Kentucky Extension Community Assessment
Muhlenberg County Report
2019

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

Kentucky State University
College of Agriculture, Food Science, and Sustainable Systems

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

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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.

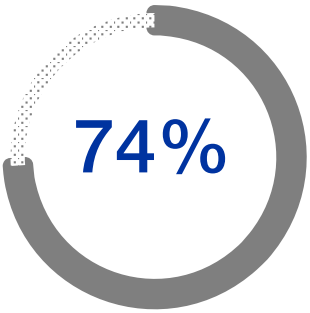
Secondary Data

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.

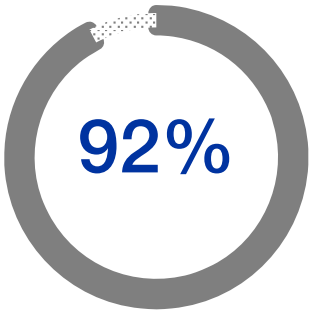
Next Steps

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.

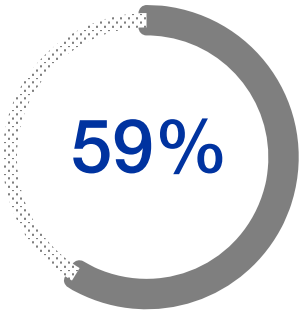
104 Respondents



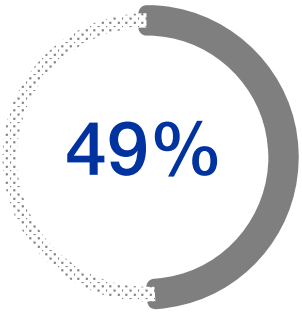
are Female



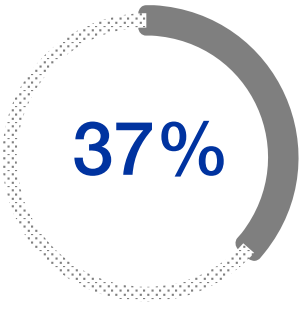
are White (non-Hispanic)



are 25-64 years old (working age)

