



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

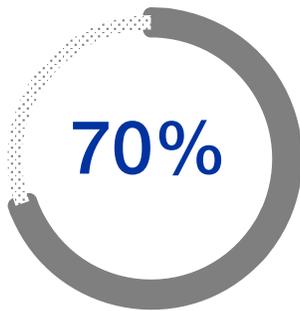
To complement the survey, focus groups, and interviews, detailed data profiles have been compiled for each county that correspond to topic areas covered in the survey. This information provides additional context to understand the role of identified issues in each county as well as historical data to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

Next Steps

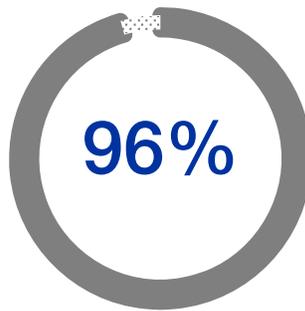
This report summarizes the information collected for this county. The report and the included secondary data compilation can serve as a starting point for deeper investigation into the issues of concern and priority for community members. The University of Kentucky and Cooperative Extension Service will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

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

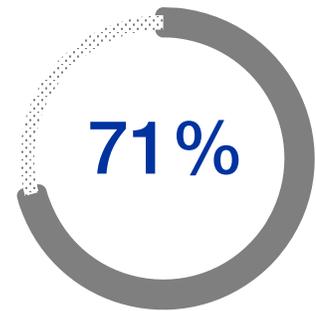
89 Respondents



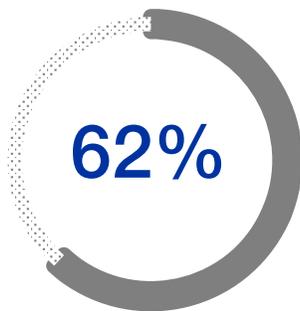
are Female



are White
(non-Hispanic)



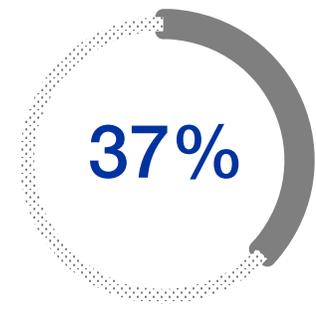
are 25-64 years old
(working age)



