



Kentucky can...

## Protect the Safety Net Available to Families

Kids do best when their parents and caregivers can find stable jobs in their community and are able to earn enough money to put food on the table, provide a safe home, have time to meaningfully engage with their child, and have the resources to take care of health and other needs. However, many Kentucky children and families live in communities that have suffered from lack of investment and subsequently, offer few stable job opportunities.

**Safety net programs, including SNAP, WIC, and K-TAP, play a critical role in making sure families struggling to make ends meet can have food to eat, cover basic family needs, and access other supports and services needed to thrive.**

- The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** helps low-income families meet their nutritional needs by providing an EBT card that can be used to purchase groceries. For every one meal a food bank provides, SNAP provides nine. SNAP is associated with improved nutritional outcome for children and improved health and economic outcomes.
- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)** provides pregnant women and low-income families with young children with an EBT card that can be used to purchase nutritious food from a pre-approved plan, as well as performs regular health screenings for babies and children. Children receiving WIC score higher on mental development assessments at age 2, and children whose mothers participated in WIC when they were in utero have been shown to perform better on reading assessments.
- The **Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (K-TAP)** provides short-term financial assistance to families in need and helps families find jobs or job training programs. This financial assistance can help families purchase necessities, such as a crib or school supplies.

### Kentucky child poverty by the numbers



Over 1 in 5 children live in poverty, and 18% live in a food insecure household.



While child poverty rates have improved overall, rates remain higher for Black children (at 32%) and Latinx children (at 30%) compared to 19% of White children.



A deeper look shows that the poverty rate increases to 42% of Black children in Jefferson and Fayette Counties. This is comparable to the 6 counties in southeastern Kentucky in which 40% or more of their entire child population lives in poverty.

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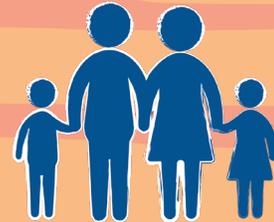
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With the cost of housing, food, and transportation, **most families need an income of at least twice the official federal poverty level (FPL) to cover their basic needs.** For many families, recovering financially from the pandemic will extend well beyond the public health crisis, necessitating continued assistance.

Kentucky will be strongest when all children have their best chance to thrive. For communities of color, the lack of opportunities has resulted in significant differences in income by race. This wealth gap multiplies across generations and contributes to the persistent high rates of Black families living in poverty and earning incomes too low to meet even basic family needs. **With the structural factors that have contributed to higher rates of poverty among families of color, such safety net programs help families meet basic needs and must offer equitable access.**

**Most families need an income of at least 200% of the federal poverty level to cover their basic needs, which amounts to about \$52,000 for a family of four**



### Blueprint for Kentucky's Children Solution:

Protect current funding for safety net programs, including KTAP, SNAP, and WIC, and ensure they are not modified in ways that prevent children from receiving needed services.