





Senior Hunger

A National Crisis and a Collaborative Response

Nutrition assistance helps at-risk seniors and their families stretch their budgets to ease the burden of choosing between buying food and paying for other necessities, such as medicine, rent and utilities. Every day, communities nationwide are leveraging government supports, volunteers and charitable giving to reach older Americans who struggle with these challenges.

Collaborations Help Seniors Throughout the Continuum of Need

Protecting seniors from food insecurity and hunger is complex due to their varying abilities to purchase and prepare food. That is why food banks and Meals on Wheels organizations are working in tandem to ensure that seniors continue to have access to assistance as they age. The chart below shows the safety net programs available that provide access to proper nutrition and promote health and independence across various stages of aging.



Seniors are able to leave their homes, shop for groceries, participate in community meal programs, and/or pick up food packages and prepare meals at their home.

Seniors are able to leave their homes, shop for groceries, leave their prepare meals at their home.

Seniors have limited ability to leave their homes, shop or prepare meals.

SENIORS

Homebound seniors are unable to shop or prepare meals.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program SNAP

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program SFMNP

Commodity Supplemental Food Program CSFP

The Emergency Food Assistance Program **TEFAP**

Congregate Meals

Home-Delivered Meals

Charitable grocery and meal programs, such as food banks, mobile pantries, grocery bags, and congregate and home-delivered meal programs, such as Meals on Wheels.

Example of Successful Collaborations at Work

East Texas Food Bank in Tyler, TX operates a program called "Senior Servings" in partnership with local Meals on Wheels programs. The Food Bank provides two additional weekend bags for Meals on Wheels drivers to deliver to their clients' homes on Fridays, extending their standard five-day coverage to seven.

Olive Branch Senior Center in Phoenix, AZ distributes fresh fruits and vegetables to congregate meals clients and other program participants, made possible through donations from the St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance.

IN 2012, 5.3 MILLION ADULTS 60+ WERE FOOD INSECURE, WITH 4 MILLION MORE FACING THE THREAT OF HUNGER

Studies show that food-insecure seniors are at increased risk of poorer health and chronic conditions, including diabetes and heart disease. With the senior population projected to double by 2050, it is more critical than ever that we invest in our nation's nutrition assistance programs to strengthen their safety net.



food-insecure seniors are disabled





of Feeding America client households with seniors make tradeoffs between purchasing food and medicine.



More than half of Meals on Wheels participants take 6-23 medications daily.

THE FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS SERVING AT-RISK SENIORS





	SNAP	SENIOR Farmers' Market Nutrition Program	CSFP	TEFAP	CONGREGATE MEALS	HOME-DELIVERED MEALS
FEDERAL PROGRAMS	Low-income seniors receive a supplemental grocery card to purchase food at qualified retailers. Some seniors are able to pay for meals at authorized restaurants or home-delivered meal programs.	Low-income seniors receive coupons for goods at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture operations (CSAs), putting fresh produce into the hands of at-risk seniors.	Low-income seniors receive monthly food packages, distributed by food banks or agencies from USDA commodities. The packages are designed to meet seniors' unique nutritional needs.	Low-income Americans in need of emergency food assistance, including seniors, receive groceries or meals at no cost through food banks, pantries, soup kitchens or shelters.	Eligible seniors receive meals in a group setting (like a senior center, community building, or adult care home), often accompanied by nutrition education, exercise and other social activities. Some seniors access meals at adult care facilities through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which is authorized through the Child Nutrition Bill.	Eligible seniors receive nutritious meals delivered to their home either by a Meals on Wheels volunteer or staff member, accompanied by a friendly visit and safety check.
ELIGIBILITY Requirements	130% of the federal poverty line, or annual income of \$15,171 for a senior living alone.	185% of the federal poverty line, or an annual income of \$21,589.50 for a senior living alone.	130% of the federal poverty line, or an annual income of \$15,171 for a senior living alone.	185% of the federal poverty line, or an annual income of \$21,589.50 for a senior living alone.	Seniors 60+ in the greatest economic and social need, with particular attention to those who are low-income, belong to a minority group, have limited English proficiency, are at risk of institutionalization and live in rural areas. Home delivery is targeted to the least mobile.	
AMERICANS 60+ Served	4.2 MILLION SENIORS average benefit \$139/month or \$1.32/meal (2012)	835,795 SENIORS average benefit \$31/year (2013)	588,000 SENIORS (2013)	528,433,816* meals served by Feeding America *17% of clients are 60+ (2014)	1,626,532 SENIORS 86,272,020 meals (2012)	851,204 SENIORS 137,361,065 meals (2012)
JURISDICTION THE UNMET NEED	Only 39% of eligible seniors are enrolled in SNAP and recipients on average access only \$139/mo, an insufficient benefit to support seniors' nutritional needs for the full month.	Seniors on average only access \$31/year in farmers' market groceries. What's more, the program is funded at a set level annually and therefore cannot serve all eligible seniors and is unavailable in 7 states.	The program is funded at a set level annually and therefore cannot serve all eligible seniors and is unavailable in AL, VA, WV, and WY.	The program is funded at a set level annually and therefore feeds only as many people as the commodities can provide for.	The program is funded at a set level annually and therefore may only serve as many eligible participants as funding allows, which has never kept pace with demand or rising costs and results in waiting lists for meal services across all states.	
	Agricultural Act, known as the Farm Bill, which is reauthorized every five years. Funding is appropriated annually through the Agricultural Appropriations Act for SFMNP, CSFP, and TEFAP. Last Authorized February 2014, Expires 2018				Older Americans Act, additional funding is provided through the Nutrition Services Incentive Program through cash or commodities. Funding is appropriated annually through the Labor-HHS-Education and Related Agencies Bill.	

POLICY SOLUTIONS THAT CAN STRENGTHEN FEDERAL SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAMS

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- Ensure SNAP benefits are adequate.
- Support SNAP outreach and promote best state-level practices for senior SNAP enrollment to ensure access for eligible food-insecure seniors, such as simplified applications.

Congregate and Home-Delivered Meals

- Reauthorize the Older Americans
 Act that supports the infrastructure
 of public-private partnerships and
 gives seniors access to congregate
 and home-delivered meals.
- Fund Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs at a level that is adequate to meet both the growing need and the increased cost of service and protect them from harsh and unnecessary sequestration cuts.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

 Provide enough funding for CSFP to maintain current caseloads and expand the program nationwide.
 Currently, CSFP operates in only 46 states, plus the District of Columbia and two Indian reservations.





FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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