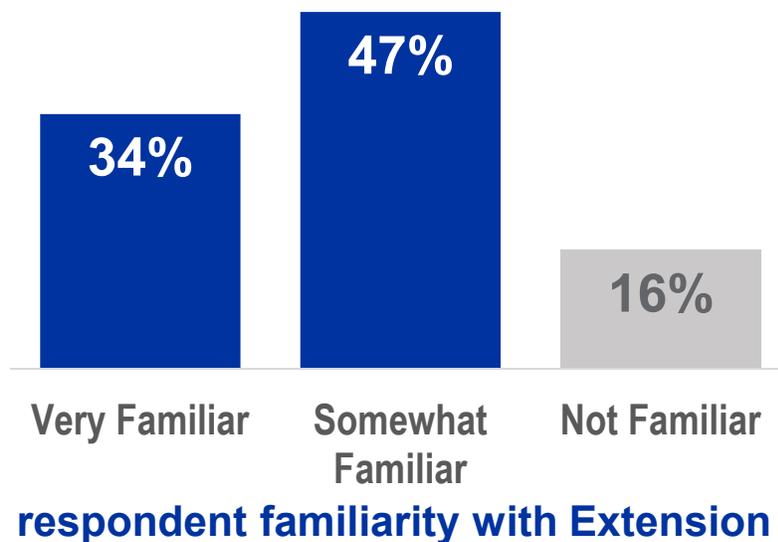
work or are
self-employed



are retired



currently participate
in Extension
programming



ISSUE IMPORTANCE

89 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

| | |
|--|--|
| 3.82 ■ Trustworthy and effective law enforcement | 3.53 ▲ Availability of substance use prevention programs |
| 3.81 ▲ Improved affordability of health care insurance | 3.52 ♥ More support for prevention of school violence and bullying |
| 3.78 ▲ Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.) | 3.52 ▲ More individual physical activity opportunities |
| 3.76 ♥ More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.) | 3.51 ▲ Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage, preservation, etc.) |
| 3.75 ▲ Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults | 3.51 ■ Better employee “soft skills” training (communications, team work, etc.) |
| 3.73 ● More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future | 3.5 ♥ More support for families and individuals with special needs |
| 3.72 ▲ Improved access to quality affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.) | 3.48 ♦ Sustainability of family farms |
| 3.72 ■ Responsive emergency services | 3.48 ♥ More senior citizen support programs |
| 3.67 ▲ Improved availability of health care insurance | 3.47 ■ Better roads and bridges |
| 3.66 ■ Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service | 3.46 ♦ More awareness and support for agriculture and agribusinesses |
| 3.66 ▲ More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods | 3.43 ♥ More support for relatives raising children of family members |
| 3.66 ■ More jobs paying good wages with benefits | 3.42 ● More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.) |
| 3.66 ▲ Safer use of prescription medications | 3.4 ♦ More market opportunities for farmers |
| 3.65 ● More youth community leadership opportunities | 3.4 ♦ More profitable farms |
| 3.65 ● More pride in the community and its assets | 3.4 ▲ Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc. |
| 3.65 ■ Increased support for small business | 3.38 ♦ More crop and livestock production opportunities |
| 3.64 ■ Safe and accessible public water and sewer | 3.38 ♦ Less pest, disease, and weed issues |
| 3.62 ♥ Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings, and financial planning | 3.38 ▲ Better skills for selecting and preparing healthier food |
| 3.62 ♥ Affordable, quality child care | 3.34 ▲ More healthy snacks and food options at restaurants and community events |
| 3.61 ● More effective cooperation between community organizations | 3.24 ■ More part-time and summer job opportunities |
| 3.6 ■ More qualified employees for existing or new jobs | 3.22 ▲ Improved sidewalks and crosswalks |
| 3.59 ♥ Better youth and adult career readiness | 3.21 ♦ More land available for food production |
| 3.59 ♦ Less illegal dumping and littering | 3.19 ■ Better utilities (water, sewer, etc.) to attract industry |
| 3.58 ● More citizens helping to solve local issues | 3.11 ♦ More community parks and green spaces |
| 3.57 ♥ Stronger parenting and relationship building skills | 3.08 ♦ More training for food gardening skills |
| 3.57 ▲ More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food | 3.07 ♦ Increased tree and forestry management |
| 3.57 ♥ More affordable, quality elder care options | 3.06 ♦ More farm-related jobs |
| 3.55 ● More active community volunteers | 3.05 ♦ Better landscapes for improved home value |
| 3.55 ▲ Availability of substance use treatment | 3.05 ♦ More community gardens |
| 3.55 ♥ More support for families with mental and emotional health issues | 3 ■ More tourism-related businesses |
| 3.54 ♥ More child and partner abuse prevention resources | 2.8 ■ More public transportation options |

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.

77 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. More qualified employees for existing and new jobs
3. Increased support for small businesses

Agriculture & Environment

1. Less illegal dumping and littering
2. 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, etc.)
3. Improved access to quality, affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.)

Youth & Families

1. More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.)
2. Better youth and adult career readiness
3. Stronger parenting and relationship building skills

Community Vitality

1. More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future
2. More citizens helping to solve local issues
3. More pride in the community and its assets

Extension agents facilitated two interactive focus groups in Simpson County. 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. The responses from the focus groups are summarized below.

Identified Priorities

- Reducing drug abuse/improving youth behavior
- Public transportation
- A place for senior citizens/community center
- Educational opportunities
- Unemployment/poverty

Priorities Discussion

Both focus groups identified reducing drug abuse as a priority, with one group giving high priority to the issue of youth drug abuse. They also mentioned youth behavior as a priority concern.

The lack of public transportation was identified as a priority by participants in one group, who also mentioned a need for better roads to accommodate a growing population. A need for better sidewalks and walking routes was identified as a need in the other group. Other public facilities which participants deemed important included a place for senior citizens to go, a place for kids and teens to hang out, a new extension building, a community center for all ages, and a homeless shelter.

