

# Report to the People

*Jefferson County*

2023

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION  
SERVICE JEFFERSON COUNTY

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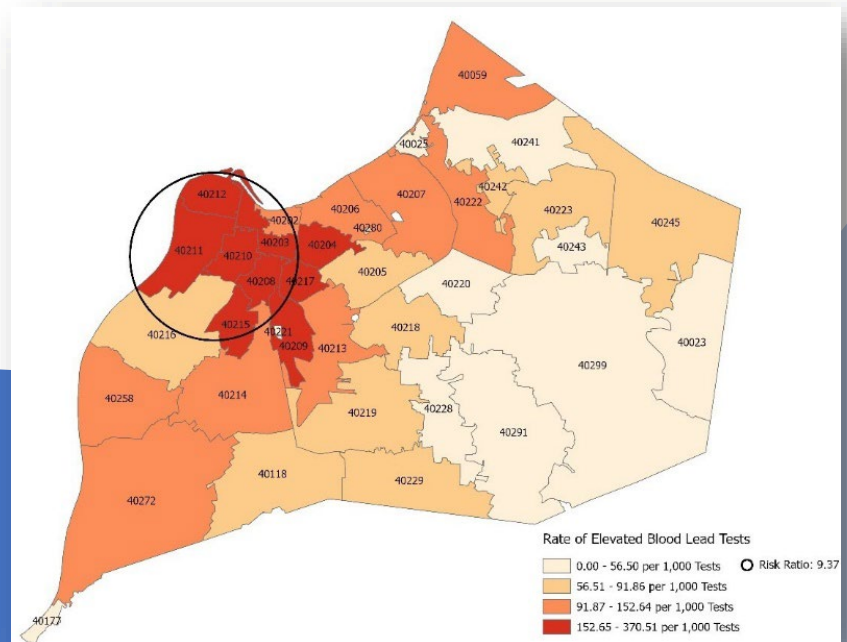
## Vacant Lot Soil Testing Continues

Soil testing continues to be of great interest to many residents, urban growers, non-profits, and government agencies in Louisville Metro. However, there aren't any requirements (legal or otherwise) to force one to do so. Recently, the Extension Ag Agent received 4 requests to review and test soil on utility easements, open privately owned spaces, and vacant lots to be used for food production. It's usually after food production has begun, that a soil sample is requested.

A recent article in the Journal of Agriculture and Human Values by Melanie Malone, Ph.D., University of Washington, points out that urban soil contamination may be overlooked as gardens are being established. Further, Dr A. Saikawa, Emory University in Atlanta GA, recently found high soil lead contamination in West Atlanta residential and garden areas resulting in EPA investigation.

The soil samples taken in selected neighborhoods in west Louisville indicate high levels of heavy metal contamination. Recalculation of existing soil test results is being shared with Louisville Metro's Office of Housing and Community Development and the Louisville Land Bank Authority.

Louisville Metro Office of Housing and Community Development is partnering with the research on vacant and abandoned properties by using the results of the findings to expedite the use of food production and further insuring a safer farming experience.



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

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Disabilities  
accommodated  
with prior notification.

## Partnership Brings New Opportunity

The Jefferson County Extension Service received a generous donation from Jefferson County Farm Bureau to purchase all materials needed for raised bed gardens. The raised beds were built in front of the Farm Bureau Building where our office is located. UK and KSU Extension Agents, along with assistants and 4-H Teen Club members came together to build seven raised garden beds.

Once the beds are filled with soil, the 4-H and Horticulture Departments will team up to offer a bi-weekly 4-H Garden Club for youth.



## Nutrition Education Program Impact

The Kentucky Nutrition Education Program (KYNEP or NEP) encompasses two separate USDA programs: The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). Both programs provide educational opportunities for limited-resource individuals and families to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and change behaviors for improved health and well-being.

The Jefferson County Extension Nutrition Education Program provides hands-on nutrition education to limited- resource audiences, focusing on four areas:

- Buying and preparing healthy foods
- Developing new meal planning and cooking skills
- Adopting new healthy lifestyle behaviors
- Managing SNAP resources

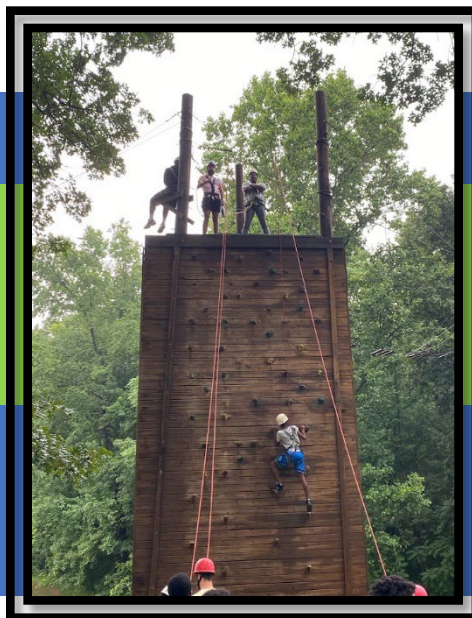
In 2022, 7,880 direct contacts were made with Jefferson County residents who participated in ongoing nutrition education programming and 89% of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and 19% showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, 77% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and 63% made changes to be more physically active.



## Closing the “Adventure” Gap: Sowing Seeds with Faith at 4-H Camp

Sowing Seeds with Faith (SSWF) is a youth program in Louisville whose goal is to engage youth academically and socially in the Louisville community by mastering developmental challenges via educational expectations, structure, faith, and accountability. Sowing Seeds with Faith is a Louisville-based private tutoring service with tutors ranging from JCPS teachers to JCPS retirees to current college students. Sowing Seeds uses a Village approach to provide the highest caliber of educational support to students of K-12 in every subject. Sowing Seeds with Faith particularly excels in math, reading comprehension, and black history.

4-H has been involved with the program for the past 5 years. We’ve taught health and nutrition, robotics, and cooking classes. With the assistance of two 4-H Assistants, three teen club leaders, and two agents, we planned and successfully implemented an overnight trip to Lake Cumberland 4-H Camp. Over 100 participants traveled to the camp. Focusing on opportunities that most inner-city youths don’t get a chance to experience, participants were given the opportunity to kayak, canoe, zipline, climb a rock wall, cook on an open fire, practice firearm safety with a rifle and a bow and arrow and much more. For more than 90% of the participants, this was the first time they have ever stayed overnight in the wilderness and learned how to use a bow and arrow. For many of these youth, the fear of guns and live ammunition is a trigger, 95% of them were successful in learning how to properly handle a shotgun and use ammunition. The youth was able to learn effective problem-solving techniques in the ropes course. They learned how to collaborate with others in the outdoor cooking, rifle, and boat dock classes. Most importantly all youth were able to build a more positive relationship with each other and the adults who work at the camp.



## Community Gardens by the Numbers

The Jefferson County Extension Service manages ten community gardens in Metro Louisville. The gardens are located all over the county reaching many communities. Of the 700+ plots that were rented in 2022 here are some interesting facts:

- Close to 600 residents rented just over 700 plots in Jefferson County.
- Plots vary from 4x8 raised beds up to 30x30 traditional plots.
- We have gardeners who sell at various Farmers Markets in the city.
- Partner with organizations like Catholic Charities & Louisville Grows working with new American gardeners.
- Over a dozen languages spoken by gardeners.



*"I sure enjoy spending time at the garden, and comparing notes with other gardeners, as well as showing my plot to visitors. My community garden plot helped me keep a positive outlook on life." William F. Miles Community Gardener*

 Cooperative  
Extension Service

*It starts with us*

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