INTRODUCTIONS
Signe Anderson
Senior Director of Nutrition Advocacy

Crys Riles
Anti-Hunger Advocate

Geraldine Hernandez-Marin
King Nutrition Fellow

Kate Goodin
Child Anti-Hunger Advocate

Anne Dobson Ball
WIC Partnership & Outreach Coordinator

Anna Grace Breedlove
WIC Referral & Data Specialist
End hunger in Tennessee by protecting and strengthening the federal nutrition programs: SNAP, WIC, Child Nutrition Programs

- Improve access and remove barriers to programs
- Advocate for solutions to systemic issues
- Educate and inform
- Provide policy expertise
- Direct client work
SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
WIC: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children
NSLP: National School Lunch Program
SBP: School Breakfast Program
SEBT: Summer EBT
SFSP: Summer Food Service Program
CACFP: Child and Adult Care Food Program
CSFP: Commodity Supplemental Food Program
AGENDA

• Objectives
• Data Overview
• Recidivism
• SNAP
• Partner Spotlights
• Advocacy & Action
• Discussion
OBJECTIVES

- Learn about the intersection of hunger and individuals exiting the prison and jail system
- Discuss recidivism and hunger
- Understand SNAP for currently and formerly incarcerated applicants
- Learn opportunities for ways to advocate
TERMINOLOGY

- Formerly-Incarcerated
- Justice-Impacted/Involved
- People Exiting Prison/Jail
- Returning Citizens
- System-Impacted
- Re-entering Individuals

- Offender
- Convict
- Felon
- Inmate
HUNGER AND REENTRY

• **First 2 weeks** of release have high risk of death (NEJM)
• Hunger **exacerbates other issues**, making it more difficult to secure housing, employment, transportation, and other basic human needs
• SNAP is the **most effective program** in the US for combatting hunger

Source: NEJM
1.2 million Americans in prison (2022 USDOJ)
   - 3rd highest rate of incarceration in the world

20% of formerly incarcerated people experienced food insecurity in 2019 (SAGE Journal)

Black people incarcerated at 4.2 times rate of White people
   - Latino/a people at 2 times rate of White people (Sentencing Project)

Source: US Dept. of Justice, SAGE, Sentencing Project
TENNESSEE DATA

- **817 per 100,000** Tennesseans are in prison (Prison Policy)
- **$1.3 billion operating budget**  TDOC FY 2022
- **11,671 individuals** released from prison FY2021 (TDOC)
- Only **1,208 people** applied for SNAP prior to release 2021 (TDOC)

Source: [Prisonpolicy.org](https://www.prisonpolicy.org), [TDOC 2022](https://www.tn.gov/corrections), [TDOC 2021](https://www.tn.gov/justice/communications/releases/2021/11/16/tn-millionaries.html)
**TENNESSEE DATA**

**INCARCERATION RATES**

Comparing Tennessee and Founding NATO Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Incarceration Rate per 100,000 population</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
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<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iceland</td>
<td>36</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2024.html

TN vs. Top 12 Countries
Lydia West
Nutrition Advocacy Intern
Tennessee Justice Center
Recidivism: tendency of previously incarcerated individuals to be rearrested, reconvicted, or reincarcerated

- Without **basic human needs** being met, people find a way to meet them
- This may include **extralegal options** which leads to recidivism
• **82% of people released** from state prison were rearrested within 10 years.

• Recidivism rates **decrease each year** that someone stays out of prison.

Source: [Bureau of Justice Statistics](https://www.bjs.gov)
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

- Formerly Food Stamps
- Allows participants to buy food with an EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer) card at grocery stores and farmers markets
- Helps mitigate hunger for low-income people of all demographics
SNAP

Household Composition:

- SNAP administered by household, not individual, which may cause issues determining eligibility
- DHS caseworkers may be confused by multiple individuals claiming same address (e.g., transitional housing)
- Applicants may not know where they will live when applying before release
Navigating the Process

- Knowing where to send the card can be difficult
  - Some people become unhoused when they leave prisons (Prison Policy)
  - Assisting agency, family/friend, or even DHS office
- Access to necessary verification documents such as ID, residence, and income
- Some people exit to other states, causing delays in access

Source: prisonpolicy.org
Navigating the Process

- Access to necessary verification documents such as ID, residence, and income
  - May self-attest as a last resort
- Some people move to other states after release, causing delays in access
  - Worth contacting the state to understand options

Source: prisonpolicy.org
Navigating the Process

- Assisting agencies can help
  - Authorized Representative permission allows them to access files, view case, and even interview on behalf of the applicant

Source: prisonpolicy.org
PRE-RELEASE WAIVER

- Allows incarcerated individuals to apply for SNAP up to 30 days before release
- Goal is to leave with a card in hand on Day One
- Waiver expires in 2025
- Lack of access by incarcerated individuals to phones and computers, etc. can be a barrier
- 1,208 applications completed in FY21 vs. 11,671 releases (TDOC)

