Hunger and malnutrition have devastating effects on our elder's ability to live independently in their homes, increasing the incidence of adverse health conditions, limitations in daily activity and disabilities.

Hunger among older Ohioans is growing and will dramatically affect already-rising health care costs and the safety, health, well-being and dignity of our friends, neighbors, mothers, fathers and grandparents.

Yet hunger is entirely preventable.

It will take all of us, working together, to solve this damaging condition yet it can, it must and it will be done.

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Ohio is an Aging State

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the state’s “working-age” population (age 20 to 65) will grow by only 224,000 from 2005 to 2015, while the population of individuals age 55 and older will grow by more than 540,000.\(^1\) By 2030, Ohio is projected to see an increase of 56.3% in the number of people over the age of 65.\(^2\)

Elder Hunger is Expected to Increase Dramatically

Nationally, the number of food insecure seniors is estimated to increase by 50% by the year 2025 (when the youngest of the Baby Boom generation reaches age 60).\(^3\)

Measures of Senior Hunger\(^4\)

**United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)**\(^5\)

Each year the USDA measures food insecurity and very low food security across the United States. In September of 2011, the USDA released data on food insecurity for 2010. They found:

*Nationally*
- **17.2 million households**, had difficulty providing enough food at some point during the year, due to a lack of resources. This included **48.8 million people** (32.6 million adults and 16.2 million children).
- An estimated **7.9% of American seniors** (65+) and **8% of American seniors who live alone** are at risk of hunger.
- **2,336,000** households with an elderly person were food insecure. **773,000** of these households had **very low food security**.

*Ohio*
- Ohio is **6th in the nation for worst food security rates**.
- **16.4% of Ohioans** were food insecure in 2010
- **Ohio’s increase of 7.9 percentage points** is the largest increase in food insecurity of all states since 1996-1998
- Ohio was tied with Georgia for **7th in nation** for increases in the **very low** food insecurity rate at **3.2%** from 1996-1998.
- Ohio’s food insecurity rate is **higher than all surrounding states** and the U.S. average.

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\(^4\) Hunger is often referred to as “food insecurity.” Food insecurity is the limited or uncertain ability to acquire food. A **very low** food secure household is cutting or skipping meals; is hungry and not eating; missed an entire day of meals in the last three months. Typically households with very low food security experienced the condition in 7 months of the year, for a few days in each of those months. http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/labels.htm#labels

\(^5\) USDA. http://www.ers.usda.gov/Publications/err125/
AARP Foundation

In August of 2011 the AARP Foundation released a report detailing food insecurity at the national and state level for adults aged 50 and older. The report found:

- Ohio ranks 10th in the nation for seniors aged 50-59 suffering from food insecurity (10.41%)
- 19.5% of Ohioans over the age of 50 with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level are food insecure.
- Of elderly households with incomes below 130% of the FPL, the risk of hunger rose 41% from 2006 (17.6%) to 2010 (24%).

U.S. Census

More than 1.7 million Ohioans, (15.8%) lived at or below the federal poverty level, according to the 2010 American Community Survey Estimates.

7.7% of Ohio’s adults older than 65 live in poverty and 62,533 Ohioans above the age of 75 live with incomes below the poverty level.

Grandparents raising grandchildren

According to the latest Census, results 216,194 Ohio grandparents live with minor children in their homes. 21,325 grandparents raising grandchildren live in homes with incomes below the federal poverty level.

Disability

62,906 Ohio adults older than 65 lived with a disability and had incomes below the poverty level in 2010.

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7 U.S. Census ACS 2010 Estimates http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/searchresults.xhtml?refresh=t
Hunger in Ohio, 2010

Ohio’s 12 Feeding America member foodbanks and their network of more than 3,300 local agencies fed 2.1 million Ohioans, 14% of which were seniors in SFY 2011, a 58.9% increase in the number of clients served from 2006 to 2010.