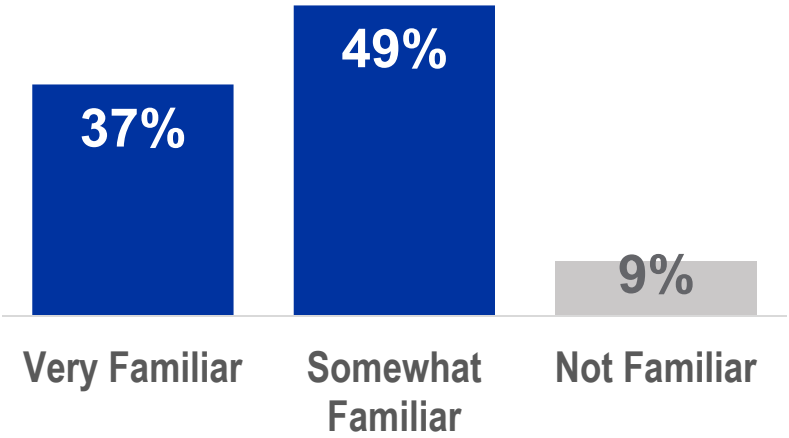


work or are self-employed



are retired

currently participate in Extension programming



respondent familiarity with Extension

ISSUE IMPORTANCE

104 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

3.86	■	More jobs paying good wages with benefits	3.47	■	Better utilities (water, sewer, etc.) to attract industry
3.7	▲	Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults	3.46	♥	More child and partner abuse prevention resources
3.69	■	Better roads and bridges	3.46	●	More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future
3.68	▲	Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)	3.46	■	Better employee "soft skills" training (communications, team work, etc.)
3.68	■	Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	3.46	♦	More awareness and support for agriculture and agribusinesses
3.68	♥	More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)	3.46	●	More pride in the community and its assets
3.68	♦	Less illegal dumping and littering	3.45	●	More youth community leadership opportunities
3.67	■	Responsive emergency services	3.45	♦	More profitable farms
3.66	▲	Improved affordability of health care insurance	3.45	▲	Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage, preservation, etc.)
3.65	▲	Improved access to quality affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.)	3.44	♥	Stronger parenting and relationship building skills
3.65	♥	More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	3.42	●	More active community volunteers
3.64	■	Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service	3.4	▲	More individual physical activity opportunities
3.63	▲	Improved availability of health care insurance	3.38	♦	More crop and livestock production opportunities
3.62	■	Safe and accessible public water and sewer	3.37	▲	Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc.
3.6	♥	More support for families with mental and emotional health issues	3.37	●	More effective cooperation between community organizations
3.58	▲	Safer use of prescription medications	3.34	●	More citizens helping to solve local issues
3.57	♦	Sustainability of family farms	3.34	♦	Less pest, disease, and weed issues
3.56	♥	Affordable, quality child care	3.33	●	More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.)
3.55	■	Increased support for small business	3.3	▲	Better skills for selecting and preparing healthier food
3.55	♦	More market opportunities for farmers	3.29	♦	More land available for food production
3.55	♥	More affordable, quality elder care options	3.28	▲	More healthy snacks and food options at restaurants and community events
3.55	♥	Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings, and financial planning	3.26	▲	Improved sidewalks and crosswalks
3.54	♥	More support for families and individuals with special needs	3.25	■	More part-time and summer job opportunities
3.53	▲	Availability of substance use prevention programs	3.22	■	More public transportation options
3.53	♥	Better youth and adult career readiness	3.18	♦	More farm-related jobs
3.53	♥	More senior citizen support programs	3.16	♦	More community gardens
3.52	♥	More support for relatives raising children of family members	3.09	♦	More training for food gardening skills
3.51	▲	More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods	3.08	■	More tourism-related businesses
3.49	■	More qualified employees for existing or new jobs	3.05	♦	Increased tree and forestry management
3.48	▲	Availability of substance use treatment	3.01	♦	More community parks and green spaces
3.48	▲	More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food	2.92	♦	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.

63 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 and benefits
2. Better roads and bridges
3. Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service

Agriculture & Environment

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

Health & Wellness

1. Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)
2. Availability of substance use prevention programs
3. Improved affordability of health care insurance

Youth & Families

1. More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)
2. More affordable, quality elder care options
3. More support for families with mental and emotional health issues

Community Vitality

1. More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future
2. More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.)
3. More pride in the community and its assets

Two focus group sessions were held in Muhlenberg County with the 4-H Teen Council and FCS Council. The conversations focused on identifying the priority issues facing the county and proposed ideas of what residents would like to see in the future. While focus groups only offer a small sample of attitudes within the county, they do provide insightful first-hand perspectives from residents. Responses from the focus groups are summarized below.

Vision for a More Vibrant Community

The following themes were raised by participants when asked about their vision for the future of the county:

- A community filled with jobs and industry
- A community that promotes overall health and a healthy, clean environment
- A community with renovated old homes and businesses
- Entertainment for the area youth and families and welcomes tourists
- Where educated residents are proud of their homes

Identified Immediate Priorities

- Supporting a healthy environment
- Increasing communication
- Community amenities

Identified Long-term Priorities

- Addressing the drug issue
- Increasing job availability
- Supporting education

Priorities Discussion

Focus group participants identified supporting a healthy community environment as a pressing topic in the community. Participants noted a cleaner environment including less litter and a smoke-free campus could support a healthier environment. Additionally, increasing attendance at wellness classes offered and providing chronic disease support systems was acknowledged by participants. Female health services were also discussed.

Other priority issues discussed were food insecurity, drugs, school attendance, homeschool support, and strengthening personal soft skills.

