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# SNAP Elderly Simplified Application Project – Landscape, Lessons and Opportunities

A presentation from the Human Services Advocacy Network



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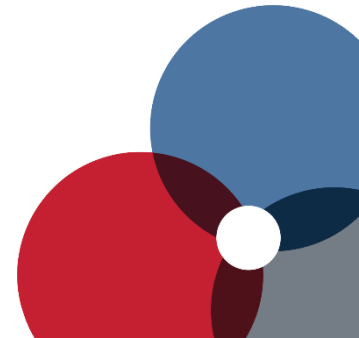
**William Tarter, Jr.**  
Policy Fellow

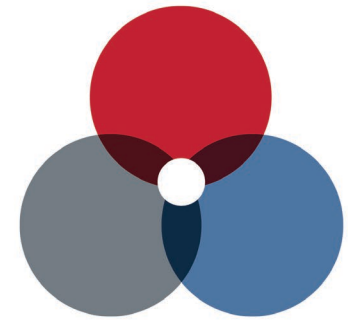


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We are a nonprofit that improves health, social and economic conditions through nonpartisan research, policy analysis, communications and advocacy.

[www.CommunitySolutions.com](http://www.CommunitySolutions.com)



### **Strengthening the Health and Human Services Safety Net**

We support sustainably designing, delivering & funding health and human services in a way that is mindful of existing systemic racism, promotes equity and reduces outcome disparities.



### **Ensuring a High-Quality, Cost-Effective Medicaid Program**

We support developing sound, cost-effective Medicaid policies through research, analysis & advocacy.



### **Safety, Health and Economic Wellbeing of Older Adults**

We support improving older adults' safety & wellbeing by increasing funding for their needs, as well as strengthening the senior services network.



### **Improving Women's and Children's Health**

We support initiatives that aim to eliminate racial inequities, improve the health of women & children and reduce infant & maternal mortality.



### **Improving Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Services**

We support initiatives to expand access to mental health & addiction services that are equitably available throughout Ohio.

# Housekeeping

**Thank you for joining us today!**

- You'll receive all slides presented today via email
- You'll get a recording of the entire webinar via email
- No audio for audience, please ask questions via the Q&A feature
  - Please note that everyone can see your questions
- Attendee view allows you to move and resize the panels you can see
- Feel free to follow up with panelists or CCS Staff for any unanswered or outstanding questions if we run out of time OR you think of something later!



# ESAP – how did we get here?

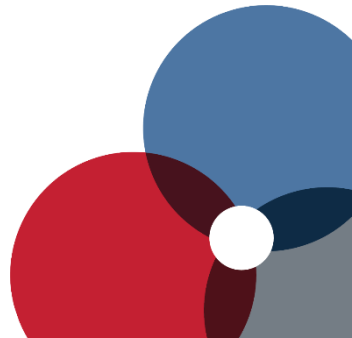
- The Elderly (and Disabled) Simplified Application Project (ESAP) also sometimes known as EDSAP is one of many state options the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) allows states to take advantage of in the SNAP program
- Older adults are a historically underserved group in the SNAP program and face many barriers to participation including (but not limited too) limited mobility and minimal access to electronic equipment that can facilitate compliance with verification and reporting requirements
- ESAP was thus designed to increase SNAP enrollment among low-income older adults through streamlined policies and procedures



# ESAP – what exactly does it do?

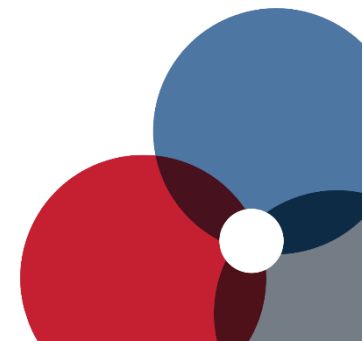
The waivers apply to households where all adult household members are 60 years or older and/or disabled individuals with no earned income (income from wages/employment). Children or disabled children may be present in the household, but child-only households are not included in the waivers.

- ESAP households have a lengthened certification period - 36 months
- ESAP households are exempt from SNAP periodic reporting requirements, also known as interim reports which are typically conducted halfway through the given certification period



# Why this population specifically?

- State data suggests that roughly 30% of these households experienced disruptions to their SNAP benefits at renewal, even though their circumstances rarely change
- Disruptions are largely due to missed paperwork or interviews
- While vulnerable to food insecurity, many never bother re-enrolling due to the complex nature of the process
- By improving SNAP retention, low-income seniors and individuals with disabilities could receive an additional \$10 million (or more) in SNAP benefits each year.



