

A large, faint, purple graphic of a fork and knife crossed in the center of the page, enclosed within a hexagonal outline.

Addressing Senior Hunger in Tennessee

May 25th, 2023 | 1:00 PM



TENNESSEE
JUSTICE
CENTER



TJC and the Nutrition Team

Signe Anderson (she/her)

*Director of
Nutrition Advocacy*

Crys Riles (they/them)

Anti-Hunger Advocate

Anna Luttrell (she/her)

Nutrition Client Advocate

Eleanor Berlin (she/her)

Dietetic Intern

TJC Anti-Hunger Advocacy

Our mission: 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



Federal Nutrition Programs

SNAP Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

WIC Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infant and Children

NSLP National School Lunch Program

SBP School Breakfast Program

SFSP Summer Food Service Program

CACFP Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children:



Reduces Food Insecurity



Improves Dietary Intake and Health



Protects Against Obesity



Boosts Learning and Development



Supports Economic Security



Lifts Families out of Poverty



Acts as Stimulus for Local Economies

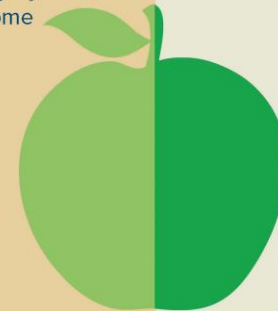
SNAP STRENGTHS

SNAP REDUCES HUNGER

and food insecurity by providing low-income people necessary food money.

SNAP IMPROVES DIETARY INTAKE

and health, especially among children and with lasting effects.



SNAP BOLSTERS LOCAL ECONOMIES

by increasing money spent for food at local retailers.

SNAP LIFTS MILLIONS OF PEOPLE

out of poverty.



Older Americans Data

1 in 14 (7.1%, or 5.5 million) seniors in the U.S. are food insecure (2021)

- **6.9%** Tennessee seniors
 - **10.8%** Memphis seniors
 - **3.3%** Nashville seniors
- Top ten lowest food security states are our neighbors (all but VA and NC)
- Black and Hispanic, lower income, renters, households with a disability, ages 60-69 face highest food insecurity
- **7 million** Older Americans could be food insecure by 2050

[Source: Feeding America](#)

Senior Hunger

- **What are the causes of senior hunger?**
 - Poverty/low fixed income
 - Social Isolation
 - Health conditions and healthcare expenses
 - Lack of affordable housing
 - Systemic racism and discrimination

[Source: National Council on Aging](#)

Senior Hunger

- **What are the effects of senior hunger?**
 - Malnutrition/lower nutrient intake
 - Poor health outcomes (congestive heart failure, obesity, gum disease, and more)
 - Mental health issues

[Source: National Council on Aging](#)

SNAP Helps Seniors

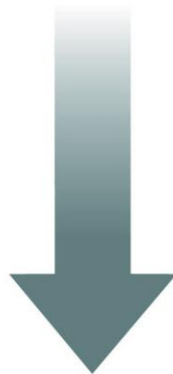
- How does SNAP Help?

SNAP Matters for Seniors

SNAP, the nation's first line of defense against hunger, is critically important to seniors.



- Improved food security
- Better nutrition
- Improved health
- Better medication adherence



- Fewer difficult choices
- Lower health care costs
- Reduced hospital & nursing home admissions

In addition to improving the food security, health, and well-being of seniors, federal SNAP dollars stimulate local economies through assistance that goes directly to struggling seniors to purchase food.