Focus group participants identified information or resources to help address both immediate and long-term issues in Muhlenberg County including:

- Supporting partnerships, committees, campaigns, and collaboration between organizations
- Funding and money management
- Spreading awareness about programs available
- Directing law changes and tax breaks
- Political and research information
- Valuing the input of young persons

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

Identified Priorities

- Replacing lost jobs
- Workforce development
- Improving quality of life

Priorities Discussion

Issues relating to employment opportunities to replace lost jobs were mentioned multiple times throughout key informant interviews. Informants felt the implications of the lack of jobs are less money in the county and a struggling economy. The lost jobs at the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the coal mines were discussed predominantly, and residents continue to find gainful employment challenging.

Informants identified the lack of working together as a community, financial situations, and political issues as barriers that keep the leaders and residents from addressing pressing issues in the community.

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) in the Department of Community and Leadership Development.

Muhlenberg County
Data Profile

Muhlenberg 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

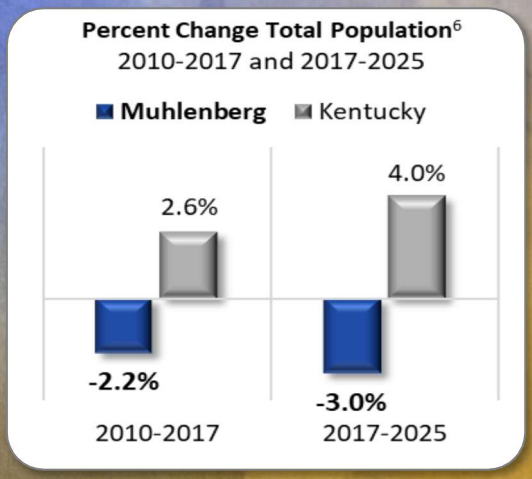
For additional data or other data-related assistance, contact: Dr. Julie N. Zimmerman (jzimm@uky.edu)

County Demographics

Population	**2010**[1]	**2017**[2]	**2025**[3]
Total	31,499	30,816	29,903
Ages 65 and over	5,110		6,313

	2010-2017[4]
Net Migration (in/out)	-343

Race/Ethnicity	**2010**[1]	**2016**[5]
White	29,323	28,543
Black or African American	1,425	1,511
Asian	43	90
Other and 2 or more races	341	428
Hispanic	367	456



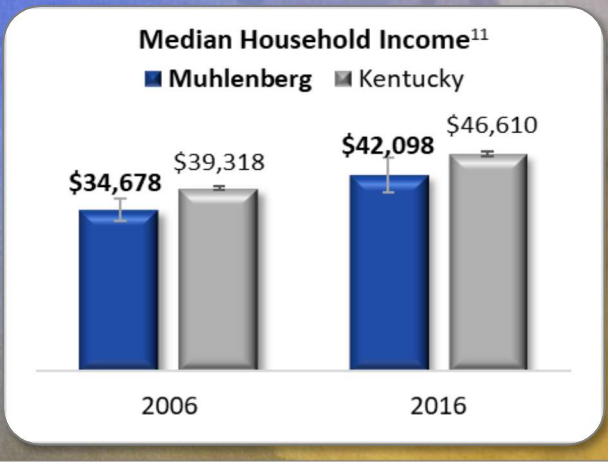
- From 2010 to 2017, the total population in Muhlenberg County **decreased** by **-683** people.[2]
- Between April 2010 and June 2017, there was an estimated **net out migration** of **-343** people.[4]
- In 2016, the composition of Muhlenberg County's population is estimated to be **92.0%** White, **4.9%** Black/African American, **0.3%** Asian, **1.4%** other and 2 or more races, and **1.5%** Hispanic.[5]
- From 2017 to 2025, the total population in Muhlenberg County is **projected** to **decrease** by **-913** people.[3]
- As baby boomers are entering retirement, between 2010 and 2025 the population ages 65 and over in Muhlenberg County are **projected** to **increase** by **23.5%** compared to 51.9% for the state as a whole.[3]