Every four years, Mathematica Policy Institute, Inc. in partnership with Feeding America, the nation’s largest organization of emergency food providers, completes a national study on emergency food providers and their clients. From Hunger in Ohio, 2010:

Hard choices being made by Ohioans visiting the emergency food assistance network in 2009:

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8 Hunger in Ohio 2010, Mathematica Policy Institute. 4,092 face-to-face interviews with Ohioans seeking emergency food.
Other Measures of Poverty

A new supplemental measure of poverty\(^9\), released by the U.S. Census last year, found that \textbf{one in six older Americans were living with incomes below the poverty level}, when income, like Social Security, and expenses, like medications and rent, were taken into account.

Depletion of Resources

Many seniors do have some savings, enough for a rainy day, but not enough to retire. Their assets do not let them qualify for government programs, but they still do not have enough money to meet their needs.

- Workers’ \textbf{retirement funds fell by $4 trillion dollars} during the economic recession, following the Dow’s loss of more than 50% its value.\(^10\)
- Low and middle income consumers over the age of 65 years carried \textbf{$10,235 in credit card debt} in 2008.
- Since 1991 the \textbf{bankruptcy rate doubled} among people age 55 to 64 from about 6% to over 15%.

Unemployment

- Due to the recession, 44% of workers aged 50 and older have \textbf{delayed retirement}.\(^11\)
- Since 2007, unemployment rates have doubled and remained higher than before the recession for workers aged 55 and older.\(^12\)
- Median duration of unemployment for older workers \textbf{tripled} for workers over age 65 has tripled.\(^13\)
- The number of workers over the age of 55 who are working part-time but are seeking full time employment \textbf{doubled} from 2007 to 2010.\(^14\)

\(^9\) U.S. Census http://www.census.gov/hhes/povmeas/methodology/supplemental/research.html
\(^10\) National Council on Aging, July 2010. The Economic Downturn’s Effect on Older Adults.
\(^12\) Government Accountability Office, Income Security: Older Adults and the 2007-2009 Recession October 17 2011
Cost of Senior Hunger

Food insecure elderly persons have been found to be 2.33 times more likely to report fair or poor health status. Food insecurity among elders increases disability, decreases resistance to infection, and extends hospital stays. Moreover, many medications need to be taken with food to assure their effectiveness. Too many seniors skip meals in order to purchase medication, only to see the “Take with food” label on the prescription bottle.

According to the American Diabetes Association and Center for Disease Control, diabetes cost us $218 billion in excess medical costs a year in 2007. Among U.S. residents aged 65 years and older, 10.9 million, or 26.9% had diabetes in 2010.

Food insecurity for seniors results in:
- Poor intakes of energy, protein, carbohydrates, niacin, riboflavin, vitamins B6 and B12, Mg, Fe and Zn
- Poor overall health status
- Compromised ability to resist
- More likely to have ADL limitations (comparable to an adult 14 years older)
- Deteriorating mental and physical health
- Greater incidence of hospitalization and extended hospital stays
- Increasing care-giving demands
- Increased national/state health care expenditures

“Hunger in America: Suffering We All Pay For,” released in October 2011 found Ohio’s Hunger Bill to be $5.58 billion dollars in 2010:

Ohio's Hunger Bill
(Amounts in billions of 2010 dollars)

Seniors have increased need for:
- Low sodium foods to prevent high blood pressure.
- Vitamin B-12 – as we age our stomachs produce less gastric acid, which makes it difficult to absorb this vitamin. B-12 helps maintain blood vessels and nerves.
- Vitamin D – with age, skin is less able to absorb Vitamin D from the sunlight. Vitamin D is essential for calcium absorption.

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Key Partners in Addressing Hunger among Older Ohioans

**State and Local Governments:** State and local governments have critical roles to play in ending hunger. They administer critical federal nutrition programs, support state-funded programs and provide leadership to make ending hunger a priority in the state.

**Businesses Help to Address Hunger:** Private sector partners can help address hunger in a myriad of ways: contributing in-kind help or technical assistance to anti-hunger groups, donating food, making cash donations, including those to promote enrollment in nutrition safety net programs, and supporting policy improvements.

