

Addressing Senior Hunger & SNAP

MAY 2024



TENNESSEE
JUSTICE
CENTER



INTRODUCTIONS

TJC NUTRITION TEAM

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TJC ANTI-HUNGER ADVOCACY

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

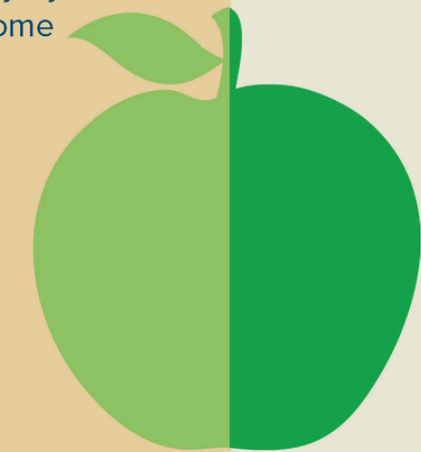
SNAP STRENGTHS

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.



FRAC
Food Research & Action Center

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

TN SENIOR HUNGER DATA

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”



CAUSES OF SENIOR HUNGER

Economic

- Fixed Income
- Medical Expenses

Isolation

- Self-neglect
- Lack of community

Housing

Transportation

Systemic Discrimination



OUTCOMES

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.



OPPORTUNITIES

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)



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



COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

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

ADVOCACY

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



ADVOCACY

Farm Bill

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



ADVOCACY

Contact your legislators

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



WORKING GROUPS

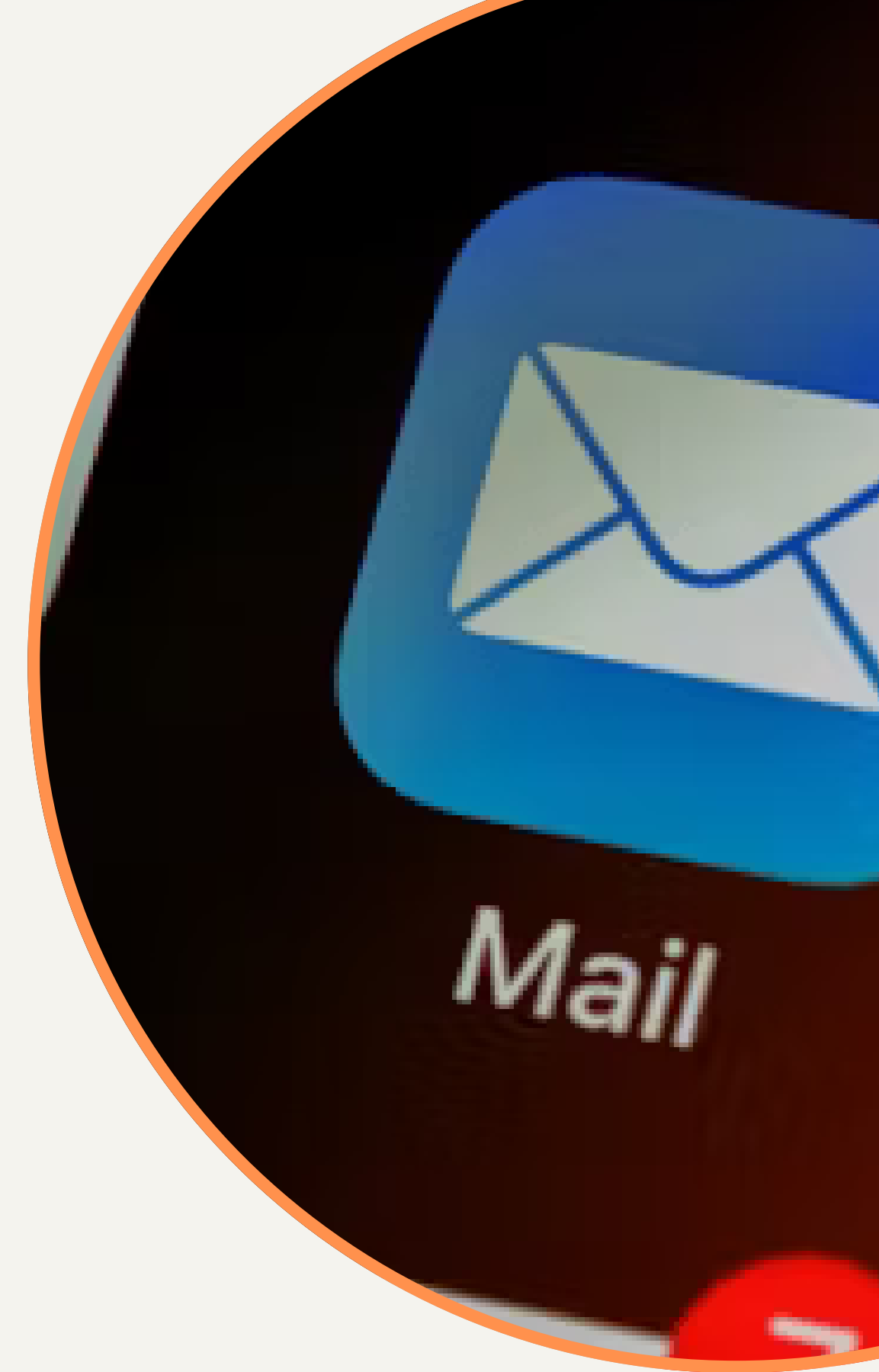
- [WIC Champions](#)
 - Second Thursdays at 9:00am CT
- [SNAP Access](#)
 - Third Thursdays at 10:00am CT
- [Healthy Meals Healthy Kids TN](#)
 - First Thursdays at 1:00pm CT
- [Summer EBT Advocacy Call](#)
 - Third Wednesdays at 3:00pm CT
- [College Hunger Quarterly Call](#)
 - Next Meeting: 6/13/24 at 1:00pm CT



NUTRITION NOTE

Join Nutrition Note!

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



RESOURCES

- [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 Shee\(English & Espanol\)](#)
- [WIC Fact Sheet \(English & عربي\)](#)
- [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

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