

Finding Food for Older Adults

There are several federal programs that can help you get healthy, nutritious foods. These programs have been proven to reduce issues with hunger and improve health. Reach out to your local Aging and Disability Resource Center, senior center, or Area Agency on Aging to find the resources you need. Find your local agency using the [Eldercare Locator](#).

Older Americans Act Nutrition Program

The purpose of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Program is to reduce hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition in older adults. The Act also promotes socialization and health and well-being. The Senior Nutrition Program is just one of several OAA programs designed to help older adults.

The Senior Nutrition Program provides many services that can help you, especially if you have limited food available. There are no income requirements, and if you are age 60 or older, you can go to one of the local congregate meal centers to eat a nutritious meal. There are also options for home-delivered meals, drive-thru pickup, and restaurant vouchers in some states.

Additionally, nutrition education is provided to participants and includes information on available resources and other programs. Nutrition screenings and referrals to other programs, as well as nutrition assessment and counseling, are often offered. Some agencies even have emergency food resources available for those that need extra help. Visit the [Nutrition and Aging Resource Center](#) to learn more.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of families in need so they can purchase healthy food and become more independent. Three out of five older adults who qualify for [USDA's SNAP](#) are not applying for assistance. There are many myths regarding SNAP:

Myth: Receiving SNAP benefits takes benefits away from others who need them more.

The truth: SNAP is for all who are eligible – it does not take anything away from others who need assistance. Eligibility is based on income requirements.

Myth: It's not worth applying because the amount of assistance is low.

The truth: The average amount of SNAP benefits given is \$104.00 a month. Older adults can use medical deductions to help increase monthly benefits. Medical deductions include prescription medications; medical supplies, including eyeglasses, contact lenses, and urinary control supplies; alternative medical services; transportation costs to doctors' offices; and insurance costs.

Myth: It is difficult to apply for SNAP.

The truth: Actually, states have many ways to apply for SNAP. You can apply in person, by phone, and online. There are also agencies that can even help you with applying for services. [BenefitsCheckUp](#) can help you find more information on applying for SNAP in your state.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) works to improve the health of low-income older adults ages 60 and older by providing them with nutritious USDA foods. Eligibility is based on income; states set income limits for older adults that are at or below 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines. The foods that are provided are healthy options that are also good sources of nutrients older adults are typically lacking, like calcium; iron; vitamins A, C, and D; and other nutrients. For a list of foods available for CSFP, visit the [USDA website](#).

The easiest way to apply for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program is through your local food pantry or food bank. You may also contact your local Area Agency on Aging for guidance.

[Commodity Supplemental Food Program Fact Sheet and help to Apply.](#)

Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)

The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) provides benefits to low-income seniors ages 60 and older to help increase access to locally grown fruits, vegetables, honey, and herbs. SFMNP benefits can be used at farmers' markets, roadside stands, and community-supported farming programs. Some states may increase benefits through SNAP to double your money at farmers' markets. Often, if someone is eligible for SNAP and CSFP, they will also be eligible for SFMNP. Contact your state agency by using the [USA Food and Nutrition Service Contact Map](#).