







**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

---

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

---

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

---

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

---

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

---

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

---

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.

# SURVEY RESPONDENTS

468 Respondents



**are Female**  
higher than  
County population



**are White  
(non-Hispanic)**  
same as  
County population



**are 25-64 years old  
(working age)**  
higher than  
County population



**work or are  
self-employed**



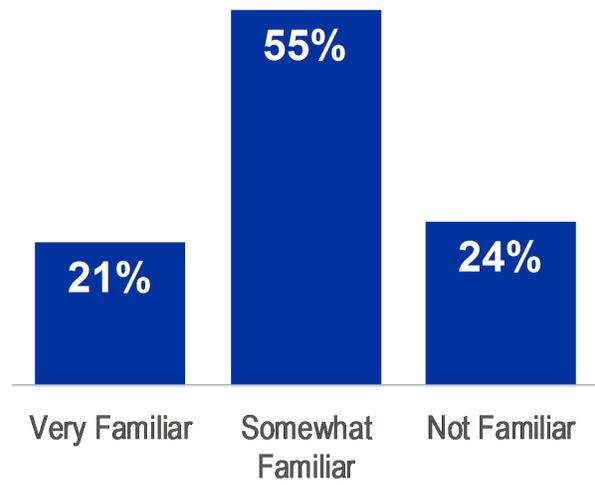
**are retired**



**work in non-profit,  
transportation, or  
manufacturing**



**currently  
participate  
in Extension  
programming**



**respondent familiarity  
with Extension**

## ISSUE IMPORTANCE

468 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, and the issues have been sorted with the most important issue (on average) listed at the top of the left column.

Category Legend:

▲ Health & Wellness     
 ♥ Youth & Families     
 ◆ Agriculture & Environment     
 ■ Jobs & Infrastructure     
 ● Community Vitality

3.93	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> More jobs paying good wages with benefits	3.62	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Availability of substance use treatment
3.88	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Improved affordability of health care insurance	3.62	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> More child and partner abuse prevention resources
3.85	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults	3.61	<span style="color: purple;">●</span> More active community volunteers
3.84	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)	3.60	<span style="color: purple;">●</span> More youth community leadership opportunities
3.81	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Improved access to quality, affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.)	3.59	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods
3.79	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)	3.58	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc.
3.78	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> More affordable, quality elder care options	3.58	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> More market opportunities for farmers
3.76	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	3.58	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Availability of substance use prevention programs
3.76	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings and financial planning	3.58	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Improved sidewalks and crosswalks
3.75	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> More support for families with mental and emotional health issues	3.58	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> More support for Kentucky agriculture and agribusinesses
3.75	<span style="color: purple;">●</span> More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future	3.57	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> More qualified employees for either existing and new jobs
3.73	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> Affordable quality child care	3.57	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Access to affordable, reliable high speed internet service
3.73	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Responsive emergency services	3.56	<span style="color: purple;">●</span> More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.)
3.73	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> Less illegal dumping and littering	3.55	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> More individual physical activity opportunities
3.71	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> Better youth and adult career readiness	3.53	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> More profitable farms
3.70	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> More senior citizen support programs	3.52	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Better skills for selecting and preparing healthier food
3.69	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Improved availability of health care insurance	3.51	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> More healthy snacks and food options at restaurants and community events
3.69	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	3.46	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Better utilities (water, sewer, etc) to attract industry
3.68	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Better roads and bridges	3.45	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> More crop and livestock production opportunities
3.68	<span style="color: purple;">●</span> More citizens helping to solve local issues	3.45	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> Less pest, disease and weed issues
3.68	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> More support for families and individuals with special needs	3.43	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> More public transportation options
3.68	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> Stronger parenting and relationship building skills	3.41	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Better employee "soft skills" training (communications, team work, etc.)
3.66	<span style="color: purple;">●</span> More pride in the community and its assets	3.39	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> More community gardens
3.66	<span style="color: purple;">●</span> More effective cooperation between community organizations	3.39	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> More training for food gardening skills
3.65	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> Improved sustainability of family farms	3.37	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> More community parks and green spaces
3.65	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Increased support for small business	3.37	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> More land available for food production
3.65	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Safe and accessible public water and sewer	3.34	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> Increased tree and forestry management
3.65	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage, preservation, etc.)	3.29	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> More farm related jobs
3.65	<span style="color: red;">♥</span> More support for relatives raising children of family members	3.28	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> More tourism-related businesses
3.65	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food	3.24	<span style="color: blue;">■</span> More part-time and summer job opportunities
3.63	<span style="color: green;">▲</span> Safer use of prescription medications	3.20	<span style="color: orange;">◆</span> 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.

