

Benefits Access and Nutrition Programs for Seniors



Prepared for
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Older Americans and Hunger



Food hardship: Nearly 1 in 5 people in US don't have enough money to purchase food they need for themselves and their families. (FRAC analysis of Gallup poll data at http://frac.org/pdf/food_hardship_2011_report.pdf)

Food insecurity: In 2011 rates for households with elderly persons (aged 65 or over) and for elderly persons living alone were 8.4 percent and 8.8 percent, respectively. See <http://www.ers.usda.gov/media/884525/err141.pdf> at table 2)

SNAP Participation Gaps: In 2009, only 34 percent of seniors eligible for SNAP participated, compared with 67 percent of SNAP eligible people overall. (See <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/MENU/Published/snap/FILES/Participation/Trends2002-09Sum.pdf>)

Nutrition Assistance Matters



SNAP out-of-poverty lift: In 2011 3.9 million Americans—300,000 of them aged 65 or over--would have been lifted out of poverty if SNAP benefits were counted as income. (FRAC analysis of US Census data at http://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/pdf/20120912_ip_%20slides_wplotpoints.pdf)

SNAP economic stimulus: Each federally funded dollar of SNAP benefits generates nearly double that in economic activity. (See USDA ERS report at http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR103/ERR103_ReportSummary.pdf)

Increased SNAP participation can increase state revenues: Each dollar of SNAP benefits frees up an estimated 45 cents more recipients spend on taxable goods, yielding additional sales tax revenues for the state. (California Legislative Analyst's Office, "Analysis of the '04-'05 Budget Bill" (February 2004): http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis_2004/health_ss/hss_20_foodstamps_anl04.htm)

Public Supports Fighting Hunger



FRAC Poll (August 2012): Seventy-five percent of voters say cutting SNAP is the wrong way to reduce spending. (See FRAC analysis and top line results from Hart Research Associates poll conducted August 23-26, 2012 http://org2.democracynaction.org/o/5118/p/salsa/web/common/public/content?content_item_KEY=10417 and http://frac.org/pdf/polling_data_snap_sep2012.pdf)

Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Poll (June 2012): Seventy-one percent of those surveyed found the moral argument for not cutting SNAP to be very convincing or somewhat convincing. Statement: “We need to be wise about how we spend our money, but it is morally wrong to cut programs like food stamps, that benefit those who are genuinely in need. We simply cannot let people starve.” (See http://www.democracycorps.com/wp-content/files/DCorps_Vulnerable_June2012_FINAL.pdf)

FRAC and Tyson Foods National Hunger Survey (March 2011): One in four Americans is worried about having enough money to put food on the table, according to a national hunger survey by Hart Research Associates, commissioned by FRAC and Tyson Foods, Inc. (NYSE: TSN). (See http://www.tysonhungerrelief.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/hart-research-exec-summary_frac-tyson-hunger-survey_final.pdf)

Federal Nutrition Programs Can Help Older Americans



SNAP—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

D-SNAP—Disaster SNAP

SFMNP—Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program

CSFP—Commodity Supplemental Food Program

TEFAP—The Emergency Food Assistance Program

SNAP and Older Americans: FY 2011 Snapshot



Elderly (aged 60 or more) SNAP participants numbered 3.770 million (7.4% of all SNAP participants); (elderly women: 2.485 million; elderly males: 1.285 million).

76 percent of SNAP HHs included either a child or an elderly or disabled person, and these HHs received 83 percent of all benefits.

Average monthly benefit for SNAP HHs with elderly was \$144, compared to \$307 for HHS without.

80 percent of all SNAP HHs with elderly were single-person HHs.

Nearly nine in 10 (87.8 percent) of SNAP households with elderly members received more than the minimum monthly benefit of \$16.

SNAP and Older Americans: Rules and Options



- No gross income test (but show under 200% FPL gross income to avoid asset test)
- States can eliminate SNAP asset test
- States can certify elderly for 24 months
- States can allow elderly to purchase hot prepared meals at approved restaurants (RMP)
- “Authorized Representatives” can apply and purchase food
- No cap on amount of shelter costs claimed for deduction
- Can deduct excess out-of-pocket medical costs (and state can set standard)
- “Heat & Eat” (leverages increased SNAP benefits via LIHEAP links)
- Streamlined Enrollment
(e.g., Combined Application Projects; shortened application forms)

(See FRAC “SNAP/Food Stamps Outreach and Access Toolkit:” www.frac.org/pdf/snap_outreach_access_toolkit_2010.pdf and FRAC “Smart Choices:” http://frac.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/smartchoices_2010.pdf)

Federal Reimbursement Match Funding for SNAP Outreach



State SNAP agency can draw down federal SNAP outreach reimbursements for allowable activities per USDA approved state outreach plan.

State share to leverage federal 50/50 reimbursement can come from private funds (e.g., foundations, food retailers, private donations, or budgets of community groups conducting outreach) as well as state budget.