# 2022-2023 Ohio State Operating Budget

- 1.5 years into COVID-19 pandemic/Public Health Emergency where older adults disproportionately impacted
- Majority of temporary supports targeted at working families with kids
  - i.e. P-EBT, additional stimulus checks, WIC benefit boosts etc.
- Staff shortages at CJFS

” I try to get a small thing of milk and make it last for as long as I can. I don't have fresh fruits and vegetables in the house all the time but I try to get some when I can. Try to buy a little extra bread to freeze. Try and buy the cheapest mayo and ketchup, etc. I know the exact prices of the absolute cheapest condiments at Walmart. I really just try to buy as cheap as I can. Knowing that the cheap stuff isn't going to be the best for you... but I have to buy whatever I can find. If I can eat two meals a day and try to have enough food for the whole month, that's good.

## The Columbus Dispatch

The screenshot shows the top portion of a news article on the Columbus Dispatch website. The navigation bar includes links for News, Sports, Entertainment, Business, Opinion, ThisWeekNews, BuckeyeXtra, Obituaries, and eNewspaper, along with a search icon and a temperature display of 38°F. Below the navigation bar is a yellow banner with the text "GUEST | Opinion This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication." The main headline reads "Older Ohioans are skipping meals. Lawmakers must help them age with dignity |Opinion". Below the headline is a sub-headline: "One Athens County man supporting his diabetic wife, teenage son and two young grandchildren on a modest pension will lose \$500 per month in SNAP when enhanced benefits end, Hope Lane and Joree Novotny". The authors are listed as "Hope Lane and Joree Novotny" and are identified as "Guest columnists". The article was published on "6:18 a.m. ET May 24, 2022". There is a "View Comments" button and social media sharing icons for Facebook, Twitter, Email, and Print. At the bottom of the article preview, there is a video player showing a close-up of a grocery store produce section with a play button overlay.





# Elderly Simplified Application Project

Ashley Howard-Section Chief



## **What is ESAP?**

- The Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) is an initiative to assign certain SNAP Assistance Groups (AGs) a 36-month certification period

## **What are the advantages to ESAP?**

- Certification periods will be extended to 36-months, reducing the number of recertification appointments
- Interim Reporting Requirements do not apply for AGs eligible for ESAP

## **Which AGs are eligible for ESAP?**

- SNAP AGs whose adult members are all elderly or disabled (ED AGs) and have no countable earned income
  - Previously, ED AGs were assigned a 24-month certification period
- ED AGs eligible for ESAP may also contain minor children, provided they also have no countable earned income, regardless of the child's disability status
  - Previously, ED AGs with children were typically assigned a 12-month certification period because the children were not elderly or disabled

## **When did ESAP go into effect?**

- July 1, 2022.

## **What happened to active AGs that meet ESAP criteria?**

- AGs that already had a 24-month certification period were automatically extended to 36-months
- AGs that are eligible for ESAP but were assigned a 12-month certification period due to minor children being in the AG, will also had their certification periods automatically extended to 36-months

## **What if an AG becomes eligible for ESAP after July 1, 2022?**

- AGs that are eligible for ESAP during their established certification period, will maintain that certification period until recertification
  - *At recertification, if the AG remains eligible for ESAP, The AG will be assigned a 36-month certification period*

### **What if an AG loses ESAP Eligibility during their 36-month certification period?**

- The 36-month certification period is maintained but the AG will be subject to Interim Reporting Requirements every 6 months in accordance with OAC 5101:4-7-01

### **What if an AG regains ESAP eligibility after losing it in the assigned certification period?**

- Once ESAP eligibility is lost, an AG cannot regain ESAP eligibility until recertification (or application)
- The assigned certification period remains in effect and the AG continues to be subject to Interim Reporting Requirements every 6 months in accordance with OAC 5101:4-7-01
  - *Send in month 5 for the 6<sup>th</sup> month*
  - *Send in month 11 for the 12<sup>th</sup> month*
  - *Send in month 17 for the 18<sup>th</sup> month*
  - *Send in month 23 for the 24<sup>th</sup> month*
  - *Send in month 29 for the 30<sup>th</sup> month*

## **What are the reporting requirements for ESAP AGs?**

- ESAP AGs are still bound by the SNAP simplified reporting requirements as any other household:
  - If the AG income exceeds 130% of the federal poverty level
  - If an ABAWD's work hours fall below 20 hrs per week/80 hrs per month
  - If an AG member wins substantial lottery or gambling winnings (greater than \$4,250)

## **How can changes be reported?**

- Online: Use your online account or create an account at [ssp.benefits.ohio.gov](https://ssp.benefits.ohio.gov)
- Phone: Contact your local county JFS office
- Mail: Send the requested information to the county JFS office
- In-person: Visit your county JFS office
- Fax

**1. Margaret, age 71, is on SNAP and is ESAP eligible. She receives a pension from her employer. Margaret is aged, has no countable earned income and has a 36-month certification period due to being on ESAP. Her great-grandson, Toby, age 13 moves in. Toby has no earned income. Does the AG remain ESAP eligible?**

Yes. The AG remains ESAP and on the 36-month certification period since ESAP AGs can contain minor children (with no countable earned income).