**Faith-Based Organizations:** Many of Ohio’s food pantries and soup kitchens are sponsored by faith-based organizations. Faith-based groups also connect people with services and promote policies and approaches to aid more people.

**Ohio Department of Aging:** the Ohio Department of Aging seeks to provide leadership for the delivery of services and supports that improve and promote quality of life and personal choice for Ohio elders, adults with disabilities, their families, and their caregivers. They operate a variety of nutrition programs for Ohio elders, including the Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program, the Congregate Nutrition Program, and Home Delivered Nutrition Program. In addition to these programs, PASSPORT and Choices are Medicaid home and community based waiver programs that provide services to Ohioans aged 60 and older in their own home, including meals.

**The Senior Farmers’ Nutrition Market Program** (SFMNP) is a USDA funded program that provides $50 worth of coupons to low-income elders for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables and honey. The program operates from May through October during which eligible elders can exchange their coupons at farmers’ markets or farm stands that display a SFMNP sign. The program also includes a nutrition education component which provides participants with information about making healthy choices and the benefits of fruits and vegetables in their diets.

Unfortunately, despite its popularity and benefits to multiple Ohioans, the program is underfunded which limits its availability and reach. Wait lists are prevalent. Current funding of $1.7 million serves 13 percent of the low income elders (31,784) in the 44 counties served and only 7% of low income elders in the entire state.

http://aging.ohio.gov/services/seniorfarmersmarketnutritionprogram/

**Contact:** Shari Baker, RD, LD, Nutrition Program ManagerOhio Department of Aging, sbaker@age.state.oh.us
**Congregate Nutrition Program and the Home Delivered Nutrition Program:** The Congregate Nutrition Program and the Home Delivered Nutrition Program are funded by the Administration on Aging and state and local dollars for a total of more than $54 million dollars. Nutrition program services are available to all Ohioans age 60 and older in each of Ohio’s 88 counties. However, availability many vary locally and priority is given to frail, homebound or isolated elders.

These nutrition programs offer health-sustaining food and other important benefits. The programs serve elders who may be frail, have multiple chronic diseases and live on marginal incomes. Both programs provide links to other community social services, such as supplemental nutrition assistance program and food pantries. The meal programs screen consumers and refer those at high risk for nutrition-related problems to appropriate resources, including physicians, dietitians and dentists. Consumers and their caregivers learn about good nutrition practices, the need for physical activity and the importance of food safety.

Despite providing nearly 100,000 elders with more than 8.7 million nutritious meals, current programs fall short of meeting the nutritional needs of many older Ohioans.

**PASSPORT and Choices:** PASSPORT and Choices are Medicaid home & community based waiver programs that provide services to individuals age 60 and older in their own home including meals. For more information visit: [http://aging.ohio.gov/home/](http://aging.ohio.gov/home/)

**AARP Ohio:** Founded in 1958, AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50 and over improve the quality of their lives. AARP has offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. As a social welfare organization, as well as the nation’s largest membership organization for people 50+, AARP is leading a revolution in the way people view and live life.

AARP and the AARP Foundation are engaged nationally and locally in identifying and addressing senior hunger and raising awareness of the growing problem of senior hunger in the United States by engaging members, and sponsoring research and reports, and the Jeff Gordon “Drive to End Hunger” Nascar campaign. AARP Ohio recently sponsored a statewide food and awareness drive of hunger among seniors in Ohio.

**Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks:** The Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks represents the 12 Feeding America food banks serving all 88 counties through nearly 3,300 member food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In addition to operating statewide programs like the Ohio Food Purchase and Agricultural Clearance Program and The Ohio Benefit Bank™, Ohio food banks distribute CSFP and TEFAP throughout the state in partnership with the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services and provide supplemental programs that address the unique needs of vulnerable populations like seniors and children. According to the USDA’s most recent report, more people used the emergency food network in the Midwest
region than in any other region of the United States. Contact: Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Executive Director, Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks, lisa@oashf.org or (614) 221-4336.