299 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

---

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

### Agriculture & Environment

---

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

### Health & Wellness

---

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

### Youth & Families

---

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

### Community Vitality

---

1. More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future
2. More citizens helping to solve local issues
3. More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction)

The McCracken County Extension Office staff convened 32 community members in three interactive focus groups. These focus group listening sessions were designed to allow community members to discuss their ideas on the future of the county. The attendees 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.

## Vision for a More Vibrant Community

The focus group participants had many ideas for the future of the county. Many of the ideas related to opportunities that would enhance entertainment and tourism including:

Paintball, zip lines, sky diving, horseback trails, running and mountain biking trails, water parks, pool and recreation center, new baseball complex, museums, and increased opportunities for youth.

## Identified Priorities

- Increase tourism
- Increase minimum wage
- Better interaction of city/county government
- Improved high speed internet
- Address drug issues

## Priorities Discussion

The immediate public priorities included:

- Fix roadways- including sidewalks, street lights, bus stops and benches
- Address drug issues – including more access to rehab, drug education and intervention programs, and have better community interaction with law enforcement
- Address low paying jobs and employment opportunities
- Improve housing

Over the next four years, focus group participants would like to see:

- Increase tourism opportunities – including a baseball park, museums, water park, and things for kids to do
- Improve intergovernmental relations so that County and City government officials work together to solve community issues
- Increase community involvement

Six interviews were conducted with people in positions of leadership in McCracken County. The interviews 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

- Livable wage jobs (3)
- Quality and affordable housing (2)
- School safety (2)
- Drug issues affecting employment
- Community walkability

## Priorities Discussion

Interviews with positional leaders in McCracken County surfaced the complexity of addressing public issues. While they are immediate priorities, there are no quick fix solutions for many of the issues McCracken and other Kentucky counties are experiencing. Issues raised in the interviews include:

- Dealing with poverty
- School safety
- Racial tension
- Affordable/quality housing
- Livable wage employment opportunities
- Population decline in the city
- The public pension crisis
- Public walkability for communities

When asked about 4-year priorities, the interviewed leaders expressed the importance of working on the immediate while looking to longer term goals. Priorities identified to be addressed over the next four years included:

- Increase competitive jobs and job retention for local youth (3)
- Increase opportunities for growth of industry (2)
- Expand jobs skill/workforce education (2)
- Improve services and activities for youth & children
- Expand opportunities for trade workers
- Expand transportation options including airports
- Expand city limits
- Expand pension plan
- Address storm water issues
- Renovation of homes and rental property

## 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.



# McCracken County Data Profile

**McCracken 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.

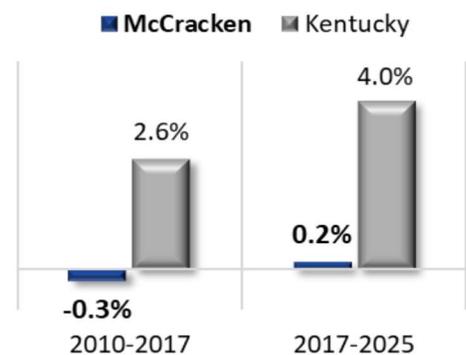
For more information on the Community Assessment process, visit <https://extension.ca.uky.edu/communityassessment>

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	65,565	65,385	65,487
Ages 65 and over	11,001		14,934
		<b>2010-2017<sup>4</sup></b>	
Net Migration (in/out)	-51		
Race/Ethnicity	2010 <sup>1</sup>	2016 <sup>5</sup>	
White	55,072	54,471	
Black or African American	7,203	7,000	
Asian	530	547	
Other and 2 or more races	1,377	1,586	
Hispanic	1,383	1,558	