SOURCE: FRAC's Hunger and Health series

Why We Care

- **TJC** works with **MANY** older Tennesseans who need assistance with federal programs
- Only **43%** of eligible seniors in Tennessee access SNAP
- For seniors raising children, **lack of access affects them too**
- Consistent access to healthy food is **vital for health**
- Many older Americans have **fixed incomes**

SNAP Program Barriers

- **Application Accessibility** and navigation of services
 - TN hasn't entirely adopted Elderly Simplified Application Project (**ESAP**)
 - SNAP interview
- **Digital Literacy** and the digital divide
- Misunderstanding **medical and shelter cost deductions**
 - Medical deductions not factored
 - **No Cap on Shelter Costs for 60+**

SNAP Program Barriers

- **Misinformation and misconceptions**
- SNAP expands to **fit the need**
- **Informal custody** is sufficient to claim a child
- Average senior benefit is **\$105/mo.** [USDA](#)
- Complicated **congregant living** household rules
- Stigma, Pride, and **Mistrust** Age Well Study

Senior SNAP Specifics

- Some medical costs can be deducted from income
- Specialty considerations for household composition
- Shelter costs do not get capped for 60+
- Exempt from work requirements/time limits for 50+

Elderly Simplified Application Project

ESAP

- For Older Americans with no "earned" income
- Reduces documentation needed
- Extends recertification period
- Fewer interviews
- Simplified 2-page application
- State opt-in options

ESAP

- **Tennessee** has only adopted two specific ESAP waivers:
 - 24-month **recertification** periods
 - **Cross-compatibility** with SSI and VA benefits
- These are very beneficial, but **TN could do more**

SCSEP

SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employment Program)

- Provide work-based income for eligible older Americans.
- This income does not count towards income for SNAP
 - Some DHS Caseworkers mistakenly count this

TJC

Eleanor Berlin (she/her)

Nutrition Team Intern

Dietetic Intern from

Vanderbilt University



Senior Housing

- Adults face increasing rent costs leading to homelessness
- Rent costs disproportionately affect older adults
- Black and Latino renters face higher rent burdens
- Solutions: Income support, affordable housing, and accessible housing

[Source: Justice in Aging](#)

Grandfamilies and WIC

- 25% of grandparent-headed households with grandchildren and no parent present experienced food insecurity
- Grandfamilies are more commonly African American, American Indian, Alaska Native, and Latino individuals

[Source: Generations United](#)

Grandfamilies and WIC

- Grandparents are the primary caregiver of 6% of children under 6 years of age
- 5% of WIC participants do not live with their parents
- Grandparents don't need to have legal custody of children for WIC eligibility.

[Source: FRAC](#)

TJC

Anna Luttrell (she/her)

Nutrition Client Advocate

SNAP Caseworker for

Tennessee Justice Center



Medical Deduction

Applicants with disability or over 60 years can deduct medical costs:

- Any insurance premiums (2023 Medicare = \$164.90)
- Unpaid medical bills
- Dr. Visit copays and transportation to Dr. office
- Cost of service animal, home health aid, housekeeper
- And more-- See TJC flyer [here](#)

Household Composition

Seniors (and people with disabilities) can apply as their own HH if they live with a caregiver

- Rest of the HH income cannot be more than 165% FPL
- Applicant is unable to purchase and prepare his/her own meals with others (caregiver does this for them)
- Rest of HH income is not factored into monthly benefit amount

Partner Agency Report

Jeff Wamble (he/him)

Social Worker

Jeff.wamble@tn.gov

Strategic Planning & Research

Metro Social Services





Metropolitan Social Services
 800 2nd Ave. North Suite 100
 Nashville, Tn. 37201
Senior Nutrition Program

MSS provides nutritionally sound meals to eligible seniors and disabled persons. The program provides both Congregate Meals in strategically located centers in Davidson County and Home Delivered Meals to eligible persons. The Senior Nutrition Program promotes better health through improved nutrition, reducing isolation of the elderly while helping them continue living independently in the community.

