Addressing Senior Hunger & SNAP

MAY 2024
INTRODUCTIONS
TJC NUTRITION TEAM

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
FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

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
SENIOR HUNGER DATA

Seniors experienced food insecurity in USA 2021*

- **5.5 million** ages 60+ (7.1% or 1 in 14) and
- **3.8 million** ages 50-59 (9.4% or 1 in 11)

- Hunger rate **higher** than before Great Recession (~2007)
- **Disability, race, ethnicity**, and other factors exacerbate hunger
- **Caregivers of children** face deeper challenges with hunger

Source: Feeding America, FRAC

*most recent data available
7.9% of people 60+ are food insecure, (0.8% more than national average)

- 3.5% of 60+ are considered to have “very low food security”
- Memphis: 10.8% “food insecure”
  - 3.1% “very low food insecurity”

Source: Feeding America, FRAC, America’s Health Rankings
CAUSES OF SENIOR HUNGER

Economic
- Fixed Income
- Medical Expenses

Isolation
- Self-neglect
- Lack of community

Housing

Transportation

Systemic Discrimination
Poor health
  • both mental and physical
Malnutrition and undernutrition
  • can exacerbate other issues
Shame
  • creates fear of reaching out for help
Other household members are also affected
Nutrition Safety Net Programs can help:

SNAP, WIC & Food Boxes
SNAP BENEFITS

- Supports **nutrition** and **food security**
- **Medication adherence**
- Supports **Financial Stability**
- **Independence**
BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Application and Navigation

- **Digital Literacy**
  - DHS is increasingly pushing applicants to the online portal
- **Phone lines**
  - Hold times are consistently several hours
- **Transportation**
  - Physical access is limited
  - Public transit is unreliable
BARRIERS TO ACCESS

SNAP Time Limits

- The age for work requirements increases to ages **18-54 in October of 2024**
  - This will knock many people off the program

Office Experience is often inhospitable to needs

- Restroom access
- Seating
- Competent & friendly staff willing to assist
BARRIERS TO ACCESS

Caseworker knowledge gaps

- Improperly trained staff may not account for senior specific exceptions
  - counting programs like SCSEP as income
  - medical deductions
  - counting all shelter costs
  - 24 month recertification, not 6
  - cross-compatibility with VA and SSI benefits
    - issues with verification documents
  - inability to navigate non-traditional living situations such as congregate living homes.
BARRIERS TO ACCESS

• Sociocultural
  ○ **Misinformation & misconceptions** about the program
    • expectations of low benefits
      ○ “It’s not worth it”
    • Don’t want to take from others
      ○ misinformation that there is limited availability and will take away from others.
      ○ **SNAP** expands to meet need automatically
BARRIERS TO ACCESS

○ Sociocultural

■ Mistrust of caseworkers and/or agents
  • Especially if they speak to a new person each time
    ○ Rapport is critical
  • Justified reticence to trust personal information with strangers

■ Shame and Pride
  • May be unwilling to use the program because of ideas of self-sufficiency or shame about needing social support
TN can make the nutrition safety net work better for older Tennesseans
OPPORTUNITIES

TN could adopt **ESAP (Elderly Simplified Application Project)**

- For 60+ with no earned income
- Waives recertification interview
- Allows for flexibility in verification
- Standard Medical Deduction (reducing paperwork)
- Extends certification to 36 months instead of 24 months.

- **Note:** TN currently uses a waiver to extend recertification to 24 months.
TN could adopt other waivers

- **Telephonic signature** would allow seniors to apply for the program over the phone, removing the digital divide as a barrier.
- **On demand interviews** would allow seniors to interview on the phone when they call DHS.
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
Grandfamilies are becoming increasingly more common.

- More than twice as many as 20 years ago
- Grandparents caring for young children can apply for WIC on their behalf.
- Being on SNAP makes this process easier as they are automatically income-eligible
- They do not have to have legal custody of the child.
PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Lisa Huskey
SNAP Outreach Coordinator,
East TN AAAD
East Tennessee Human Resource Agency (ETHRA)
Community-Support Organizations:
Food boxes, prepared meals, and SNAP navigation
Many organizations like food banks and community development groups work to combat senior hunger:

- Food boxes for clients who can prepare meals and prepared meals for those who cannot
  - “Meals on Wheels” and other senior outreach
- Create opportunities to connect older Tennesseans to safety net programs
  - Intentional rapport building is critical, such as using the same vetted volunteers each time, and spending time with clients beyond just delivery.
ADVOCACY AND ACTION
Farm Bill

- **Oppose H.R. 1581**
- 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
Support “SNAP Plus Act” H.R. 6338
- Allows SNAP to be used on hot prepared food
- Helps reduce labor burden on older Tennesseans
Contact your legislators

- **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: 6/13/24 at 1:00pm CT
Join Nutrition Note!

- Our monthly anti-hunger newsletter
- Updates on changes and news
- Sign up [HERE](http://example.com/sign-up)
Feeding America: The State of Senior Hunger
FRAC Senior Hunger Resources
America’s Health Rankings: 60+ Tennesseans Data
FNS Elderly and Disabled FAQ
SNAP Eligibility FAQ
TJC Nutrition Legislation Tracker
SNAP Fact Sheet (English & Espanol)
WIC Fact Sheet (English & Espanol)
WIC Fact Sheet (عربي)
SNAP Application Assistance Flyer
SNAP 3-Month Time Limits in TN
TN WIC Referral Form
FRAC SNAP for Seniors Graphics

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

Anne Dobson Ball
WIC Partnership & Outreach Coordinator
aball@tnjustice.org

Anna Grace Breedlove
WIC Referral & Data Specialist
abreedlove@tnjustice.org