Source: TDOC 2021
DRUG FELONY BAN

- 20% of FY21 prison population had drug-related offenses
- TN bans those with Class A Drug Felonies from SNAP
- Class B-E can be overcome by completing qualifying rehab programs
  - This can cause issues for people who cannot produce documentation (facility no longer exists, etc.)
  - For non-usage felonies, a doctor’s note can be submitted
  - Self-attestation can be used as a last resort

Source: NEJM, TDOC 2021
25 states and territories have partial or full drug felony bans.
Partial bans can make it really difficult for people to access SNAP:
- Locating documents
- Understanding the rules
- May not know what class they have
- Blanket rules: not usage specific

Source: NEJM, TDOC 2021
• **New Legislation**
  - **HB 1886/SB 2078**
  - Passed in TN this year
  - Any felony in another state that would constitute a Class A Drug Felony in TN now applies for the SNAP ban if the person lives in TN.
TIME LIMITS

- Often called “work requirements”
- Some people (dependant on age) must work 20 hours/week to stay on SNAP
- Formerly incarcerated people are unemployed at 3 times rate of general public (White House)
  - For POC, is almost 7 x higher
- Many employers will not hire formerly incarcerated people, causing unemployment or underemployment

Source: White House
PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Kleopatra Gaiter, MSW
Admissions Manager
Dismas House
PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Dr. Cynthia Stewart (she/her)

Director of Operations

TPOM (Tennessee Prison Outreach Ministry)
Urge DHS to Adopt State Waivers:

- **Time Limit Area Waivers** can exempt entire geographic locations from work requirements, which cause issues for the unemployed and underemployed.
Urge DHS to Adopt State Waivers:

- **Telephonic Signature** would allow application over the phone
- **Longer Recertification Periods** would create less administrative burden for both participant and agency
- **Broad Based Categorical Eligibility** would expand who can be on and stay on SNAP
Drug Felony Ban

Must be done via legislation, either at the state or federal level.
H.R. 3479 - RESTORE Act of 2023

- **Sponsor:** Rep. Steve Cohen (TN)
- **Farm Bill**
  - Removes the lifetime ban to accessing SNAP for people with drug felonies and allows them to begin the application process 30 days before their release date so they have access to benefits on Day One.
H.R. 4232 - Ending Homelessness Act

- Rep. Maxine Waters (CA)
- Looks to expand access to the Housing Choice Voucher Program by making it into a federal entitlement program
- Meeting basic needs helps meet other basic needs
H.R. 3519 - Hot Foods Act of 2023

- **Sponsor:** Rep. Grace Meng (NY)
- **Farm Bill**

This bill would allow SNAP dollars to be spent on hot, prepared foods. This is a massive barrier to those without the ability to store or cook foods, effectively limiting their ability to use their SNAP benefits.
H.R. 1510 - Improving Access to Nutrition Act of 2023

- **Sponsor:** Rep. Barbara Lee (CA)
- **Farm Bill**
- This bill would abolish the 3-month time limit for most SNAP recipients who don’t meet work requirements.
Contact your legislators via phone, letter, or email.

Ask them to support these and other legislation/policies that increase access to nutrition programs for justice-impacted folks.

- **Federal**: Find your Legislators [HERE](#)
- **State**: Find your Legislators [HERE](#)
WORKING GROUPS

- **WIC Champions**
  - Second Thursdays at 9:00am CT

- **SNAP Access**
  - Third Thursdays at 10:00am CT

- **Healthy Meals Healthy Kids TN**
  - First Thursdays at 1:00pm CT

- **Summer EBT Advocacy Call**
  - Third Wednesdays at 3:00pm CT

- **College Hunger Quarterly Call**
  - Next Meeting September 24, 2024 1:00pm CT
Join Nutrition Note!

- Our monthly anti-hunger newsletter
- Updates on changes and news
- Sign up [HERE](#)
RESOURCES

- SNAP Eligibility FAQ
- SNAP Fact Sheet (English & Espanol)
- WIC Fact Sheet (English & Espanol)
- WIC Fact Sheet (English & العربية)
- SNAP Application Assistance Flyer
- SNAP 3-Month Time Limits in TN
- USDOJ 2022 Statistics
- Food Insecurity Among Formerly Incarcerated Adults-SAGE
- Mass Incarceration Trends - Sentencing Project
- States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2024-Prison Policy Initiative
- TDOC Annual Report 2021
- TDOC Annual Report 2022
- Bureau of Justice Report on Recidivism
- Expanding Economic Opportunity for Formerly Incarcerated Persons-White House

Share your resources in the chat!
DISCUSSION
CONTACT US

Signe Anderson
Senior Director of Nutrition Advocacy
sanderson@tnjustice.org

Crys Riles
Anti-Hunger Advocate
criles@tnjustice.org

Geraldine Hernandez-Marin
King Nutrition Fellow
gmarin@tnjustice.org

Kate Goodin
Child Anti-Hunger Advocate
kgoodin@tnjustice.org

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aball@tnjustice.org

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