Community-based organizations can receive reimbursements for carrying out activities under state SNAP outreach plans.

E.g., Minnesota Lt. Gov. partnering with non-profits, MN Grocers Association, General Mills Foundation and others. (See <http://www.hungersolutions.org/newsroom/lt-gov-prettner-solon-announces-food-support-coalition>)

(For background, see FRAC “SNAP/Food Stamps Outreach and Access Toolkit,” (May 2010): www.frac.org/pdf/snap_outreach_access_toolkit_2010.pdf)

D-SNAP



SNAP responds effectively to changes in need, whether due to economy or natural disasters.

States can seek authority to operate Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) to give temporary benefits to disaster victims not already on SNAP.

States can seek authority for mass auto replacements and supplemental payments for current SNAP participants.

States can seek hot prepared food waivers.

In the wake of 2011 hurricanes USDA provided over \$120 million in D-SNAP benefits, serving 1 million individuals. (See

http://www.fns.usda.gov/disasters/response/pdf/hurricane_response.pdf)

FRAC Disaster SNAP Information: <http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/snapfood-stamps/disaster-snapfood-stamps/>

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)



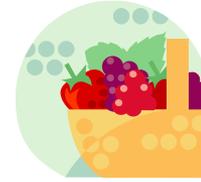
SFMNP awards grants to states, DC, territories, and federally-recognized Indian tribal governments to provide low-income seniors with coupons that can be exchanged for eligible foods (fruits, vegetables, honey, and fresh-cut herbs) at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community supported agriculture programs.

Majority of SFMNP grant funds must be used to support food costs; state agencies may use up to 10 percent of SFMNP grants for administrative costs.

SFMNP eligible people generally defined as at least 60 years old and having household incomes of not more than 185% of federal poverty income guidelines.

Unlike SNAP, SFMNP is not an entitlement program; there may not be enough funds to serve all those who fit the eligibility criteria for SFMNP.

SFMNP Benefits



SFMNP benefit level, whether a household or individual, may be between \$20 and \$50 per each farmers' market calendar year (except for certain state agencies grandfathered in at another level).

State agencies may supplement SFMNP federal benefit level with state, local or private funds.

Nutrition education is provided to SFMNP recipients by state agency, often through local WIC agency. Other SFMNP partners may provide nutrition education and/or educational information to SFMNP recipients.

See USDA FNS posting at

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/SeniorFMNP/SeniorFMNPoverview.htm>

SFMNP State Agency Contacts:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/SeniorFMNP/SFMNPcontacts.htm>

Local Example of Matching SFMNP



“It is important to FRESHFARM Markets that local, fresh produce is available to all people, regardless of income or financial stability. Currently we have four programs that help low-income people buy healthy foods in our DC and MD markets. By accepting SNAP (EBT/Foods Stamps), WIC, SFMNP vouchers and offering an incentive Matching Dollars program we aim to decrease the access barriers to fresh, healthy food. “

“In order to lower economic barriers to local and healthy foods, FRESHFARM Markets offers a Matching Dollar incentive to SNAP, WIC and Senior FMNP customers at the six markets that accept SNAP....Instructions: At the FRESHFARM Market Information tent, tell market staff how much in SNAP, WIC, or Senior FMNP you would like to spend. Market staff will match your redemption with FREE Match wooden tokens (with a maximum of \$15 free per visit). For example, if you redeem \$15 in SNAP, you will get an additional \$15 Free Match tokens to spend. You may use Match tokens at any farm stand selling SNAP-eligible foods, but you may not purchase non-food items (flowers, soap) or prepared, ready-to-eat foods.”

See Fresh Farm Markets posting at

http://freshfarmmarkets.org/programs/nutrition_assistance_programs.php

Commodity Supplemental Food Program(CSFP)



Through CSFP, USDA purchases and makes available food to certain state agencies, DC and Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs), along with funds for administrative costs.

State agencies store CSFP foods and distribute them to public and non-profit private local agencies.

Local agencies determine CSFP applicant eligibility, distribute foods, and provide nutrition education.

Local agencies also provide referrals to other welfare, nutrition, and health care programs such as SNAP, Medicaid; and Medicare.

CSFP Elderly Eligibility



CSFP serves eligible elderly and certain pregnant women, infants and young children in states where the program is authorized.

CSFP elderly are those aged 60 and over with incomes no higher than 130% of the federal poverty income guidelines.

CSFP is only available in certain states: AK, AR, AZ, CA, CO, DE, DC, GA, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, LA, ME, MI, MN, MS, MO, MT, NE, NV, NH, NJ, NM, NY, NC, ND, Oglala Sioux Reservation (SD), OH, OK, OR, PA, Red Lake Reservation (MN), SC, SD, TN, TX, UT, VT, WA, WI. (See links to CSFP state agencies:

http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/programs/csfp/csfp_states.htm)

CSFP Funding



Funding for CSFP is included in annual Agriculture Appropriations legislation.

