

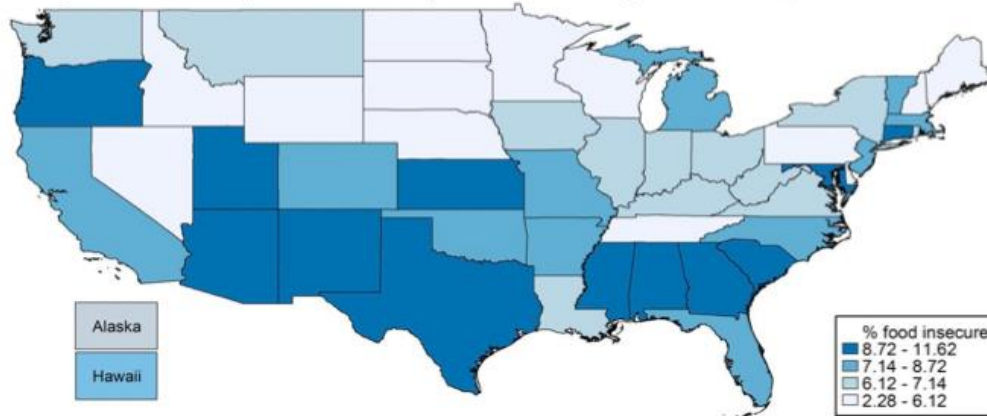
Senior Hunger in Maryland

Maryland Leads Nation in Food Insecure Older Adults who are Eligible for Food Stamps

In Maryland, nearly 1 of every 4 (24.2%) seniors 65+ are likely to be eligible for FSP benefits, as they have incomes at or below 200% of the FPL.ⁱ

For households that fall below 200% of FPL, Maryland has the **nation's 7th highest food insecurity rate among 50-59 year olds (33.89%)** and **8th highest food insecurity rate among those 60+ (18.69%).**ⁱⁱ

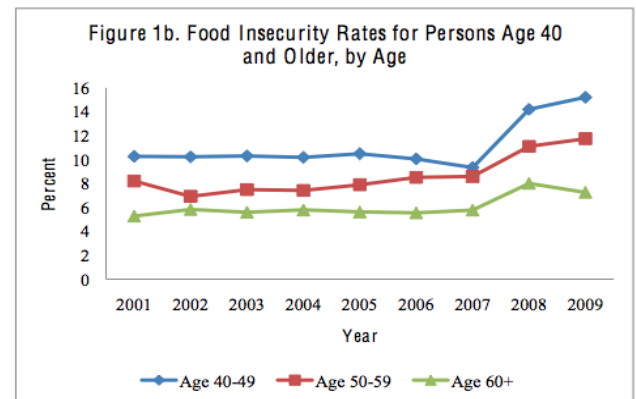
Figure 9c: State Very Low Food Security Rates for Adults Age 50 and Older, Under 200% FPL



Nationwide, Food Insecurity among Older Adults is Increasing

Several factors contribute to older adults' risk of food insecurity, including:

- **Income & poverty:** nationwide increases in food insecurity are biggest among the near-poor, and 9.7% of people aged 65+ currently experience poverty ⁱⁱ
- **Age:** nationwide food insecurity increases were biggest among 40-49 year olds, followed by 50-59 year olds, then among those 60+ ⁱⁱ
- **Disability:** for 50-59 year olds in the U.S., disability is associated with food insecurity ⁱⁱ
- **Race:** looking at older adults who are below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL), Blacks and Hispanics saw larger nationwide increases in food insecurity than Whites ⁱⁱ
- **Homelessness:** nationwide, 6% of the entire homeless population is aged 55-64, ⁱⁱⁱ and over 16% of people living in shelters are over 51 ^{iv}
 - Numbers of homeless elders age 50+ have grown over the past years
 - This situation will worsen as the crisis in homelessness expands, the elderly population increases, and the demand for affordable housing surpasses supply ^v



Food Insecurity Affects the Mental and Physical Health of Older Adults ⁱⁱ

Food insecure adults are:

- 27% less likely to be in excellent or very good health,
- over 5 times more likely to suffer from depression,
- almost 2 times as likely to be diabetic, and
- more than twice as likely to have at least one ADL limitation.