The Ohio Food Purchase and Agricultural Clearance Program (OFPACP):
The OFPACP is a public private partnership that has operated in Ohio for 14 years with funding provided by the Ohio General Assembly and administered by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services. The statewide partnership directs surplus and unmarketable agricultural products from over 100 Ohio farmers and producers through the State’s network of food banks onto the table of Ohio families, ensuring even our most vulnerable populations have a source of nutritious, Ohio-grown, raised and produced food. The program prevents waste, reduces loss for farmers and growers, is the most nutritious food in the food bank warehouse and, most importantly, provides the most wholesome of food to struggling Ohio families for pennies on the pound.

In State Fiscal year 2011, OASHF member food banks distributed more than 150 million pounds of food and grocery items throughout the State. More than 25% of this food (more than 32.4 million pounds) was provided through the OFPACP.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)
TEFAP is a federally funded (USDA) program that provides shelf stable meat, dairy, canned fruits and vegetables, and other food commodities to states, mainly through local food banks. Food banks redistribute the products to faith-based and secular food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters that directly serve the public. TEFAP households, except those receiving prepared meals, must meet the state’s income eligibility criteria.

In State Fiscal Year 2011, TEFAP provided 27% of all food distributed through the emergency food assistance network in Ohio. TEFAP is essential resource for the record number of Ohioans standing in food lines. Yet even as the need for emergency food remains high, agricultural markets are currently very strong. As a result, there is little need for USDA to intervene in agricultural markets by purchasing “bonus” TEFAP foods that have helped the emergency food network cope with rising demand over the past three years. Any decrease in TEFAP and bonus commodities will severely impact the amount of food available, including reducing the size of food packages available by 12.5%. State Agency: Ohio Department of Job & Family Services http://jfs.ohio.gov/ofam/foodstamps.stm

19 The exclusion of the homeless and under representation of those who are tenuously housed—bias estimates of emergency kitchen use downward, especially among certain subgroups of the population.
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP):

CSFP is a federally-funded USDA program available in 54 Ohio counties that provides a simple, monthly box of food, costing about $20.00, that contains four cans of vegetables, two jugs of fruit juice, two cans of fruit, a couple of cans of tuna or other protein, three cans of evaporated milk, 2 boxes of cereal, a jar of peanut butter and a two pound block of cheese.

This box of food is not extravagant but it can mean the difference between a life at home or an expensive hospital or nursing home stay paid for with those same taxpayer’s dollars. The program serves 20,463 Ohioans through the emergency food assistance network; all are seniors (age 60 or over). For more information on CSFP in Ohio visit http://jfs.ohio.gov/ofam/foodstamps.stm

The Ohio Benefit Bank™ (OBB):

The Ohio Benefit Bank™ is an online service that connects Ohioans to much needed federal and state resources to help their family become more economically self-sufficient. The OBB is a public-private partnership between the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks and the State of Ohio, including eight state agencies. The OBB is an internet based program that connects low-and moderate income Ohioans to over 20 different applications for work-support programs and tax credits administered by 9 state and 4 federal agencies.

A recent study found that many low-income households were not accessing the benefits that were available to them.

- Many can’t afford to take time off work to pick up and complete paperwork.
- Others are overwhelmed by the amount of paperwork required.
- Some don’t have transportation to get to the various application offices to apply for assistance.  

The OBB provides access to over 20 work support programs and services (including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Home Energy Assistance Program, Health Care, Medicare Part D Extra Help, Medicare Savings Programs, a wide variety of free tax filing and tax credits, among many more) bringing all of these resources together in one location. The OBB allows Ohioans to complete the necessary applications in one location either at home via the internet (www.ohiobenefits.org) or at a community location with the help of trained counselor. Ohioans can access The OBB in all 88 counties.

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through nearly 4,000 trained counselors in over 1,300 community, faith-based, and public sites. To date, over 260,000 individuals have been served.

