

- PRESS
- Press Releases

## AARP Foundation and FRAC Announce New Tools to Fight Hunger among Seniors

### The Joint Toolkit Aims to Connect More Seniors to SNAP

**Washington, DC** – FRAC and AARP Foundation are taking a step forward in preventing food insecurity by publishing a digital toolkit that provides best practices for connecting older adults to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Both organizations recognize how important SNAP is to preventing food insecurity and promoting economic stability and health for vulnerable households. However, nearly three of five low-income seniors who are eligible for SNAP food assistance miss out on this valuable help to purchase food.

The toolkit, “Combating Food Insecurity: Tools for Helping Older Americans Access SNAP,” offers practical tips and examples to help organizations of all sizes address food insecurity in all types of communities. The goal is to increase senior SNAP participation.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides monthly benefits to help low-income individuals afford healthier food. In an average month in 2012 – the most recent data available – more than 4 million Americans age 60 or older participated in SNAP, with an average monthly benefit of \$119 for those living alone. With at least 1 in 11 seniors (aged 65 or older) struggling against hunger, increasing access to SNAP can make a huge difference for millions of households with limited resources.

“SNAP is proven to fight hunger and improve health, but eligible older Americans are significantly less likely to participate in the program than members of other demographic groups,” said FRAC President Jim Weill. “Many factors contribute to this low participation rate, from barriers related to mobility, unfamiliarity with technology, and concern about stigma, to widespread myths about how the program works and who can qualify. This toolkit from FRAC and AARP Foundation aims to erase these misconceptions, and provide organizations with the tools they need to end senior hunger.”

“Nearly 9 million people age 50+ are threatened by hunger every day,” said AARP Foundation president, Lisa Marsh Ryerson. “We are thrilled to be a part of the new toolkit that extends SNAP benefits to those eligible, in an easy-to-use digital format. Not only does SNAP help low-income people eat healthier, more nutritious food, SNAP also benefits the economy. Every \$5 in new SNAP benefits generates \$9 – nearly twice as much – in total economic activity in the community.”

Closing the participation gap is incredibly important for the fight against hunger, but it also would go a long way to improving seniors’ health and well-being. Food-insecure seniors are 2.33 times more likely to report fair or poor health status. Hunger increases disability, decreases resistance to infection, and extends hospital stays. Moreover, many medications need to be taken with food to ensure their effectiveness. Too many seniors skip meals in order to purchase medication, only to see the “take with food” label on the prescription bottle. Improving access to SNAP would give seniors the resources they need for healthier lives.

The toolkit aims to do just that. It walks through the basics of SNAP, and then provides practical resources to help organizations craft successful programs of education, outreach, and application assistance. It includes real examples of collateral and messages that have worked in communities across the nation, and offers strategies on how to measure success.

“Combating Food Insecurity: Tools for Helping Older Americans Access SNAP” is one more step forward in preventing food insecurity and promoting economic stability and health for vulnerable older adults, and another step in the AARP Foundation and FRAC joint effort to provide real solutions for real problems.

The toolkit is available online: <http://pdf.aarpfoundation.org/i/397003>.

# # #

#### About AARP Foundation

AARP Foundation is working to win back opportunity for struggling Americans 50+ by being a force for change on the most serious issues they face today: housing, hunger, income and isolation. By coordinating responses to these issues on all four fronts at once, and supporting them with vigorous legal advocacy, the Foundation serves the unique needs of those 50+ while working with local organizations nationwide to reach more people, strengthen communities, work more efficiently and make resources go further. AARP Foundation is AARP’s

affiliated charity. Learn more at [www.aarpfoundation.org](http://www.aarpfoundation.org).

## **About FRAC**

The Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) is the lead advocacy organization working to end hunger in America through stronger public policies. For more information, visit [www.frac.org](http://www.frac.org). Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/foodresearchandactioncenter](https://facebook.com/foodresearchandactioncenter) or follow us on Twitter at [twitter.com/fractweets](https://twitter.com/fractweets).

## **About AARP**

*AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, with a membership of nearly 38 million, that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse. We advocate for individuals in the marketplace by selecting products and services of high quality and value to carry the AARP name as well as help our members obtain discounts on a wide range of products, travel, and services. A trusted source for lifestyle tips, news and educational information, AARP produces AARP The Magazine, the world's largest circulation magazine; AARP Bulletin; [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org); AARP TV & Radio; AARP Books; and AARP en Español, a Spanish-language website addressing the interests and needs of Hispanics. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to political campaigns or candidates. The AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. AARP has staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Learn more at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org).*

## **Contact:**

FRAC: Jennifer Adach, (202) 640-1118

AARP: Charlotte Castillo, (202) 434-2560, [Media@aarp.org](mailto:Media@aarp.org)

---