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

Families and Households

Families	2010[1]	2012-2016[7]
Married couple		
… with own children	2,276	1,823 (+/- 222)
Female householder		
… with own children	698	737 (+/- 216)
Male householder		
… with own children	274	162 (+/- 85)
Nonfamily households (live alone/unrelated)	3,471	3,443 (+/- 315)

Poverty	2012-2016[7]
Percent of families with related children who are below poverty	23.4% (+/- 4.6%)
Percent 65 and over below poverty	12.2% (+/- 2.9%)



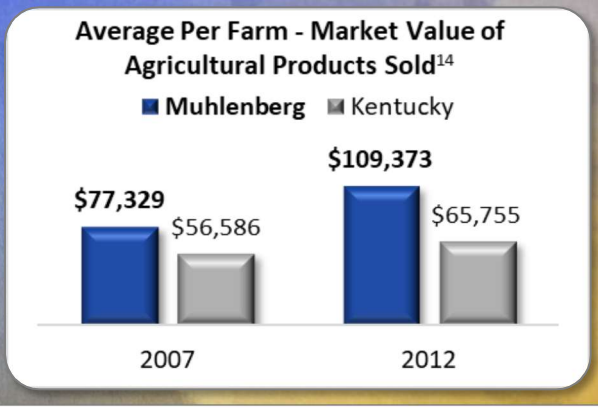
	2012-2016[7]
Grandparents living with and raising grandchildren[3]	578 (+/- 220)

- In 2016, Muhlenberg County's official poverty rate was **19.6%** (15.9% - 23.3%), compared to 18.2% (17.9% - 18.6%) for the state as a whole.[8]
- In 2017, there were **8** child care centers in Muhlenberg County. Of these **3** were STARS certified.[9]
- Between 2012-2016, **1.5%** (+/-0.6%) of people ages 5 and over spoke a language other than English at home.[7]
- The Urban Institute estimates that **11%** people in Muhlenberg County with a credit bureau record in 2016 had student loan debt compared to 16% for the state.[10]

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

Farms*	2007[12]	2012[13]
Total number of farms	636	630
Percent of land in farms	47.1%	43.1%
Average farm size (acres)	221	204

	2012[13]
Income from agri-tourism and recreational services	$14,000
Number of farms marketing products directly to retail outlets	7
Average value per farm of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption	$2,018



Percent of Principal Operators	2012[13]
… who are female	9.8%
… under age 35	5.4%
… farming as primary occupation	39.8%

- In 2012, the total market value of agricultural products sold in Muhlenberg County was **$68,905,000**.[13]
- Of the total market value of agricultural products sold, **35.6%** was the value of crops and **64.4%** was the value of livestock, poultry, and their products.[13]
- The total farm production expenses (average per farm) was **$83,970** compared to $62,002 for the state.[13]
- In Muhlenberg County, there were **522** hired farm labor workers on **130** farms.[13]
- **89.4%** of farms were operated by a family or an individual compared to 91.0% for the state.[13]

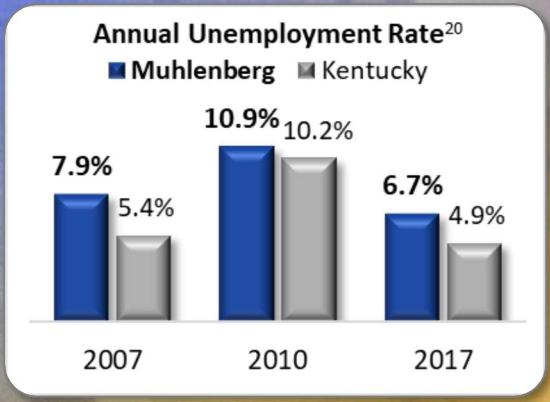
** A farm must sell at least $5,000 to be defined as a farm operation.*

Jobs, Economy, and Labor Force

Jobs and Businesses	2010	2016
Total Employment (# of jobs)[15]	12,051	12,114
Total Establishments (w/ employees)[16]	550	575
… % with 1-9 employees	74.0%	75.5%
… % with 10-20 employees	13.8%	11.7%
Total NonEmployer Establishments (w/o employees)[17]	1,737	1,598