Participants noted a need for more post-secondary educational opportunities in the county. They also were concerned about poverty in the community, and considered assistance for the unemployed to be a pressing issue. Other topics which were raised during the conversations included safety, dangerous intersections, the need for more local media outlets, and the crime rate.

An interview was conducted with an informant in a leadership role in Simpson County. This interview allowed deeper insight from the perspectives of a person 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 Immediate Priorities

- Jobs and workforce readiness
- Lack of housing options
- Hunger
- Opportunities for all types of higher education

Identified Long-term Priorities

- Reducing drug abuse
- New community facilities
- Lack of public transportation system
- Youth development

Priorities Discussion

The interviewee discussed unemployment and the need for the public to understand that jobs are available locally. Workforce training for those not going to college, other job training, and informing the public about currently available jobs would help address this issue.

Increasing housing options is an immediate priority in the county. The informant noted the need to have more people living and working here. It also was stated that investors are needed to fund new housing in the county and the lack of investors is a barrier to addressing community needs.

Hunger was recognized as an immediate need getting “lost in the noise.” A long-term priority was to reduce drug abuse. Substance abuse is an issue relevant in many Kentucky counties, which affects individuals and families directly, and the community as a whole through higher demands on law enforcement and social services. A related priority was to address youth development and youth behavioral issues.

The informant spoke of long-term priorities to have a senior citizens’ facility, a new Extension office, and public transportation in the community. In addition, education and communication so the community understands what we have available in “our own backyard” is important.

Among barriers keeping the community from addressing pressing issues, the informant identified lack of public awareness, lack of educational options for youth, and a lack of compromise. Additionally, organizations in the community that have different purposes need better communication with each other. For elected officials to listen to citizens’ concerns would be beneficial.

The informant suggested that the University of Kentucky and Cooperative Extension Service could help the county address priority issues by:

- Continuing to collaborate with other agencies and organizations in the community
- Facilitating a community plan, which is needed for long-term growth for Simpson County.

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.



Simpson County Data Profile

Simpson 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.

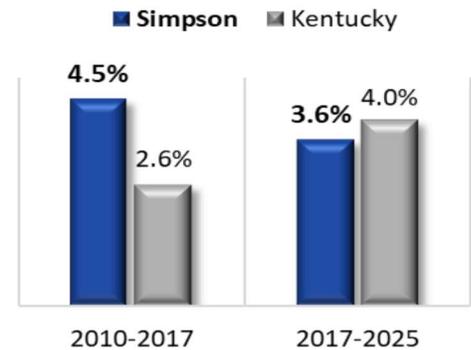
For more information on the Community Assessment process, visit <https://extension.ca.uky.edu/communityassessment>

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

County Demographics

| Population | 2010 ¹ | 2017 ² | 2025 ³ |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Total | 17,327 | 18,108 | 18,764 |
| Ages 65 and over | 2,471 | | 3,764 |
| | 2010-2017⁴ | | |
| Net Migration (in/out) | 438 | | |
| Race/Ethnicity | 2010 ¹ | 2016 ⁵ | |
| White | 14,950 | 15,359 | |
| Black or African American | 1,618 | 1,700 | |
| Asian | 111 | 163 | |
| Other and 2 or more races | 323 | 422 | |
| Hispanic | 325 | 439 | |

Percent Change Total Population⁶
2010-2017 and 2017-2025



- From 2010 to 2017, the total population in Simpson County **increased** by **781** people.²
- Between April 2010 and June 2017, there was an estimated **net in migration** of **438** people.⁴
- In 2016, the composition of Simpson County's population is estimated to be **84.9%** White, **9.4%** Black/African American, **0.9%** Asian, **2.3%** other and 2 or more races, and **2.4%** Hispanic.⁵
- From 2017 to 2025, the total population in Simpson County is **projected** to **increase** by **656** people.³
- As baby boomers are entering retirement, between 2010 and 2025 the population ages 65 and over in Simpson County are **projected** to **increase** by **52.3%** compared to 51.9% for the state as a whole.³