**2. Tim, age 67, is on SNAP and is ESAP eligible. He is having problems paying for basic needs, so he decides to go back to work as a greeter at Walmart making \$10/hr for 30 hours per week. Does Tim remain ESAP eligible?**

Tim's monthly income would be  $\$300/\text{week} \times 4.3 + \$1,290$ . This would not need to be reported until recertification because only income that exceeds 130% of the federal poverty level needs reported. For an AG size of 1, 130% of the FPL is \$1,473.

At the next recertification, if Tim still has his job, then he will no longer be ESAP. IF Tim does report this change, then his certification period will still be 36 months, however, would be required to turn in an interim report at 6 month intervals.

**3. Phillip and Rosie, both age 65, are on SNAP. Rosie receives \$500 in SSI Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS) income. Is this AG ESAP eligible?**

Yes. Income received from PASS is excluded income and not countable. Therefore, the AG has no countable earned income and can be placed on ESAP.

**4. John, age 59 and Susie, age 61 are on SNAP. Are they eligible for ESAP?**

No. All adult members of the household must be aged or disabled. John is 59 and therefore, does not meet the definition of “aged” (60+ years).

**5. Sonia, age 67, is on SNAP and is ESAP eligible. She received rental assistance for one month due to falling behind because of unexpected medical bills. Will the receipt of rental assistance cause her to lose ESAP status?**

No. Sonia does not have to report the receipt of rental assistance since this is not earned income that would put her over the 130% of the FPL. IF she reports it, this is not countable and will not kick her off of ESAP.

Contact Information:

Ashley Howard

[Ashley.Probst@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:Ashley.Probst@jfs.ohio.gov)



AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that empowers people to choose how they live as they age



# Ohio is Aging

1 in 4 Ohioans will be 60+ by  
2040

Millennials are  
turning 40

Ohio's 60+ population  
is growing at a faster  
rate than the state

# What Are Older Ohioans Telling Us?

## Vital Voices Survey (2021)

- 87% want to age in their home as they age
- 48% of respondents were concerned about public benefits such as Social Security, low-income housing and/or food stamps

## Deciding Voices Listening Tour (2022)

- **Only 12% believed they had saved enough for retirement**
- **69% respondents identified challenges with housing expenses**
- **1 of 3 respondents said they delayed healthcare for a year due to costs**



“Making Ohio the best  
place to age in the  
nation.”

# Age-Friendly States and Communities

- 711 communities with 10 states, nationally. 24 communities in Ohio.
- Facilitate a community-wide process to ensure a community is livable for all ages
- Policies include adult dwelling units, housing affordability and transportation

# Call To Action

Is your community in the Age-Friendly Network? Want to learn how it can join? Contacting Doug Tayek, [dtayek@aarp.org](mailto:dtayek@aarp.org)

**Apply for an AARP Community Challenge Grant in 2023** – the program funds shovel ready community building projects. RFP announcement will be in January of 2023. More info at <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/community-challenge/>

**Download or order a free copy of of AARP's Walk Audit Toolkit.** The workbook helps readers walk their neighborhood and look at the built environment with an eye towards accessibility and sustainability. <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/getting-around/aarp-walk-audit-tool-kit/>