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

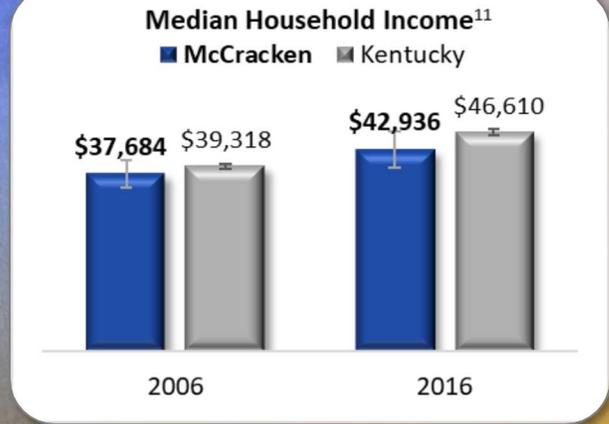


- From 2010 to 2017, the total population in McCracken County **decreased** by **-180** people.<sup>2</sup>
- Between April 2010 and June 2017, there was an estimated **net out migration** of **-51** people.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2016, the composition of McCracken County's population is estimated to be **83.6%** White, **10.7%** Black/African American, **0.8%** Asian, **2.4%** other and 2 or more races, and **2.4%** Hispanic.<sup>5</sup>
- From 2017 to 2025, the total population in McCracken County is **projected** to **increase** by **102** people.<sup>3</sup>
- As baby boomers are entering retirement, between 2010 and 2025 the population ages 65 and over in McCracken County are **projected** to **increase** by **35.8%** compared to 51.9% for the state as a whole.<sup>3</sup>

# McCracken County Data Profile

## Families and Households

Families	2010 <sup>1</sup>	2012-2016 <sup>7</sup>
Married couple		
... with own children	4,622	4,027 (+/- 295)
Female householder		
... with own children	2,076	2,313 (+/- 381)
Male householder		
... with own children	597	517 (+/- 188)
Nonfamily households (live alone/unrelated)	10,336	11,152 (+/- 510)
<b>Poverty</b>		<b>2012-2016<sup>7</sup></b>
Percent of families with related children who are below poverty		24.3% (+/- 3.4%)
Percent 65 and over below poverty		8.7% (+/- 1.7%)

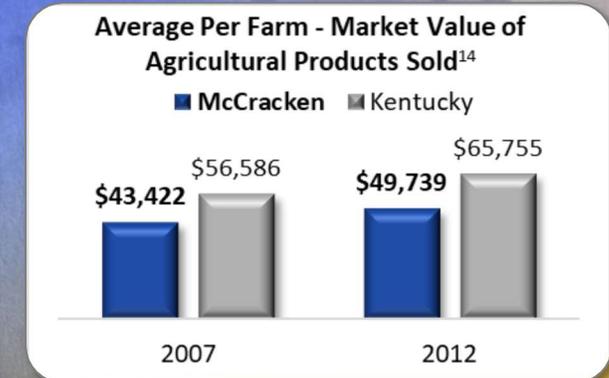


Grandparents living with and raising grandchildren <sup>3</sup>	2012-2016 <sup>7</sup>
	717 (+/- 209)

- In 2016, McCracken County's official poverty rate was **18.7%** (16.2% - 21.2%), compared to 18.2% (17.9% - 18.6%) for the state as a whole.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2017, there were **30** child care centers in McCracken County. Of these **21** were STARS certified.<sup>9</sup>
- Between 2012-2016, **3.1%** (+/-0.5%) of people ages 5 and over spoke a language other than English at home.<sup>7</sup>
- The Urban Institute estimates that **15%** people in McCracken 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	483	447
Percent of land in farms	47.3%	42.2%
Average farm size (acres)	156	150
		<b>2012<sup>13</sup></b>
Income from agri-tourism and recreational services		N/A
Number of farms marketing products directly to retail outlets		15
Average value per farm of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption		\$5,686



Percent of Principal Operators	2012 <sup>13</sup>
... who are female	15.7%
... under age 35	2.9%
... farming as primary occupation	31.5%

- In 2012, the total market value of agricultural products sold in McCracken County was **\$22,233,000**.<sup>13</sup>
- Of the total market value of agricultural products sold, **73.3%** was the value of crops and **26.7%** was the value of livestock, poultry, and their products.<sup>13</sup>
- The total farm production expenses (average per farm) was **\$48,745** compared to \$62,002 for the state.<sup>13</sup>
- In McCracken County, there were **279** hired farm labor workers on **87** farms.<sup>13</sup>
- **89.7%** 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.

