The number of seniors (60+) across the nation is growing and far too many struggle with hunger and food insecurity. Nationally, 9.5% of households with seniors face food insecurity. In Massachusetts, 7.6% of households with seniors face food insecurity.

Due to income constraints, food-insecure households with older adults do not have consistent access to enough food for healthy, active living. The impact of senior hunger extends well beyond an empty stomach and wallet.


---

**Seniors Struggling With Food Insecurity may Experience a Number of Challenges:**

- **Food running out**
- **Skipping meals**
- **Choosing between food and medicine**
- **Postponing medical care**
- **Poor health outcomes**
- **Higher health care use and costs**

**SOURCE:** FRAC’s Hunger and Health series

---

**Senior SNAP Participation:**
SNAP is available in every area of the country to help older adults purchase food.

**Percentage of all Households With Seniors Participating in SNAP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Metro Areas</th>
<th>Small Towns</th>
<th>Rural Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationally</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the purpose of this analysis, "Metro Areas" are metropolitan statistical areas delineated by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), each of which contains at least one Census Bureau-delineated urbanized area of 50,000 or more people. "Small Towns" are micropolitan statistical areas as delineated by OMB, each containing at least one Census Bureau-delineated urban cluster of between 10,000 and 50,000 people, and "Rural Areas" are non-metropolitan and non-micropolitan areas.

**SOURCE:** FRAC analysis of American Community Survey data averaged over five years (2012-2016)
SNAP Matters for Seniors
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP, the nation’s first line of defense against hunger, is critically important to seniors.

- Improved food security
- Better nutrition
- Improved health
- Better medication adherence

- Fewer difficult choices
- Lower health care costs
- Reduced hospital & nursing home admissions

In addition to improving the food security, health, and well-being of seniors, federal SNAP dollars stimulate local economies through assistance that goes directly to struggling seniors to purchase food.

**SOURCE:** FRAC’s Hunger and Health series

---

**Too Many Seniors Miss out on SNAP**

Nationally, only 42% (2 in 5) eligible seniors participate in SNAP.

**See how Your State Compares:**

- % of eligible seniors benefiting from SNAP in an average month in FY2015
  - Nationally: 42%
  - Massachusetts: 67%

- Average monthly SNAP benefit for senior households in FY2017
  - Nationally: $125
  - Massachusetts: $142

**SOURCE:** USDA’s FY2015 Trends in SNAP Participation Rates report

---

**To get more seniors participating in SNAP, states and anti-hunger advocates can:**

- **Educate** policy makers on the importance of SNAP in addressing senior hunger
- **Partner** with health care providers, senior centers, faith-based organizations, and retailers to counsel seniors on SNAP benefits and to provide application assistance
- **Adopt** state practices and policies to help ease barriers to SNAP enrollment and to ensure seniors receive the maximum amount of SNAP benefits to which they are entitled