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Simpson County Extension Assessment 2019

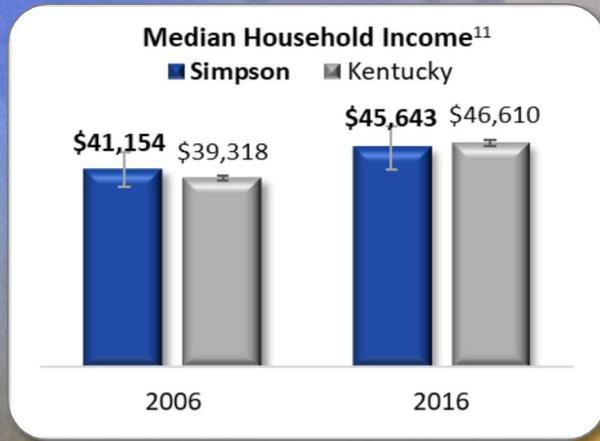
Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy,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

Simpson County Data Profile

Families and Households

| Families | 2010 ¹ | 2012-2016 ⁷ |
|--|-------------------|------------------------|
| Married couple | | |
| ... with own children | 1,343 | 1,216 (+/- 168) |
| Female householder | | |
| ... with own children | 488 | 272 (+/- 127) |
| Male householder | | |
| ... with own children | 185 | 272 (+/- 156) |
| Nonfamily households (live alone/unrelated) | 2,020 | 2,330 (+/- 269) |

| Poverty | 2012-2016 ⁷ |
|---|------------------------|
| Percent of families with related children who are below poverty | 27.5% (+/- 7.4%) |
| Percent 65 and over below poverty | 12.4% (+/- 3.9%) |

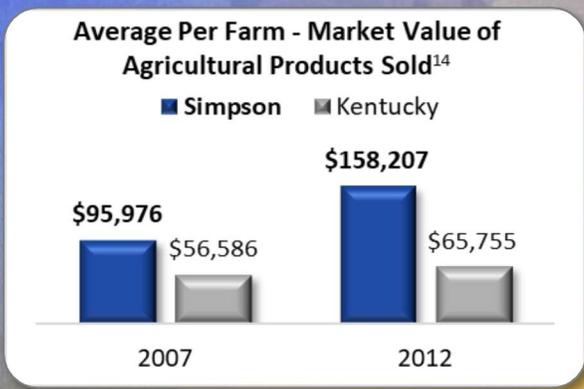


| Grandparents living with and raising grandchildren ³ | 2012-2016 ⁷ |
|---|------------------------|
| | 290 (+/- 140) |

- In 2016, Simpson County's official poverty rate was **15.1%** (12.0% - 18.2%), compared to 18.2% (17.9% - 18.6%) for the state as a whole.⁸
- In 2017, there were **6** child care centers in Simpson County. Of these **5** were STARS certified.⁹
- Between 2012-2016, **2.0%** (+/-0.9%) of people ages 5 and over spoke a language other than English at home.⁷
- The Urban Institute estimates that **14%** people in Simpson 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 | 494 | 467 |
| Percent of land in farms | 79.5% | 67.7% |
| Average farm size (acres) | 241 | 217 |
| | | 2012 ¹³ |
| Income from agri-tourism and recreational services | | N/A |
| Number of farms marketing products directly to retail outlets | | 7 |
| Average value per farm of agricultural products sold directly to individuals for human consumption | | \$4,399 |



| Percent of Principal Operators | 2012 ¹³ |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| ... who are female | 7.7% |
| ... under age 35 | 3.6% |
| ... farming as primary occupation | 50.3% |

- In 2012, the total market value of agricultural products sold in Simpson County was **\$73,883,000**.¹³
- Of the total market value of agricultural products sold, **60.0%** was the value of crops and **40.0%** was the value of livestock, poultry, and their products.¹³
- The total farm production expenses (average per farm) was **\$124,535** compared to \$62,002 for the state.¹³
- In Simpson County, there were **386** hired farm labor workers on **138** farms.¹³
- **92.1%** 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.