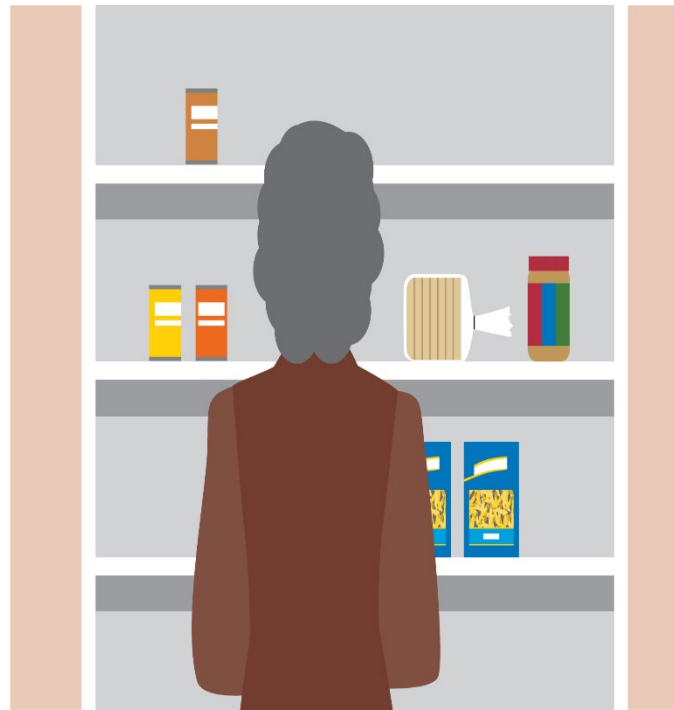
# Older Adults and Food Insecurity

Dabney K Conwell MSSA, LSW  
Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging



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# Food Insecurity for Older Adults

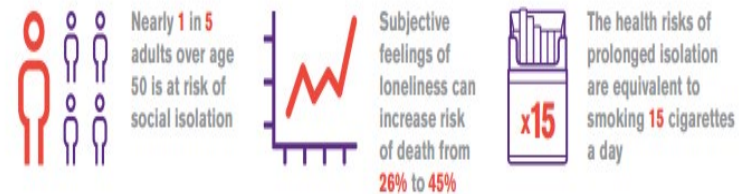


Seniors Struggling With Food Insecurity may Experience a Number of Challenges:



SOURCE: FRAC's Hunger and Health series

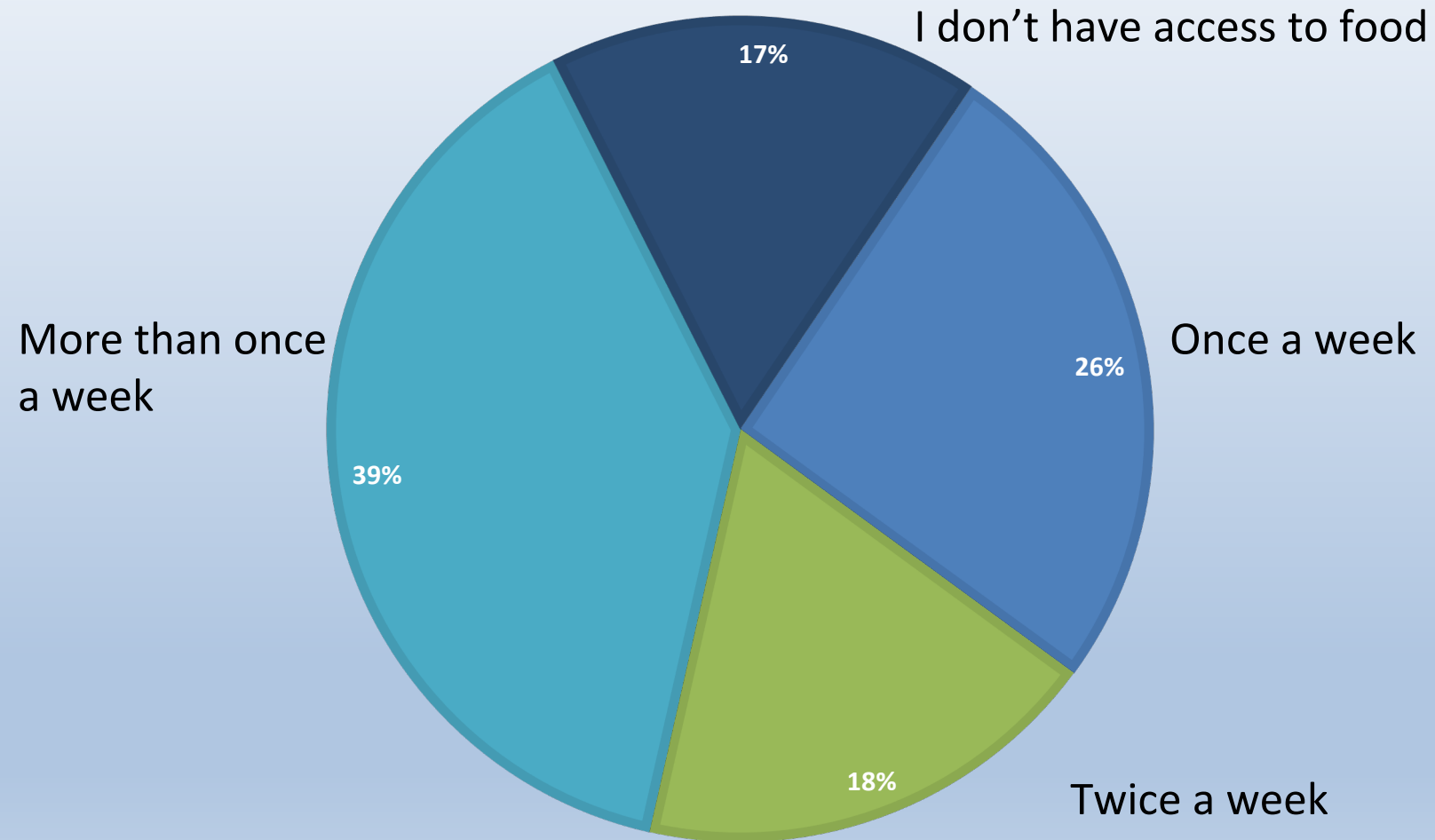
## SOCIAL ISOLATION IS A BIGGER PROBLEM THAN YOU MAY KNOW



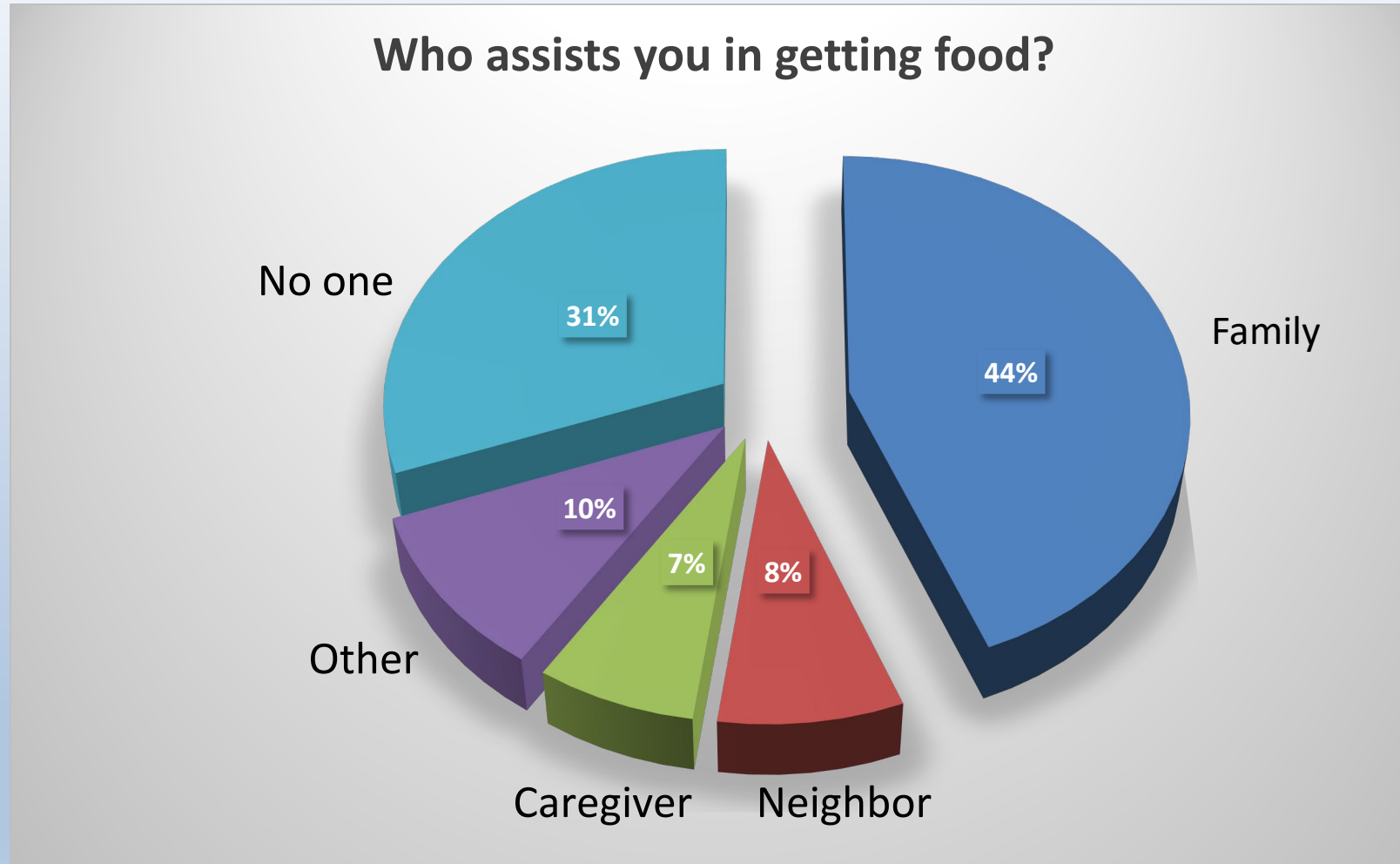


# Food Access Results

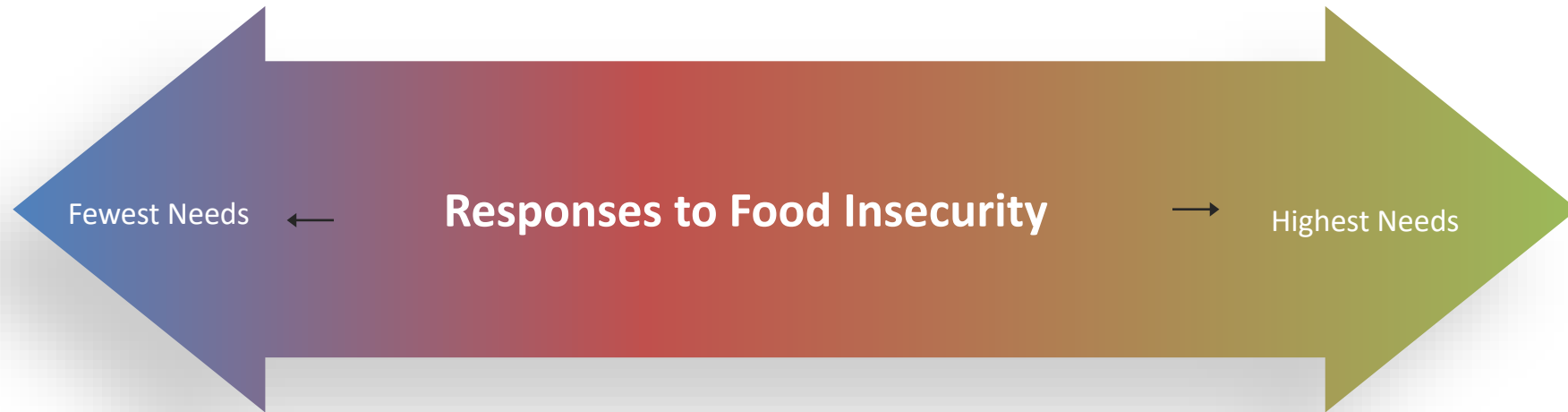
HOW OFTEN DO YOU HAVE ACCESS TO OTHER FOOD?



# Food Access Results



# Food across the continuum of need



## Groceries

Utilize food pantry or foodbank and prepare meals for themselves and their families

## Congregate Meals

Prepared meals served at community locations

## Home Delivered Meals

Prepared meals delivered to a person's home.