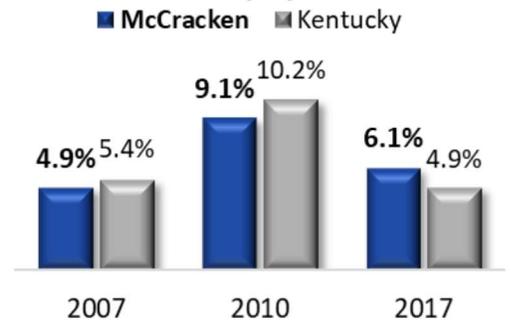
# McCracken County Data Profile

## Jobs, Economy, and Labor Force

Jobs and Businesses	2010	2016
Total Employment (# of jobs) <sup>15</sup>	46,084	48,992
Total Establishments (w/ employees) <sup>16</sup>	2,128	2,074
... % with 1-9 employees	66.3%	64.5%
... % with 10-20 employees	17.3%	18.3%
Total NonEmployer Establishments (w/o employees) <sup>17</sup>	4,191	4,391

Education	2012-2016 <sup>7</sup>	
Percent of population 25 and over		
... with HS or higher	87.8% (+/- 1.0%)	
... with bachelors or higher	22.9% (+/- 1.6%)	
	Men	Women
Median Earnings (2012-16) <sup>7</sup>	\$35,312 (+/- \$2,220)	\$22,764 (+/- \$1,371)

Annual Unemployment Rate<sup>20</sup>



Avg Weekly Wage<sup>18</sup>

	2017
... All Industries (Private & Govt)	\$811
... Goods-producing (Private)	\$916
... Service-providing (Private)	\$790

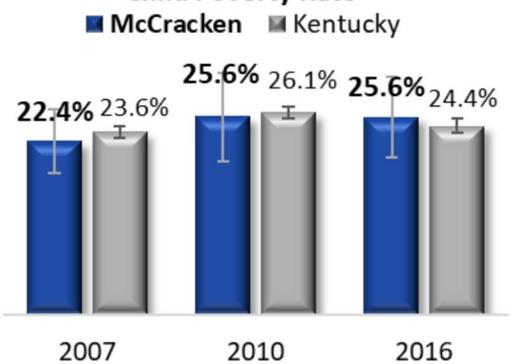
- In 2017, the number of private establishments covered by unemployment insurance in McCracken County was **246** for goods-producing, **2,084** for service-providing, and **249** for hospitality & leisure.<sup>18</sup>
- Between 2012 and 2016, of the **28,667** (+/- 719) workers ages 16 and over, **86.0%** (+/- 1.4%) worked inside the county, **10.6%** (+/- 0.7%) worked outside the county and **3.4%** (+/- 0.7%) worked outside Kentucky.<sup>7</sup>
- Between 2012 and 2016, **3.8%** (+/- 1.2%) 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>
- **20.5%** 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	3,921	3,977	3,911
5-9 years old	4,160	4,051	4,085
10-14 years old	4,081	4,105	4,003
15-19 years old	3,946	3,705	3,503

Children by Relationship to Householder	2012-2016 <sup>7</sup>
... Own Children (Biological, Adopted, Stepchild)	12,385 (+/- 333)
... Grandchild	1,160 (+/- 265)
... Other Relative	374 (+/- 154)
... Foster/Unrelated	323 (+/- 193)

Child Poverty Rate<sup>23</sup>



**13.7%** of students entered KY public postsecondary institutions underprepared in one or more subjects (2015).<sup>21</sup>