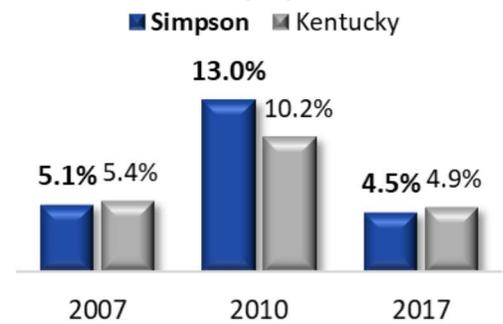
Simpson County Data Profile

Jobs, Economy, and Labor Force

| Jobs and Businesses | 2010 | 2016 |
|--|--------|--------|
| Total Employment (# of jobs) ¹⁵ | 10,204 | 11,489 |
| Total Establishments (w/ employees) ¹⁶ | 383 | 394 |
| ... % with 1-9 employees | 67.4% | 69.5% |
| ... % with 10-20 employees | 16.4% | 12.7% |
| Total NonEmployer Establishments (w/o employees) ¹⁷ | 1,190 | 1,220 |

| Education | 2012-2016 ⁷ | |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|
| Percent of population 25 and over | | |
| ... with HS or higher | 84.0% (+/- 2.6%) | |
| ... with bachelors or higher | 14.2% (+/- 2.6%) | |
| | Men | Women |
| Median Earnings (2012-16) ⁷ | \$35,082 (+/- \$3,844) | \$19,597 (+/- \$2,520) |

Annual Unemployment Rate²⁰



Avg Weekly Wage¹⁸

| | 2017 |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| ... All Industries (Private & Govt) | \$761 |
| ... Goods-producing (Private) | \$1,016 |
| ... Service-providing (Private) | \$576 |

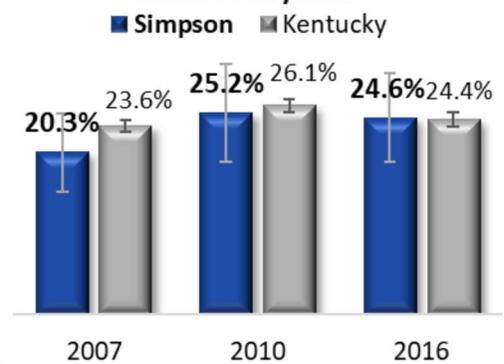
- In 2017, the number of private establishments covered by unemployment insurance in Simpson County was **86** for goods-producing, **367** for service-providing, and **63** for hospitality & leisure.¹⁸
- Between 2012 and 2016, of the **7,683** (+/- 399) workers ages 16 and over, **64.5%** (+/- 3.9%) worked inside the county, **19.7%** (+/-2.8%) worked outside the county and **15.8%** (+/-2.8%) worked outside Kentucky.⁷
- Between 2012 and 2016, **3.9%** (+/-1.9%) 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
- **51.6%** 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 | 1,157 | 1,167 | 1,215 |
| 5-9 years old | 1,186 | 1,209 | 1,237 |
| 10-14 years old | 1,217 | 1,214 | 1,227 |
| 15-19 years old | 1,095 | 1,193 | 1,093 |

| Children by Relationship to Householder | 2012-2016 ⁷ |
|---|------------------------|
| ... Own Children (Biological, Adopted, Stepchild) | 3,659 (+/- 233) |
| ... Grandchild | 435 (+/- 177) |
| ... Other Relative | 103 (+/- 92) |
| ... Foster/Unrelated | 178 (+/- 99) |

Child Poverty Rate²³



17.3% of students entered KY public postsecondary institutions underprepared in one or more subjects (2015).²¹

- Between 2012-2016, there were an estimated **134** (+/-70) youth ages 5-17 who had a disability.⁷
- **52.1%** of 3rd grade students in Simpson County scored proficient or distinguished on math in the 2015-16 school year compared to 47.7% for the state.²²
- **1,277** (+/- 397) 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