## Meals for people with greatest needs

Meals designed to address specific chronic illnesses delivered to the home

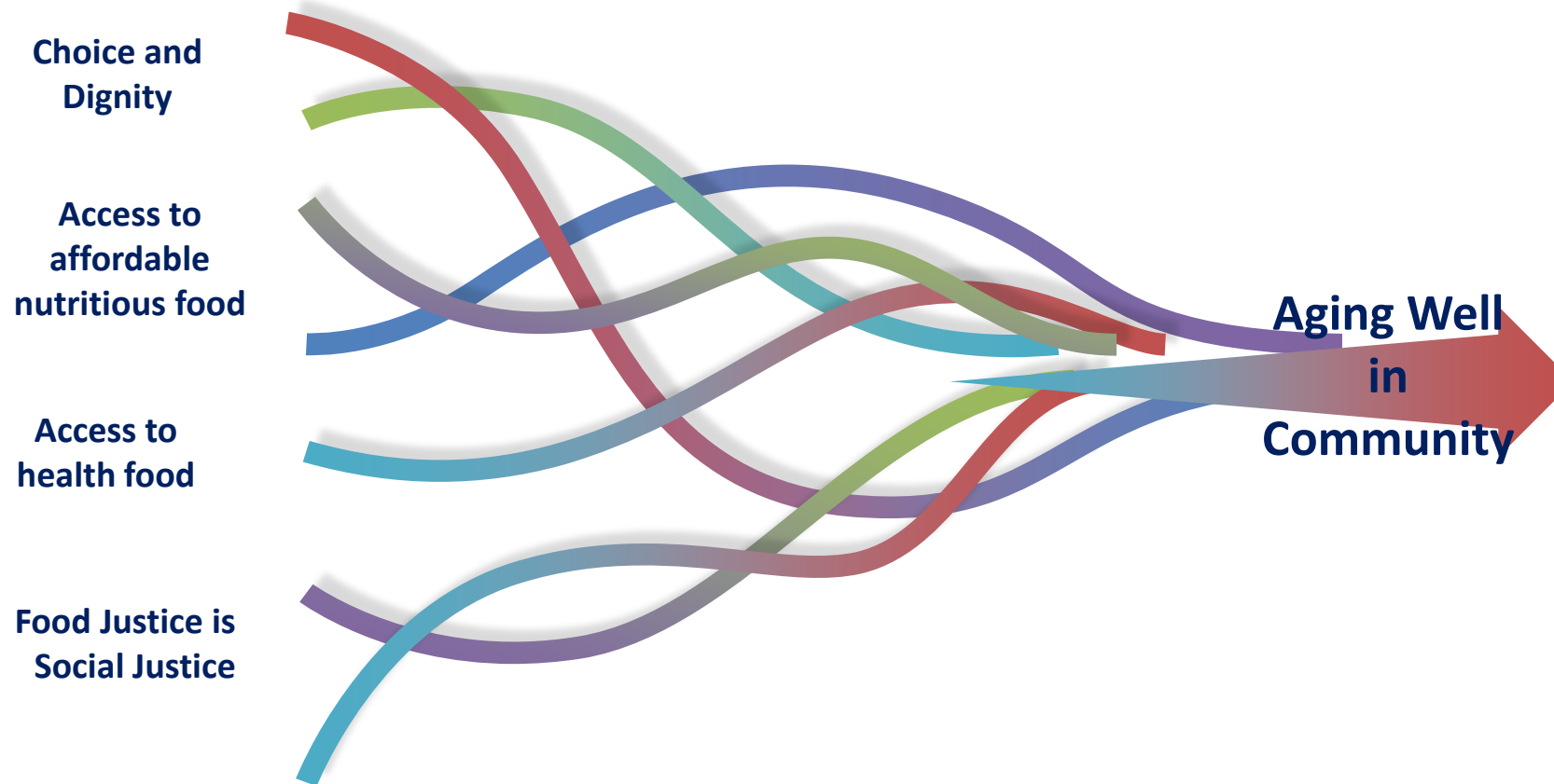


# Impact of access to food and health outcomes

- Decrease in hospitalizations
- Live in community
- Addressing one SDOH
- Hook to engage others in supportive services not otherwise connected
- Better health outcomes



# Nutritious Food as a foundation to aging well in the community



# Making it work

- The use of the congregate meal to “stretch” purchased food further
- Shopping less healthy options because they are more affordable
- Community Resources / Supports
- Shelf Stable Food
- Monthly timing

Great  
Internet  
chicken  
Overall  
often  
back  
lunch

great  
Rose  
like  
much  
help  
service  
good  
meals  
Yes  
nice  
eat  
home  
meal  
food  
Table  
Well  
person  
Thank  
delivered  
Aging  
Sometimes  
Centers  
Nutrition  
Confident  
Telephone  
Thankful  
response  
Delivered



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# Greater Cleveland Food Bank

*SNAP Elderly Simplified Application Project: Landscape,  
Lessons and Opportunities*

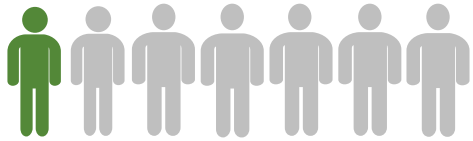
Katie Gedeon  
Greater Cleveland Food Bank