- Between 2012-2016, there were an estimated **661** (+/- 178) youth ages 5-17 who had a disability.<sup>7</sup>
- **54.9%** of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade students in McCracken County scored proficient or distinguished on math in the 2015-16 school year compared to 47.7% for the state.<sup>22</sup>
- **4,466** (+/- 496) 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>

# McCracken County Data Profile

## Health and Wellness

### Percent of Adults

... reporting poor or fair health (2016) <sup>24</sup>	18.4% (17.8%-19.0%)
... with hypertension (2013-15) <sup>25</sup>	45.2% (37.4%-53.3%)
... with obesity (2014-16) <sup>25</sup>	28% (22.6%-33.3%)
... with diabetes (2014-16) <sup>25</sup>	10.5% (7.8%-13.8%)

### Number of Individuals

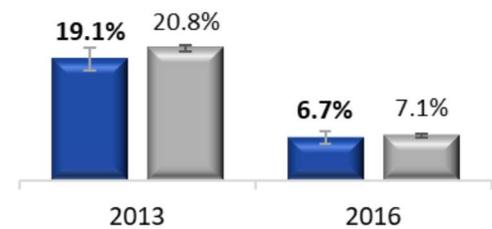
... receiving SNAP (food stamps) (2017) <sup>26</sup>	8,784
... who are food insecure (2016 estimate) <sup>27</sup>	10,240

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

	2008-2010	2015-2017
... fatal overdoses	28	28
... nonfatal overdoses	716	828

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

■ McCracken ■ Kentucky



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

... Primary Care Physicians (2015)	57
... Dentists (2016)	61
... Mental Health Providers (2017)	95

- The estimated food insecurity rate for McCracken County is **15.7%**, compared to 15.5% for the state.<sup>27</sup>
- From 2010 to 2016, the number of grocery stores **increased** by **27.3%**, from **11** to **14** stores.<sup>16</sup>
- In 2013-2015, **28.7%** (25.3%-32.5%) of adults ages 20 and over reported no leisure time physical activity.<sup>24</sup>
- The Urban Institute estimates that **18%** of people in McCracken 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>
- **11.2%** (7.8%-15.9%) 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

- 2010 Decennial Census. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
- 2017 Population Estimates. Kentucky State Data Center.
- 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.
- 2007 Census of Agriculture. U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- 2012 Census of Agriculture. U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Chart: 2007 and 2012 Census of Agriculture. U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Regional Economic Accounts. Bureau of Economic Analysis.
- County Business Patterns. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
- NonEmployer Statistics. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
- Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- 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>).

McCRACKEN COUNTY PRIORITY RESPONSES  
299 RESPONDENTS

### Jobs and Infrastructure

More jobs paying good wages with benefits	28.0%
Increased support for small business	8.5%
Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	8.4%
Responsive emergency services	7.0%
Better roads and bridges	6.8%
Access to affordable, reliable high speed internet service	6.4%
More public transportation options	6.2%
More qualified employees for either existing and new jobs	6.1%
Better utilities (water, sewer, etc) to attract industry	5.0%
Safe and accessible public water and sewer	4.8%
Better employee "soft skills" training (communications, team work, etc.)	4.5%
More part-time and summer job opportunities	3.6%
More tourism-related businesses	2.6%

### Agriculture and Environment

Less illegal dumping and littering	13.4%
Improved sustainability of family farms	11.9%
More market opportunities for farmers	10.5%
More support for Kentucky agriculture and agribusinesses	9.4%
More community parks and green spaces	7.1%
More profitable farms	6.8%
More community gardens	6.6%
More farm related jobs	6.0%
More training for food gardening skills	6.0%
Less pest, disease and weed issues	5.2%
More crop and livestock production opportunities	4.8%
Better landscapes for improved home value	4.2%
Increased tree and forestry management	3.9%
More land available for food production	3.5%

## Health and Wellness

Improved affordability of health care insurance	13.6%
Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)	10.9%
Improved access to quality, affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.)	10.9%
Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults	9.1%
Availability of substance use treatment	8.1%
Availability of substance use prevention programs	5.9%
Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc.	5.7%
Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage, preservation, etc.)	5.2%
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food	4.9%
More healthy snacks and food options at restaurants and community events	4.3%
Improved availability of health care insurance	4.1%
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods	3.8%
Safer use of prescription medications	3.6%
Improved sidewalks and crosswalks	3.4%
Better skills for selecting and preparing healthier food	2.9%
More individual physical activity opportunities	2.8%