HOME DELIVERED MEALS (60 years or older)

Eligibility Requirements for home delivered meals

- Incapacitation or disability
- Unable to prepare own meals.
Inability to receive nutritious meals from family, friends, or other resources.
- Must live in Davidson County

*There is no charge for meals, but donations are important to the success of our program.
 Suggested Contribution Scale*

If your monthly income is: Please consider contributing:	
\$100- \$400	\$1.05
\$401- \$800	\$2.10
\$801- \$1200	\$3.15
\$1201-\$1600	\$4.20
\$1601- over	\$5.25

Referral Process

- Referrals are required for home delivered meals services. Referrals must be made by a healthcare provider (MCOs, physician's office, home health care agency, hospital, etc.). (Due to COVID-19 we are accepting self-initiated referrals)
- Referrals may be made by calling 615-880-2459.
- For additional information about the Senior Nutrition Program, please call 615-880-2292. After the referral is received a Metro Social Services staff will make contact to conduct the required screenings and in-home assessment to determine eligibility.

▪ All referrals do not result in approval. Eligibility for delivered meals provided by the Area Agency on Aging and Disability of the Greater Nashville Regional Council and the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County



Metropolitan Social Services
800 2nd Ave. North Suite 100
Nashville, Tn. 37201

Senior Nutrition Program



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Eligibility Requirements for Congregate Meals

- Age 60 or over and Davidson County Resident
 - Spouses of persons 60+; whom themselves is under 60 years of age
 - Disabled persons under 60 years of age who reside in a senior high-rise development where congregate meals are served

There is no charge for meals, but donations are important to the success of our program.

CONGREGATE MEAL SITES

There are several congregate meal sites in convenient locations throughout Nashville including these and several others located in senior high-rise developments:

- Cohn Adult Learning Center, 4800 Park Avenue, 615-880-2343
- East Park Community Center, 700 Woodland Street, 615-862-8448
- Elizabeth Community Center, 1701 Arthur Street, 615-880-2340

For additional information about the Senior Nutrition Program, please call 615-880-2292.
Hadley Community Center, 1037 28th Avenue North, 615-880-2290

If you are interested in applying for Metropolitan Transit Authority's AccessRide Program, please call to request an application: 615-880-3970, ext. 1104.

*Funding for this program is provided by the
Area Agency on Aging and Disability of the Greater Nashville Regional Council and the
Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County*

ADVOCACY/ACTION
OPPORTUNITIES

Legislation

“Limit, Save, Grow Act” (Debt Ceiling Bill)

- Has already passed the House, headed to Senate
- Would gut many safety net programs including SNAP
- Complete and share [THIS ACTION](#)

Legislation

“SNAP Plus Act” [H.R. 6338](#)

- Part of Farm Bill 2023
- Would allow SNAP to be spent on hot, prepared foods
- The ability to cook or store food can often be a barrier to accessing SNAP, making it less useful for some Older Americans
- [Contact your Legislators](#)

Legislation

H.R. 1581

- Part of the 2023 Farm Bill
- Would extend work requirements to age 65 and remove exemptions for those caring for kids over 7
- Co-sponsored by Rep. Andy Ogles of TN District 5

Legislation

Oppose: [H.R. 1581](#)

How to help:

- House Agriculture Committee members from TN overseeing the Farm Bill. Rep. [Scott DesJarlais \(TN-04\)](#) and [Rep. John Rose \(TN-06\)](#).
- Rep. [Andy Ogles's office](#)
- Senators [Blackburn](#) and [Hagerty](#)

Information & Resources

- [Feeding America: The State of Senior Hunger in America in 2021 Report](#)
- [Justice in Aging: Issue Brief](#)
- [FRAC: Making WIC Work Better: Welcoming Grandparents Raising Grandchildren](#)
- [Generations United: Together at the Table](#)
- [TJC: SNAP Medical Deductions Flyer](#)
- [TJC: Debt Ceiling Senator Letter Action](#)
- [TJC: Nutrition Legislation and Advocacy Page](#)
- [TN DHS: CARES Conference on Aging](#)
- [FRAC: Best Practices for ESAP](#)
- [USDA: Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2020](#)
- [NCOA: Get the Facts on Food Insecurity and Older Adults](#)
- [TJC: Vaccine Resources](#)

QUESTIONS?

Tennessee Justice Center

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criles@tnjustice.org

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sanderson@tnjustice.org

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