Simpson County Data Profile

Health and Wellness

Percent of Adults

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| ... reporting poor or fair health (2016) ²⁴ | 19.9% (19.1%-20.6%) |
| ... with hypertension (2013-15) ²⁵ | 39.8% (23.7%-58.5%) |
| ... with obesity (2014-16) ²⁵ | 41% (27.3%-55.9%) |
| ... with diabetes (2014-16) ²⁵ | 14.5% (6.3%-30.2%) |

Number of Individuals

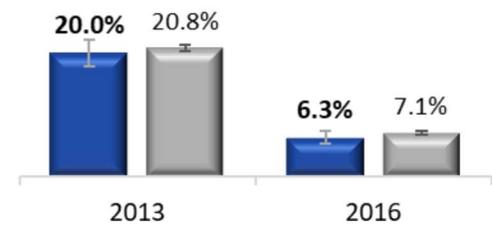
| | |
|---|-------|
| ... receiving SNAP (food stamps) (2017) ²⁶ | 2,183 |
| ... who are food insecure (2016 estimate) ²⁷ | 2,790 |

Number of Overdoses²⁸

| | 2008-2010 | 2015-2017 |
|------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| ... fatal overdoses | < 5 | 13 |
| ... nonfatal overdoses | 133 | 113 |

Percent of Population Ages 18-64 who are Uninsured²⁹

■ Simpson ■ Kentucky



Number of Care Providers²⁴

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| ... Primary Care Physicians (2015) | 8 |
| ... Dentists (2016) | 10 |
| ... Mental Health Providers (2017) | 17 |

- The estimated food insecurity rate for Simpson County is **15.6%**, compared to 15.5% for the state.²⁷
- From 2010 to 2016, the number of grocery stores **decreased** by **60.0%**, from **5 to 2** stores.¹⁶
- In 2013-2015, **26.8%** (21.0%-33.0%) of adults ages 20 and over reported no leisure time physical activity.²⁴
- The Urban Institute estimates that **33%** of people in Simpson County with a credit bureau record in 2016 had medical debt in collections compared to 27% for the state as a whole.¹⁰
- **13.7%** (5.4%-30.5%) of adults reported that there was a time in past year when they needed to see a doctor but could not because of the cost.²⁵

Sources

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- 2016 Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE). U.S. Census Bureau.
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- 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>).

Simpson County Priority Responses
77 Respondents

Jobs and Infrastructure

| | |
|--|--------|
| More jobs paying good wages and benefits | 30.34% |
| More qualified employees for existing and new jobs | 24.72% |
| Increased support for small businesses | 16.85% |
| Better roads and bridges | 15.73% |
| Access to affordable, reliable high-speed internet service | 8.99% |
| Better employee "soft skills" training (communications, team work, etc.) | 8.99% |
| Trustworthy and effective law enforcement | 7.87% |
| Responsive emergency services | 5.62% |
| Safe and accessible public water and sewer | 4.49% |
| More tourism-related businesses | 3.37% |
| More public transportation options | 2.25% |
| More part-time and summer job opportunities | 2.25% |
| Better utilities (water, sewer, etc.) to attract industry | 1.12% |

Agriculture and Environment

| | |
|--|--------|
| Less illegal dumping and littering | 30.34% |
| Sustainability of family farms | 30.34% |
| More market opportunities for farmers | 22.47% |
| More support for Kentucky agriculture and agribusiness | 20.22% |
| More profitable farms | 15.73% |
| More crop and livestock production opportunities | 13.48% |
| Less pest, disease, and weed issues | 7.87% |
| More community parks and green spaces | 7.87% |
| More community gardens | 6.74% |
| More land available for food production | 5.62% |
| More farm-related jobs | 4.49% |
| More training for food gardening skills | 4.49% |
| Increased tree and forestry management | 3.37% |
| Better landscapes for improved home value | 2.25% |