## Youth and Families

More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)	13.9%
More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	13.6%
Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings and financial planning	10.1%
More support for families with mental and emotional health issues	9.9%
More affordable, quality elder care options	9.5%
Affordable quality child care	9.3%
Better youth and adult career readiness	7.1%
Stronger parenting and relationship building skills	6.5%
More senior citizen support programs	5.2%
More support for families and individuals with special needs	5.1%
More support for relatives raising children of family members	4.6%
More child and partner abuse prevention resources	4.4%

## Community Vitality

More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future	21.0%
More citizens helping to solve local issues	17.3%
More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.)	13.2%
More youth community leadership opportunities	13.0%
More effective cooperation between community organizations	12.5%
More pride in the community and its assets	12.0%
More active community volunteers	9.7%

## 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 **THREE** 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 3 issues	
More jobs paying good wages with benefits	<input type="radio"/>						
More tourism-related businesses	<input type="radio"/>						
Increase support for small businesses	<input type="radio"/>						
More part-time and summer job opportunities	<input type="radio"/>						
More qualified employees for existing and new jobs	<input type="radio"/>						
Better employee "soft skills" and 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 3 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"/>					
Improved sustainability of family farms	<input type="radio"/>					
More support for Kentucky 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 THREE 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 3 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 3 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"/>				
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 affordability of health care insurance	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
Improved availability of health care insurance	<input type="radio"/>		<input type="radio"/>				
More sources for buying safe, affordable, local fresh food	<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 THREE 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 3 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 3 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>What is your gender?</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Non-binary</b>
	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

<b>What is your Race/Ethnicity?</b>	<b>What is the level of education you have completed?</b>
White, Non-Hispanic <input type="radio"/>	Some high school <input type="radio"/>
African-American <input type="radio"/>	High school diploma/GED <input type="radio"/>
Hispanic, Latino <input type="radio"/>	Some college <input type="radio"/>
Asian-American <input type="radio"/>	Associate's degree <input type="radio"/>
American Indian <input type="radio"/>	Bachelor's degree <input type="radio"/>
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander <input type="radio"/>	Master's degree <input type="radio"/>
Two or more races <input type="radio"/>	Doctoral or other professional degree <input type="radio"/>
Other (write below): <input type="radio"/>	

<b>Please select the option that best describes your employment status:</b>						
Retired	Work full-time	Work part-time	Self-employed	Unemployed	Do not work	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 in?</b>	<b>Do you live in the County seat?</b>
	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>

*Please use other side of page if you need more space.*

## 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).



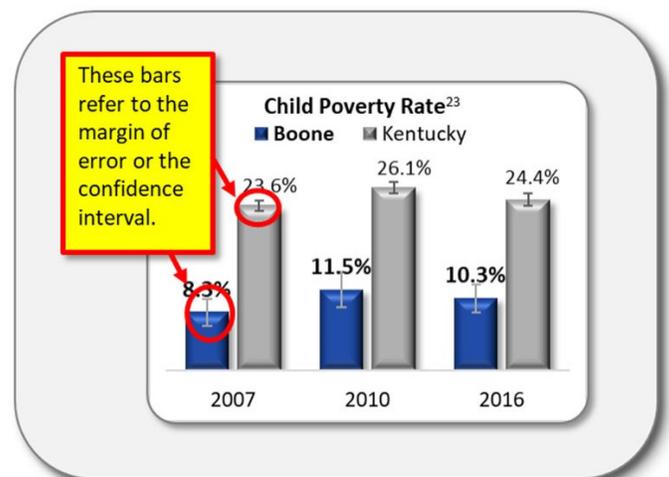
We can also think of margins of error and confidence intervals as “wobble room.” The larger the range, the more “wobble room” there is for the estimate. In other words, when the margin of error is smaller, the estimate is more precise or the focus is sharper. When the margin of error is larger, the estimate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