For FY 2013, CSFP like many other federal discretionary programs has funding through March 27, 2013 under a Continuing Resolution.

House Appropriations Committee proposed cuts to CSFP could be considered when lawmakers turn to funding for the remainder of FY 2013.

For details, go to <http://frac.org/leg-act-center/budget-and-appropriations/appropriations-2/>

CSFP and SNAP



Many low-income elderly individuals need both SNAP and CSFP.

For elderly applicants, local CSFP agencies must provide written information on SNAP, Supplemental Security Income benefits, and Medicare.

In summer 2012 D.C. Hunger Solutions partnered with AARP DC, DC Legal Counsel for the Elderly, and Greater Washington Urban League to survey CSFP participants in D.C. and provide them with assistance in completing applications for SNAP.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)



TEFAP provides USDA commodities to states, which distribute food through local emergency food providers.

Available foods vary depending on market conditions.

Each state determines criteria for household eligibility, and may adjust income criteria based on need in the state.

Eligibility criteria may include participation in existing food or other assistance programs for which income is considered as a basis for eligibility.

For a list of state agency contacts for TEFAP, go to

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/contacts/sdacontacts.htm>

TEFAP and Older Americans



Older Americans are among those accessing food at emergency feeding sites, including those that receive TEFAP commodities.

23.5% of client households that visited a food pantry in Ohio during 2009 had a member who was 65 years or older and 16.8% of visitors to an Ohio soup kitchen during 2009 were 65 years of age or older.

See Ohio Association of Second Harvest Food Banks' posting at http://admin.oashf.org/uploads/news/Senior_Hunger_in_Ohio1.pdf

TEFAP and SNAP



Many food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens serve TEFAP foods to needy people; many also reach out to TEFAP clients with information about SNAP and offer assistance in filling out SNAP applications.

See FRAC's "Making A Difference: Effective SNAP Strategies Tailored to Target Groups and Locations," posted at http://www.frac.org/pdf/making_a_difference.pdf

Intergenerational Nutrition Supports



Additional USDA programs can assist elderly people in providing nutrition to household members:

- School Lunch and School Breakfast**
- Summer Food Program**
- Child and Adult Care Food Program**
- WIC**

For information about Child Nutrition Programs, go to

www.frac.org

10 Steps for State Legislators to Promote Food Security for Older Constituents

- 1) Download NCSL's "How to Address Hunger in Your Community: A Checklist for State Legislators" and other materials on anti-hunger initiatives, posted at <http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/human-services/a-checklist-for-state-legislators.aspx>
- 2) Convene stakeholders. Enlist private sector as well as nonprofit partners in community anti-hunger efforts.
- 3) Help connect older constituents with SNAP and other nutrition safety net programs, including by putting information on websites, in newsletters, and other media.

10 Steps...

- 4) Visit nutrition program sites such as SNAP offices, senior centers providing SNAP application assistance, supermarkets conducting SNAP outreach and nutrition education, and farmers' markets that take EBT and SFMNP; for tips on being "Caseworker for a Day," see posting at http://frac.org/pdf/take_your_congress_member_to_work.pdf
- 5) Advocate for federal policies to protect and strengthen the nutrition safety net for older Americans—make calls, write letters and op eds, tweet, and pass resolutions. (For Farm Bill advocacy resources, go to <http://frac.org/leg-act-center/farm-bill-2012/> and http://frac.org/pdf/farmbill_ncsl_supporting_snap_house.pdf and http://frac.org/pdf/farmbill_aarp_supporting_snap.pdf and http://frac.org/pdf/FarmBill_SNAP_OpposeCuts.pdf)

10 Steps...

- 6) Urge your state to have a D-SNAP plan and to seek broadest federal waivers to maximize nutrition assistance for disaster victims. (See postings on FRAC website disaster section at <http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/snapfood-stamps/disaster-snapfood-stamps/>)
- 7) Conduct hearings on hunger among older Americans.
- 8) Use legislative oversight function to get your state to have a SNAP Outreach Plan and to take SNAP options that serve older Americans and maximize receipt of federal nutrition dollars.
- 9) Invest state money to fill nutrition program gaps in access, adequacy and staffing/systems.
- 10) Take the SNAP/Food Stamp Challenge and help educate your community. (See toolkit and tips posted at <http://frac.org/initiatives/snapfood-stamp-challenges/>)

Resources and Links



FRAC Website: www.frac.org

FRAC SNAP/Food Stamps Outreach and Access Toolkit at http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/snap_outreach_access_toolkit.pdf

FRAC “Smart Choices in Hard Times” at http://frac.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/smartchoices_2010.pdf

FRAC Disaster SNAP Resources: <http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/snapfood-stamps/disaster-snapfood-stamps/>

FRAC “A Review of Strategies to Bolster SNAP’s Role in Improving Nutrition as well as Food Security” at <http://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/SNAPstrategies.pdfm>

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