Health and Wellness

| | |
|--|--------|
| Improved affordability of health care insurance | 31.46% |
| Fewer chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, cancer, etc.) | 24.72% |
| Improved access to quality, affordable health care providers (medical, dental, etc.) | 19.1% |
| More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh local foods | 17.98% |
| More sources for buying safe, affordable, fresh food | 12.36% |
| Better skills for selecting and preparing healthier food | 10.11% |
| Availability of substance use treatment | 8.99% |
| Fewer overweight or obese youth and adults | 8.99% |
| Availability of substance use prevention programs | 7.87% |
| Better use of food safety practices (hand washing, storage, preservation, etc.) | 7.87% |
| More healthy snack and food options at restaurants and community events | 6.74% |
| Safer use of prescription medications | 5.62% |
| Safer community places to walk, run, bike, etc. | 4.49% |
| Improved availability of health care insurance | 2.25% |
| Improved sidewalks and crosswalks | 2.25% |
| More individual physical activity opportunities | 1.12% |

Youth and Families

| | |
|--|--------|
| More youth life skills training (money management, life decision making, etc.) | 30.34% |
| Better youth and adult career readiness | 25.84% |
| Stronger parenting and relationship building skills | 17.98% |
| More support for prevention of school violence and bullying | 15.73% |
| Affordable quality child care | 14.61% |
| Better family skills in reducing debt, increasing savings and financial planning | 14.61% |
| More support for relatives raising children of family members | 13.48% |
| More support for families with mental and emotional health issues | 12.36% |
| More affordable, quality elder care options | 11.24% |
| More child and partner abuse prevention resources | 8.99% |
| More senior citizen support programs | 7.87% |
| More support for families and individuals with special needs | 4.49% |

Community Vitality

| | |
|---|--------|
| More qualified leaders to prepare community for the future | 37.08% |
| More citizens helping to solve local issues | 29.21% |
| More pride in the community and its assets | 28.09% |
| More effective cooperation between community organizations | 26.97% |
| More community marketing efforts (tourism, industry attraction, etc.) | 14.61% |
| More youth community leadership opportunities | 14.61% |
| More active community volunteers | 11.24% |

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



DATE

NAME
ADDRESS
CITY, KY ZIP

Cooperative Extension Service

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

Re: _____ County Extension Community Survey

Dear _____,

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

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

Please return this survey to (Local office name and address) by _____.

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

Sincerely,

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

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



Disabilities
accommodated
with prior notification.

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

Jobs and Public Infrastructure

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

Agriculture and Environment

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

This section continues on the next page.

Please rate each of the following community issues on a scale of "Not Important" to "Very Important" by placing a check mark or "X" in the corresponding space. If you are uncertain if an issue is important to your community, select "I don't know."

After evaluating the importance of each issue within this category, **please select the TWO issues** you consider the highest priority for your community.

Agriculture and Environment, continued

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

Health and Wellness

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

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

Youth and Families

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

Overall Community Vitality

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

Demographics

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FOCUS GROUP PROCESS

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

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

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

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

INTERVIEW PROCESS

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

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

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

UNDERSTANDING SECONDARY DATA RELIABILITY

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

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

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

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



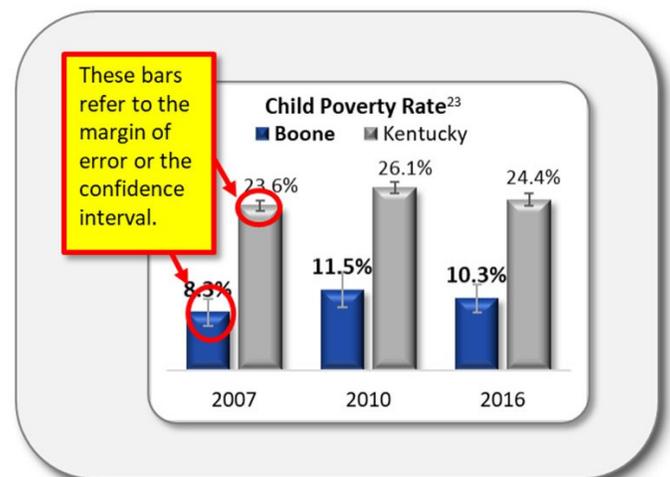
We can also think of margins of error and confidence intervals as “wobble room.” The larger the range, the more “wobble room” there is for the estimate. In other words, when the margin of error is smaller, the estimate is more precise or the focus is sharper. When the margin of error is larger, the estimate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

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

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

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

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



It starts with us

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