Education	2012-2016[7]
Percent of population 25 and over	
… with HS or higher	79.5% (+/- 2.0%)
… with bachelors or higher	12.1% (+/- 1.8%)

	Men	Women
Median Earnings (2012-16)[7]	$32,563 (+/- $4,164)	$20,026 (+/- $1,493)



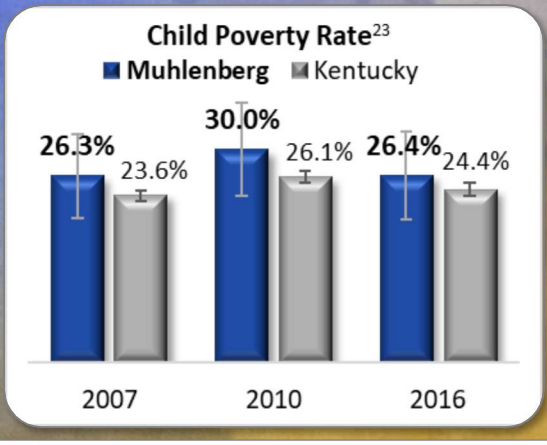
Avg Weekly Wage[18]	2017
… All Industries (Private & Govt)	$842
… Goods-producing (Private)	$1,150
… Service-providing (Private)	$644

- In 2017, the number of private establishments covered by unemployment insurance in Muhlenberg County was **87** for goods-producing, **479** for service-providing, and **59** for hospitality & leisure.[18]
- Between 2012 and 2016, of the **11,632** (+/- 453) workers ages 16 and over, **67.8%** (+/- 3.4%) worked inside the county, **29.8%** (+/-1.0%) worked outside the county and **2.3%** (+/-1.0%) worked outside Kentucky.[7]
- Between 2012 and 2016, **3.8%** (+/-1.3%) 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.[7]
- **33.9%** of 2016 HS graduates in the county earned an industry certificate compared to 19.2% for the state.[19]

Youth

Population by Age	2010[1]	2017[2]	2025[3]
Under 5 years old	1,766	1,686	1,554
5-9 years old	1,905	1,651	1,635
10-14 years old	1,976	1,833	1,714
15-19 years old	2,021	2,006	1,848

Children by Relationship to Householder	2012-2016[7]
… Own Children (Biological, Adopted, Stepchild)	5,264 (+/- 282)
… Grandchild	970 (+/- 288)
… Other Relative	137 (+/- 105)
… Foster/Unrelated	180 (+/- 108)



20.4% of students entered KY public postsecondary institutions underprepared in one or more subjects (2015).[21]

- Between 2012-2016, there were an estimated **454** (+/-179) youth ages 5-17 who had a disability.[7]
- **49.6%** of 3rd grade students in Muhlenberg County scored proficient or distinguished on math in the 2015-16 school year compared to 47.7% for the state.[22]
- **2,399** (+/- 454) 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]

Muhlenberg County Data Profile

Health and Wellness

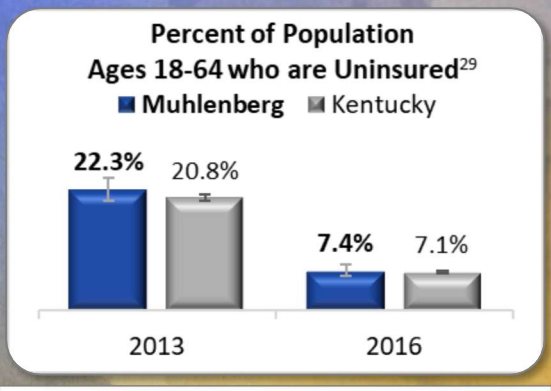
Percent of Adults

… reporting poor or fair health (2016)[24]	21.3% (20.5%-22.1%)
… with hypertension (2013-15)[25]	47.0% (37.0%-57.2%)
… with obesity (2014-16)[25]	37% (29.5%-45.4%)
… with diabetes (2014-16)[25]	11.1% (7.4%-16.5%)