**Contact:** Maryjo Mace-Woodburn, Director of Work Support Initiatives, Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks ([www.oashf.org](http://www.oashf.org)), (614) 221-4336, ext. 268, maryjo@oashf.org

**Privately operated senior hunger relief programs:** Many programs across Ohio secure funding, staff and volunteer resources develop infrastructure and maximize local collaboration to deliver hunger and poverty relief services to seniors across the State. As the need increases now and in the years ahead seniors will continue to need these programs. Recognition of their significant contribution to alleviating hunger and poverty must be made along with inclusion in a comprehensive plan that addresses and solves the senior hunger crisis.

**Volunteer and National Service Organizations:** Volunteers play important roles in addressing senior hunger, from delivering Meals on Wheels and making food donations, to screening seniors for SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps) benefits and supporting policies to address the problem. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) “improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering.”

In 2010-2011\(^{21}\) FY

- **Senior Corps** provided more than **16,000** seniors in Ohio the opportunity to contribute their time and talents in one of three Senior Corps programs: Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP.
- **AmeriCorps** provided more than **1,400** individuals the opportunity to provide intensive, results-driven service to meet education, environmental, health, economic, and other pressing needs in communities across Ohio last year.
- **Learn and Serve America** provides grants to schools, colleges, and nonprofit groups to engage more than **38,000** Ohio students in community service linked to academic learning and the development of civic skills.

**Contacts:** Tina Dunphy, State Director, CNCS State Office, (614) 469-7441, tdunphy@cns.gov and William B. Hall, Executive Director, Ohio Community Service Council, (614) 728-2916, William.hall@ocsc.state.oh.us

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Maximizing Federal Nutrition Programs

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** The Supplemental Food Assistance Program (SNAP), known as **Food Assistance** in Ohio and formerly known as food stamps, provides low-income people with benefits on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card that they can use to obtain food at most grocery stores and other food outlets. The federal government funds 100 percent of SNAP benefits and provides approximately half of a state’s costs to administer the program.

**How many eligible seniors participate in Ohio?**

USDA SNAP participation rates by age group currently are available at the national, but not at the state level. In 2010, **14.3 percent** of all Ohio SNAP households contained an elderly individual. **7%** of all individuals in Ohio who participate in SNAP in 2010 were over the age of 60. 22

**Who can get SNAP in Ohio?**

Income tests largely determine Ohioan’s SNAP eligibility. **Asset tests were eliminated for all Ohio households starting in 2008,** which can significantly affect a senior’s participation in programs. Ohio seniors **who are 60 or older** may be income eligible regardless of gross income if their net income, after subtracting gross income certain expenses (such as housing and medical costs, child care, and eldercare), is at or below 100 percent of the federal poverty line. There are no work requirements for people age 60 or older.

**Why should we care?**

The minimum SNAP benefit is $16.00 a month. **The average SNAP benefit for older American living alone is $119.00 a month.** 23 Ensuring that older Ohioans are aware of and able to easily access SNAP will not only draw down federal dollars into the State’s economy, it will decrease food insecurity and the damaging effects of hunger on one of our most vulnerable populations.

**How do we increase SNAP participation among elderly Ohioans?**

- Increase awareness of SNAP eligibility and benefit levels where seniors, caregivers and family members are already accessing services.
- Increase EBT use at Farmer’s Markets in conjunction with the SFMNP.
- Simplify application and recertification processes for seniors by
  - Providing seamless enrollment across programs seniors already participate in.
  - Raising income eligibility levels so that an senior participating in the Home Energy Assistance Program, SFMNP, CSFP, for example, could be automatically eligible for SNAP.
  - Minimizing documentation requirements and using all available data sources as “back door” verification.

SNAP is administered by the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services. For more information on SNAP visit: [http://jfs.ohio.gov/factsheets/foodassistance.pdf](http://jfs.ohio.gov/factsheets/foodassistance.pdf)

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