4.2%	7.2%	5.6%	6.4%	8.0%	5.7%	4.4%	5.8%
Health and Wellness	Improved affordability of health care insurance	12.4%	12.7%	11.5%	12.9%	11.8%	12.3%	12.8%	8.0%	13.2%	13.4%	12.4%
	Fewer chronic diseases diabetes heart disease cancer etc	12.6%	12.2%	12.0%	11.0%	12.3%	12.0%	13.1%	12.2%	11.6%	14.5%	12.2%
	Improved access to quality affordable health care providers medical dental etc	9.3%	9.8%	8.6%	9.8%	9.2%	9.7%	8.7%	7.8%	9.4%	10.9%	9.4%
Youth and Families	More youth life skills training money management life decision making etc	19.8%	18.6%	18.4%	18.5%	17.8%	18.7%	19.7%	17.4%	20.5%	15.2%	19.0%
	Better youth and adult career readiness	12.8%	11.4%	10.3%	9.9%	11.7%	10.8%	14.2%	10.6%	12.4%	10.4%	11.7%
	More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	10.0%	11.7%	12.5%	10.8%	11.6%	11.9%	9.8%	11.7%	10.4%	13.7%	11.3%
	Better family skills in reducing debt increasing savings and financial planning	11.7%	11.2%	10.3%	12.5%	10.3%	10.4%	13.2%	9.8%	11.7%	10.7%	11.2%
Community Vitality	More qualified leaders to prepare communities for the future	23.3%	24.5%	25.7%	24.8%	24.2%	23.3%	26.3%	21.2%	24.2%	26.2%	24.1%
	More citizens helping to solve local issues	14.8%	15.8%	16.5%	16.9%	15.2%	15.5%	15.4%	15.9%	15.0%	16.7%	15.4%
	More pride in the community and its assets	14.3%	14.9%	15.9%	12.1%	14.3%	14.7%	13.9%	11.8%	15.1%	14.4%	14.4%
	More youth community leadership opportunities	13.5%	13.8%	20.0%	13.9%	13.8%	14.5%	12.5%	17.5%	13.9%	11.1%	13.9%

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"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More tourism-related businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Increased support for small businesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More part-time and summer job opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More qualified employees for existing or new jobs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Better employee "soft skills" training (communications, team work, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Better utilities (water, sewer, etc.) to attract industry	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Safe and accessible public water and sewer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Responsive emergency services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Better roads and bridges	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More public transportation options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<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"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More market opportunities for farmers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More crop and livestock production opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More profitable farms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Sustainability of family farms	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More awareness and support for agriculture and agribusinesses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More land available for food production	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Less pest, disease and weed issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More community gardens	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<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"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More community parks and green spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Increase tree and forestry management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Less illegal dumping and littering	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Better landscapes for improved home value	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<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"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More healthy snacks and food options at restaurants and community events	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage, preservation, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Improved access to quality affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Improved availability of health care insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Improved affordability of health care insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Safer use of prescription medications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More individual physical activity opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Improved sidewalks and crosswalks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Availability of substance use prevention programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Availability of substance use treatment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<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"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings and financial planning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More support for families with mental and emotional health issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More support for families and individuals with special needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More support for relatives raising children of family members	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More child and partner abuse prevention resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Stronger parenting and relationship building skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Affordable quality child care	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More senior citizen support programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More affordable, quality elder care options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<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"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More youth community leadership opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More citizens helping to solve local issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More effective cooperation between community organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More active community volunteers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More pride in the community and its assets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>

Demographics

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

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

Please select your Race/Ethnicity?		What is your highest level of education?	
White, Non-Hispanic	<input type="radio"/>	Some high school	<input type="radio"/>
African-American	<input type="radio"/>	High school degree	<input type="radio"/>
Hispanic, Latino	<input type="radio"/>	Some college	<input type="radio"/>
Asian-American	<input type="radio"/>	Associate's degree	<input type="radio"/>
Two or more races	<input type="radio"/>	Bachelor's degree	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	Advanced degree(Masters, Doctorate, JD, MD, etc)	<input type="radio"/>

Please select the option that best describes your current employment status:							
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"/>	

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

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

What county do you live?	Do you live in the county seat?	
	Yes <input type="radio"/>	No <input type="radio"/>

What other comments and/or suggestions do you have about important issues in your county?	

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?

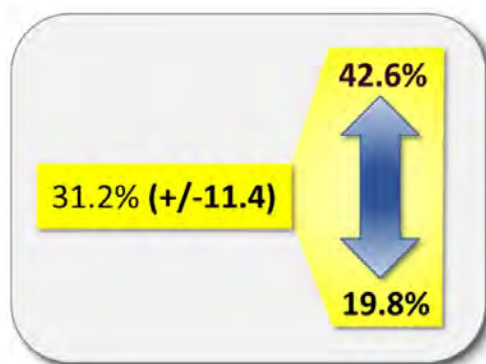
UNDERSTANDING SECONDARY DATA RELIABILITY

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 (\pm ##) and confidence intervals (### - ###) tell 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 (\pm 25), you will want to use a larger “grain of salt” than if your estimate is 30 (\pm 1).



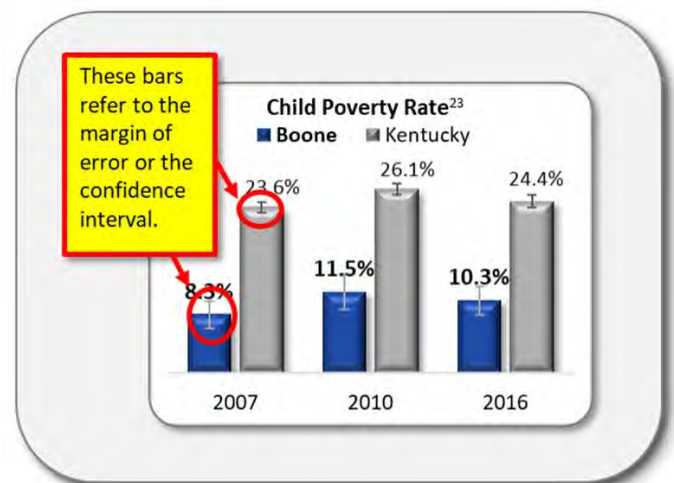
We can also think of margins of error and confidence intervals as “wiggle room.” The larger the range, the more “wiggle room” there is for the estimate. In other words, when the margin of error is smaller, the estimate is more precise or the focus is sharper. When the margin of error is larger, the estimate 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 (\pm ##) 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