Number of Individuals

… receiving SNAP (food stamps) (2017)[26]	5,099
… who are food insecure (2016 estimate)[27]	4,760

Number of Overdoses[28]	**2008-2010**	**2015-2017**
… fatal overdoses	20	13
… nonfatal overdoses	315	359



Number of Care Providers[24]

… Primary Care Physicians (2015)	12
… Dentists (2016)	10
… Mental Health Providers (2017)	11

- The estimated food insecurity rate for Muhlenberg County is **15.3%**, compared to 15.5% for the state.[27]
- From 2010 to 2016, the number of grocery stores **increased** by **55.6%**, from **9** to **14** stores.[16]
- In 2013-2015, **32.0%** (27.2%-37.3%) of adults ages 20 and over reported no leisure time physical activity.[24]
- The Urban Institute estimates that **25%** of people in Muhlenberg County with a credit bureau record in 2016 had medical debt in collections compared to 27% for the state as a whole.[10]
- **14.3%** (9.6%-20.9%) 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.[25]

Sources

1. 2010 Decennial Census. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
2. 2017 Population Estimates. Kentucky State Data Center.
3. Population Projections – Vintage 2016. Kentucky State Data Center.
4. 2017 Population Estimates Components of Change. Kentucky State Data Center.
5. 2016 Population Estimates. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
6. Chart: 2010 Decennial Census, 2017 Population Estimates, Population Projections – Vintage 2016, Kentucky State Data Center.
7. 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
8. 2016 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE). U.S. Census Bureau.
9. 2017 Early Childhood Profile. Kentucky Center for Statistics (Formerly KCEWS).
10. Debt in America: An Interactive Map. Urban Institute.
11. Chart: 2006 and 2016 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE). U.S. Census Bureau.
12. 2007 Census of Agriculture. U.S. Department of Agriculture.
13. 2012 Census of Agriculture. U.S. Department of Agriculture.
14. Chart: 2007 and 2012 Census of Agriculture. U.S. Department of Agriculture.
15. Regional Economic Accounts. Bureau of Economic Analysis.
16. County Business Patterns. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
17. NonEmployer Statistics. U.S. Census Bureau. American FactFinder.
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19. 2018 High School Feedback Report. Kentucky Center for Statistics (Formerly KCEWS).
20. Chart: 2007, 2010, and 2017 Annual Unemployment Rate. Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
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25. Kentucky Health Facts. Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky.
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28. Custom Data Request. Kentucky Injury Prevention and Research Center (KIPRC).
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Websites

2012 Census of Agriculture. https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/

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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

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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/saipe.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).

Julie N. Zimmerman and Cameron McAlister. January 2019. Kentucky: By The Numbers is a program in the Department of Community and Leadership Development and the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Kentucky. For more information contact your local Cooperative Extension office or Dr. Julie N. Zimmerman. Professor of Rural Sociology. Department of Community and Leadership Development, 500 Garrigus Building, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546-0215. email: jzimm@uky.edu.

Muhlenberg County Priority Responses
63 Respondents

Jobs and Infrastructure

More jobs paying good wages and benefits	43.27%
Better roads and bridges	6.73%
Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service	6.73%
Better utilities (water, sewer, etc.) to attract industry	6.73%
Better employee "soft skills" training (communications, team work, etc.)	6.73%
Safe and accessible public water and sewer	5.77%
Increased support for small businesses	4.81%
More tourism-related businesses	4.81%
More qualified employees for existing and new jobs	3.85%
Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	2.88%
Responsive emergency services	2.88%
More public transportation options	1.92%
More part-time and summer job opportunities	0%

