

# SENIOR HUNGER

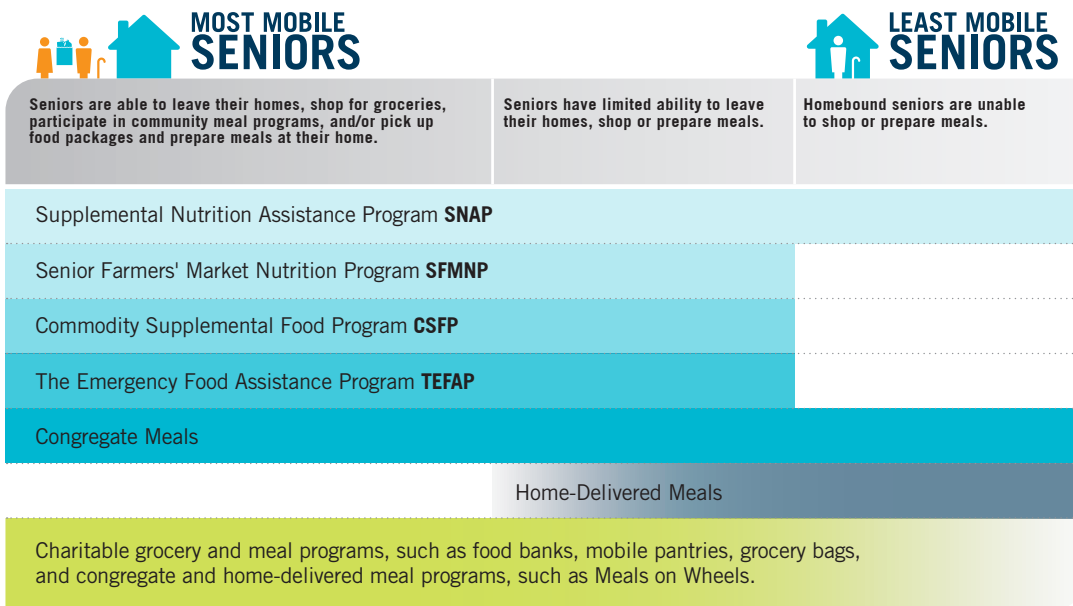


## A NATIONAL CRISIS AND A COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE

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.



**IN 2014, 5.7 MILLION ADULTS 60+ WERE FOOD INSECURE, WITH 4.5 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.

**1 in 3** 

food-insecure seniors are disabled.


**63%** 

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

## EXAMPLES 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.

**53%** 

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

# THE FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS SERVING AT-RISK SENIORS



## GROCERY



## MEAL-BASED

	SNAP	SENIOR FARMERS' MARKET NUTRITION PROGRAM	CSFP	TEFAP	CONGREGATE MEALS	HOME-DELIVERED MEALS
FEDERAL PROGRAMS	<p>Low-income seniors receive a supplemental grocery card to purchase food at qualified retailers.</p> <p><i>Some seniors are able to pay for meals at authorized restaurants or home-delivered meal programs.</i></p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p><i>Some seniors access meals at adult care facilities through the Child and Adult Care Food Program, which is authorized through the Child Nutrition Bill.</i></p>	<p>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.</p>
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS	<p>130% of the federal poverty line, or annual income of \$15,444 for a senior living alone.</p>	<p>185% of the federal poverty line, or an annual income of \$21,978 for a senior living alone.</p>	<p>130% of the federal poverty line, or an annual income of \$15,444 for a senior living alone.</p>	<p>185% of the federal poverty line, or an annual income of \$21,978 for a senior living alone.</p>	<p>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.</p>	
AMERICANS 60+ SERVED	<p><b>4.25 MILLION SENIORS</b> average benefit \$139/month or \$1.32/meal (2014)</p>	<p><b>817,751 SENIORS</b> average benefit \$31/year (2015)</p>	<p><b>572,035 SENIORS</b> (2015)</p>	<p>596,929,272 meals served by Feeding America</p> <p><i>*17% of clients are 60+ (2014)</i></p>	<p><b>1,566,935 SENIORS</b> 80,282,410 meals (2014)</p>	<p><b>835,985 SENIORS</b> 137,702,853 meals (2014)</p>
THE UNMET NEED	<p>Only 41% of eligible seniors are enrolled in SNAP and recipients on average access only \$129/month, an insufficient benefit to support seniors' nutritional needs for the full month.</p>	<p>The program is funded at a set level annually and therefore cannot serve all eligible seniors and is unavailable in 7 states. Seniors on average only receive \$31/year in groceries.</p>	<p>The program is funded at a set level annually and therefore cannot serve all eligible seniors and is unavailable in AL, WV, and WY.</p>	<p>The program is funded at a set level annually and therefore feeds only as many people as the commodities can provide for.</p>	<p>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.</p>	
JURISDICTION	<p>The Agricultural Act, also known as the Farm Bill, is reauthorized every five years. Funding is appropriated annually through the Agricultural Appropriations Act for SFMNP, CSFP, and TEFAP.</p> <p><b>Last Authorized February 2014, Expires 2018</b></p>				<p>The Older Americans Act is generally reauthorized every five years. 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.</p> <p><b>Last Authorized 2016, Expires 2019</b></p>	

## POLICY SOLUTIONS THAT CAN STRENGTHEN FEDERAL SENIOR NUTRITION PROGRAMS

### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- Ensure SNAP benefits are adequate.
- Strengthen SNAP policies for seniors to close the Senior SNAP GAP and ensure access for all eligible food-insecure seniors, such as simplified applications and standard medical deductions.

### Congregate and Home-Delivered Meals

- Protect and strengthen the Older Americans Act that supports the delivery of social and preventative services to some of our nations most isolated and vulnerable Americans, including nutritious meals for 2.4 million seniors.
- 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 47 states, plus the District of Columbia and two Indian reservations.



### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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