The Food Supplement Program is an Answer to Older Adult Hunger

The Food Supplement Program (FSP) is the new name for the Food Stamp Program in Maryland. It is a nutrition assistance program that helps low-income households buy nutritious, healthy food.

More money for food means better nutrition. With FSP, benefits are deposited monthly onto an Independence EBT card that works like a debit card. Benefits can be used on most food items such as bread, vegetables, meat, and flour. More money for food also means not having to choose between food and expensive prescriptions or visits to the doctor.



Maryland Policies and Practices Connect Seniors with FSP Benefits

Eligibility for the Food Supplement Program (FSP) is based on income (including SSI, interest and dividends, etc.) and household size.

- Marylanders that are 60+ or disabled and prepare food separately from other household members can apply for benefits as a household of 1, potentially increasing benefit levels of seniors living with adult children or roommates.
- Households receiving SSI, PAA, TDAP, or TCA are automatically eligible for FSP benefits.
- Marylanders who are 60+ or disabled can include medical expenses (travel to appointments, Depends, hearing aids, medicines, etc.) in their application, potentially increasing benefit levels.
- Interviews for applications can be completed by telephone.
- Marylanders that are 60+ or disabled have an extended period (24 months) before they need to recertify their benefits.

Maryland Hunger Solutions is Leading the Fight against Senior Hunger in Maryland

MDHS Has Made Senior Hunger a Key Issue

- [Voices of Hunger and Hope](#), MDHS's video series, draws attention to senior hunger in Maryland.
- The [Paper Apple Campaign is used as a tool to advocate for senior benefits in Maryland](#).
- As a partner on the State FSP Outreach Plan, MDHS reaches out to eligible seniors by providing information and application assistance for FSP benefits.
- During the [Food Stamp Challenge](#), MDHS draws attention to senior hunger. Participants have included: Gloria Lawlah, Secretary, Maryland Department of Aging; Mike Lachance, Legislative Liaison, Maryland Department of Aging; and Hank Greenberg, State Director, AARP Maryland.

This February, Senior Hunger Action Month, Maryland Hunger Solutions Made a Difference for Seniors Statewide

- MDHS collaborated with AARP Maryland to host a Tele-Town Hall on senior hunger.
- Through partnerships with Meals on Wheels of Central Maryland and senior centers in Montgomery County, MDHS sent low-income seniors information on applying for and keeping FSP benefits.
- In collaboration with AARP MD, MDHS hosted an outreach event reaching over 150 seniors and connecting them with nutrition assistance at Holiday Park Senior Center in Wheaton, MD.

Join the Fight with Us! Maryland Hunger Solutions Wants to Work with Your Organization

- *Training:* We train staff and volunteers on assisting others with an [online Food Stamp application](#).
- *Outreach materials:* We adapt free [materials](#) on Food Stamp eligibility, applications, and more.
- *Education:* We do one-on-one or group informational sessions about Food Stamp eligibility, application, recertification, and more.
- *Direct outreach:* We directly help Marylanders apply for food stamps.

Questions? Contact Laura Flamm at lflamm@mdhungersolutions.org or (410) 528-0021 x 23

ⁱ American Community Survey, 2006-2010

ⁱⁱ Ziliak, J.P. & Gunderson, C. (2011). *Food Insecurity Among Older Adults: A Report Submitted to AARP Foundation*.

http://drivetoendhunger.org/downloads/AARP_Hunger_Report.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ National Coalition for the Homeless. "Who is Homeless?" July 2009.

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/who.html>

^{iv} National Coalition for the Homeless. "Homelessness among Elderly Persons." September 2009.

<http://www.nationalhomeless.org/factsheets/Elderly.pdf>

^v Rosenheck et. al. "Special Populations of Homeless Americans." Department of Health and Human Services.

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/progsys/homeless/symposium/2-spclpop.htm>