Agriculture and Environment

Less illegal dumping and littering	26.92%
Sustainability of family farms	20.19%
More market opportunities for farmers	19.23%
More training for food gardening skills	12.5%
More crop and livestock production opportunities	11.54%
More support for Kentucky agriculture and agribusiness	8.65%
More community parks and green spaces	8.65%
More community gardens	8.65%
More profitable farms	7.69%
More farm-related jobs	7.69%
Better landscapes for improved home value	4.81%
Less pest, disease, and weed issues	2.88%
Increased tree and forestry management	2.88%
More land available for food production	1.92%

Health and Wellness

Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)	18.27%
Availability of substance use prevention programs	13.46%
Improved affordability of health care insurance	11.54%
Improved access to quality, affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.)	11.54%
Improved availability of health care insurance	7.69%
Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults	7.69%
Better skills for selecting and preparing healthier food	7.69%
Safer use of prescription medications	6.73%
Availability of substance use treatment	6.73%
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods	4.81%
More healthy snack and food options at restaurants and community events	3.85%
Improved sidewalks and crosswalks	2.88%
Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage, preservation, etc.)	2.88%
Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc.	1.92%
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food	0.96%
More individual physical activity opportunities	0.96%

Youth and Families

More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)	18.27%
More affordable, quality elder care options	13.46%
More support for families with mental and emotional health issues	13.46%
Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings and financial planning	11.54%
Better youth and adult career readiness	10.58%
More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	10.58%
Affordable quality child care	9.62%
More support for families and individuals with special needs	7.69%
More child and partner abuse prevention resources	6.73%
More senior citizen support programs	6.73%
Stronger parenting and relationship building skills	5.77%
More support for relatives raising children of family members	3.85%

Community Vitality

More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future	21.15%
More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.)	18.27%
More pride in the community and its assets	18.27%
More citizens helping to solve local issues	17.31%
More youth community leadership opportunities	16.35%
More effective cooperation between community organizations	6.73%
More active community volunteers	6.73%

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture, Food and Environment

DATE

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

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, KY ZIP

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	O	O	O	O	O		O
More tourism-related businesses	O	O	O	O	O		O
Increased support for small businesses	O	O	O	O	O		O
More part-time and summer job opportunities	O	O	O	O	O		O
More qualified employees for existing or new jobs	O	O	O	O	O		O
Better employee "soft skills" training (communications, team work, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O		O
Better utilities (water, sewer, etc.) to attract industry	O	O	O	O	O		O
Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service	O	O	O	O	O		O
Safe and accessible public water and sewer	O	O	O	O	O		O
Responsive emergency services	O	O	O	O	O		O
Trustworthy and effective law enforcement	O	O	O	O	O		O
Better roads and bridges	O	O	O	O	O		O
More public transportation options	O	O	O	O	O		O
Other _____	O	O	O	O	O		O

Agriculture and Environment

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

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	O	O	O	O	O		O
More community parks and green spaces	O	O	O	O	O		O
Increase tree and forestry management	O	O	O	O	O		O
Less illegal dumping and littering	O	O	O	O	O		O
Better landscapes for improved home value	O	O	O	O	O		O
Other _____	O	O	O	O	O		O

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	O	O	O	O	O		O
More healthy snacks and food options at restaurants and community events	O	O	O	O	O		O
Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage, preservation, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O		O
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food	O	O	O	O	O		O
More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods	O	O	O	O	O		O
Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O		O
Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults	O	O	O	O	O		O
Improved access to quality affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O		O
Improved availability of health care insurance	O	O	O	O	O		O
Improved affordability of health care insurance	O	O	O	O	O		O
Safer use of prescription medications	O	O	O	O	O		O
More individual physical activity opportunities	O	O	O	O	O		O
Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc.	O	O	O	O	O		O
Improved sidewalks and crosswalks	O	O	O	O	O		O
Availability of substance use prevention programs	O	O	O	O	O		O
Availability of substance use treatment	O	O	O	O	O		O
Other _____	O	O	O	O	O		O