# Senior Food Insecurity

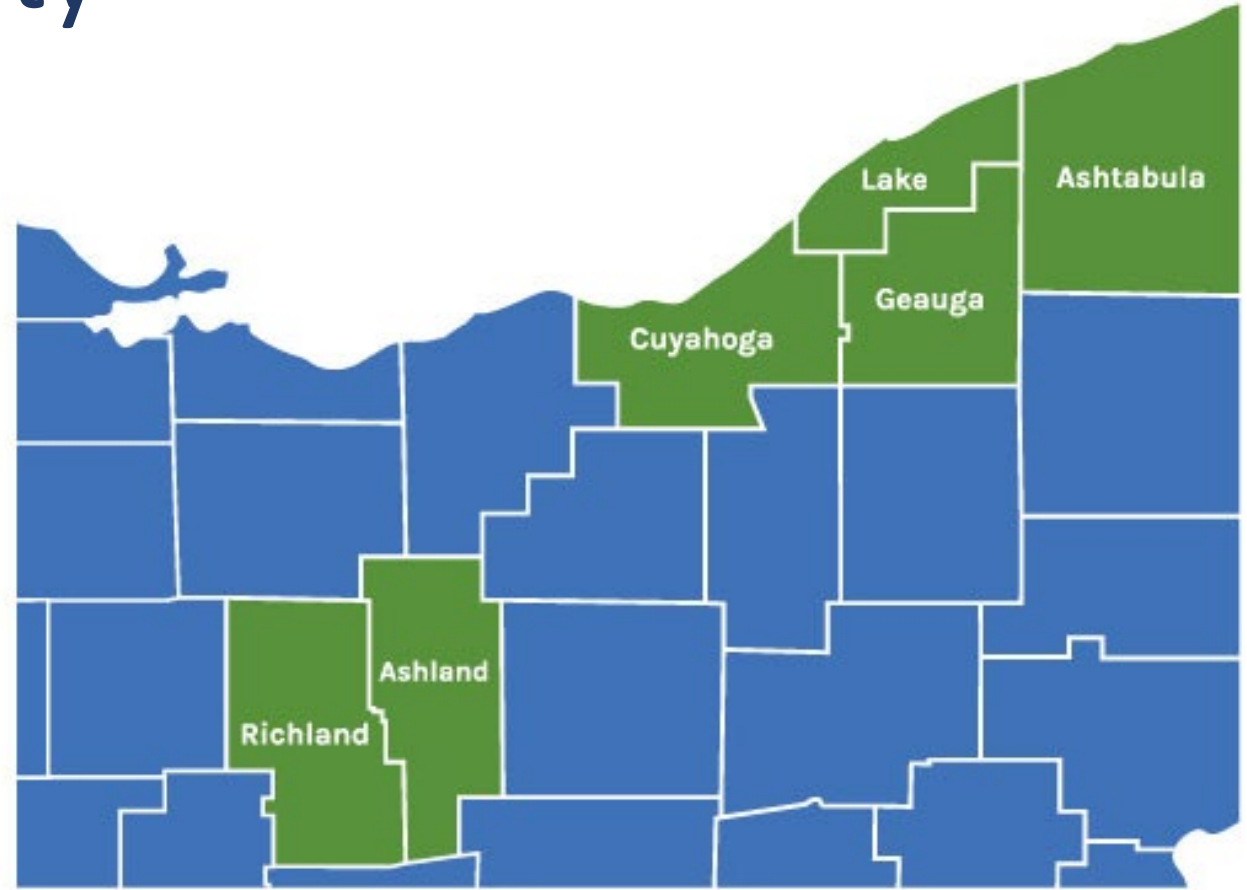
47,300 Seniors

Eligible for SNAP in GCFB Service Area



95,700 Seniors

Eligible for Food Assistance in GCFB Service Area



Source:

2016 – 2020 Survey (ACS) Estimates



# Senior Serving Initiatives

Pre-Pandemic in FY19 GCFB served 70,307 older adults across all programming. In FY20, over 90,000 seniors accessed food at a program site.

In FY21, we added 41 new senior feeding site partners, growing from 94 to 135 sites.

Some of the programs in which food insecure seniors are being assisted include: *Senior Markets, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), Senior Pantries, and Congregate/Home Delivered meals.*

Despite the increase in programming, for every meal that our Food Bank can provide, SNAP can provide 9 meals.





# Senior SNAP Outreach

The Greater Cleveland Food Bank screens older adults for SNAP eligibility, educates them about the benefits of applying for SNAP and supports them through the application process.

Seniors who qualify for SNAP are significantly less likely to participate in the program than other demographic groups with several factors contributing to low participation numbers.

Many seniors face enrollment barriers including stigma, mobility, technology and are discouraged by widespread misinformation about how the program works and who can qualify.

Seniors often express a fear that if they apply for the benefit, others more “deserving” of SNAP, such as families with children will go without. They talk about feeling overwhelmed by program requirements and paperwork and are often discouraged by the minimum benefit amount.

In FY22, GCFB assisted **2,249** older adults with SNAP applications in our six county service area.

## Over 60? Struggling to meet basic needs?

You may be eligible for public benefits you are not receiving!



Call the Greater Cleveland Food Bank's Help Center today to apply for SNAP (food stamps), Medicare Savings, and Medicaid over the phone!

We will help you with the redetermination process to keep your benefits.



CALL OUR HELP CENTER  
7:00 AM to 6:00 PM MONDAY - FRIDAY

**216-738-2067**

TOLL FREE: 855-738-2067

Se habla Español.

Serving Ashland, Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, and Richland Counties.