Senior Hunger
SEPTEMBER 2019
Senior Hunger

As the Baby Boom generation ages, we must be prepared to meet the dramatic increase in demand for nutrition assistance among seniors. The number of older adults is projected to increase by 36% over the next decade and continue to rise in the following decade. In 2030 there will be 72.1 million older adults, almost twice as many as in 2008. Additionally, the senior population is becoming increasingly diverse. Between 2010 and 2030, the white population of 65 and plus is projected to increase by 59% compared with 160% of older minorities.

These changing demographics will have profound impacts on the demand for social services, especially the need for adequate and culturally appropriate nutrition services. It is critical that current nutrition interventions continue to adequately serve Americans, but we must also proactively create the infrastructure to meet the future demand for nutrition services.
In 2009, about one in three Americans age 65 years or older lived in low-income families.

When examining economic instability over a lifetime, nearly half of older Americas will encounter at least 1 year of poverty or near poverty between the ages of 60 and 90.

Historically, economic security for seniors has been built on Social Security, pensions and savings. However, sources of income are extremely uneven for most low-income seniors.

For most low-income seniors, Social Security is close to 70 percent of their monthly income.
Senior Hunger

Nevada Population: 3,034,392
Total Number of seniors in Nevada: 476,400 (15.7%)
Total number of Seniors at 100% or below the poverty level: 40,494 (8.5%)
Projected population in Nevada in 2030: 577,088

California Population: 39,536,653
Total Number of Seniors: 6,325,865 (16%)
Total Number of Seniors at 100% or below the poverty level: 632,587 (10%)
Projected population by 2030 in California: 9.04 million
Senior Hunger

When breaking down the older Nevadan population by the three generations (including ages 55 years and older), the 2015 U.S. Census Bureau shows:

47% (339,203) Are pre-retirement (age 55-64 years)
48% (344,490) are retirement qualified (65-84 years)
5% (36,216) Are oldest old (age 85+ years)

Americans are living longer!
Senior Hunger

Food insecurity among seniors has been linked to:

- Poorer self-reported health
- Lower quality of life
- Cardiovascular disease
- Diabetes
- Anemia
- Obesity
- Functional impairment
- Anxiety and depression
- Cognitive function

Environmental factors such as food cost, availability, distance to obtain food, walkability, safety, and available transportation all influence dietary intake.
Senior Hunger

Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs:

**Congregate Meal Program** provides one meal per day to seniors 60+ and qualified individuals (spouse of a senior, disabled living at a nutrition site (and eating at that site), or disabled person dependent on a senior). A hot meal or fresh salad is provided Monday through Friday.

There are currently 27 congregate meal grantees across Nevada receiving Older American Title III-C funding through ADSD.

**Home Delivered Meals** provides delivery of meals to homebound seniors 60+ who are unable to participate in the Congregate Meal program due to an illness or a disability, whether temporary or permanent.

A total of 16,622 older Nevadans were served by HDM programs in Nevada in 2016.
Senior Hunger

USDA Senior Nutrition Program:
The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) provides a monthly commodes box to low income seniors age 60 and over. In addition, FBNN runs a senior box program for seniors who narrowly miss the CSFP eligibility guidelines.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food.

Percentage of households with at least one person aged 60 receiving SNAP:
Nv CD-2: 30% (Washoe)
Nv CD-4: 26% (Lyon)
Ca-1: 28% (Plumas, Lassen)
Ca-4: 36% (Truckee, South Lake Tahoe)
Ca-8: 25.10% (Bishop, Mammoth)
Senior Hunger

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) could be an additional source of support, but only 42% of eligible seniors participate in the program. As a comparison, roughly 85% of eligible, non-elderly adults take advantage of the benefit. Feelings of stigma or guilt, confusing applications, and barriers related to mobility are all reasons why the participation rate is so low among senior citizens.

The minimum monthly benefit for a senior is $16. In 2017, the USDA reported the average monthly benefit for 80% of the eligible seniors was $105.
In 2017, the Nevada Legislature budged 1.9 million to increase the reimbursement rate for home delivered meals one dollar per meal making the rate $3.15 per meal.

In 2019, the Nevada Legislature passed SB 443 which allocates 1.5 million to increase the reimbursement rate for Nevada’s senior congregant meal programs. The current reimbursement rate is now $3.20 per meal. The legislation also provided start-up funds for organizations wishing to open a congregant meal site.
Senior Hunger

Seniors who spend more than $35 a month on out-of-pocket medical costs may be able to deduct that from their gross income when applying for SNAP, thus increasing their monthly benefit amount.

Currently only 16% of older adults utilize the medical expense deduction, but it is estimated that many more SNAP-eligible seniors would qualify to use it.
Senior Hunger

How to improve senior food security:

- Promote participation in SNAP
- Open congregate meal sites – there are only 27 in Nevada
- Encourage income eligible seniors to apply for CSFP
- Connect seniors to the closest neighbourhood pantry