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	O	O	O	O	O		O
More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O		O
Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings and financial planning	O	O	O	O	O		O
More support for prevention of school violence and bullying	O	O	O	O	O		O
More support for families with mental and emotional health issues	O	O	O	O	O		O
More support for families and individuals with special needs	O	O	O	O	O		O
More support for relatives raising children of family members	O	O	O	O	O		O
More child and partner abuse prevention resources	O	O	O	O	O		O
Stronger parenting and relationship building skills	O	O	O	O	O		O
Affordable quality child care	O	O	O	O	O		O
More senior citizen support programs	O	O	O	O	O		O
More affordable, quality elder care options	O	O	O	O	O		O
Other _____	O	O	O	O	O		O

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	O	O	O	O	O		O
More youth community leadership opportunities	O	O	O	O	O		O
More citizens helping to solve local issues	O	O	O	O	O		O
More effective cooperation between community organizations	O	O	O	O	O		O
More active community volunteers	O	O	O	O	O		O
More pride in the community and its assets	O	O	O	O	O		O
More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.)	O	O	O	O	O		O
Other _____	O	O	O	O	O		O

Demographics

Please select your age:	Under 18	18-24	25-44	45-64	65 and over
	O	O	O	O	O

Please select your gender?	Male	Female	Non-binary
	O	O	O

Please select your Race/Ethnicity?	
White, Non-Hispanic	O
African-American	O
Hispanic, Latino	O
Asian-American	O
Two or more races	O
Other	O

What is the highest level of education?	
Some high school	O
High school degree	O
Some college	O
Associate's degree	O
Bachelor's degree	O
Advanced degree(Masters, Doctorate, JD, MD, etc)	O

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
O	O	O	O	O	O	O

How familiar are you with the programs and services of the Cooperative Extension Service?

Very familiar O Somewhat familiar O Not familiar O

Do you, or someone in your family, currently participate in any Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service program?

Yes O No O

What county do you live?

_____

Do you live in the county seat?

Yes O No O

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?

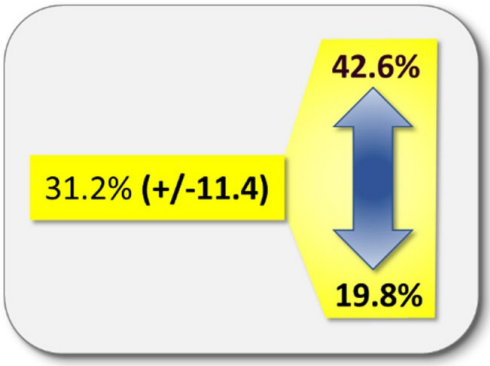
UNDERSTANDING SECONDARY DATA RELIABILITY

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 (+/- ##) 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).

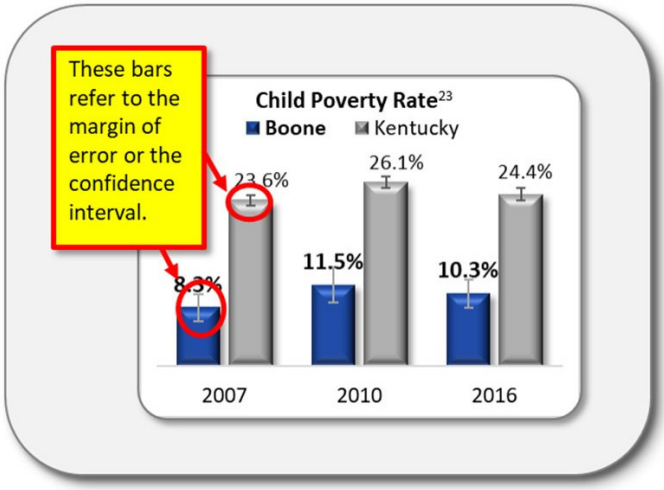


We can also think of margins of error and confidence intervals as "wiggle room." The larger the range, the more "wiggle room" there is for the estimate. In other words, when the margin of error is smaller, the estimate is more precise or the focus is sharper. When the margin of error is larger, the estimate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