

Senior Food Security in Nevada

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Food Bank of Northern Nevada



Who We Are

The Food Bank of Northern Nevada connects families and individuals to the food and resources they need to thrive. Working with more than 140 partner agencies and through direct service programs, we create opportunities for over 160,000 neighbors each month to access fresh, nourishing meals. This includes children, seniors, and others working toward brighter futures.

What began as a small pantry has grown into a regional hub of hope. For more than 40 years, we have proudly served northern Nevada and the eastern Sierra in California. Last fiscal year, we provided over 23.1 million meals, fueling resilience and well-being across our communities.

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our community, we faced a year of growing need with determination – and we even surprised ourselves a bit with all we were able to accomplish together. Hunger in our region has reached extraordinary levels. Each month, we helped an average of 160,000 people. That's 5,000 more than last year, and a staggering 76% increase compared to pre-pandemic numbers in 2019.

We met this need head-on by distributing 23.1 million meals to our neighbors throughout the year. This was only possible because of our amazing network of more than 140 partner agencies working throughout our 90,000-square-mile service area. Of the 26.8 million pounds of food distributed, 21.6 million pounds went directly to families through these partners. And we're proud that 32% of this food was fresh produce, keeping nutrition at the heart of our mission.

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Programs we operate

Golden Groceries

Delicious, healthy, supplemental groceries to individuals 60 and better. Seniors receive a box of non-perishable food items, a whole grain item, and a bag of fresh produce. FBNN served 3719 seniors aged 60 and over – which is 65% of the overall percentage served this program for FY 2025

Mobile Harvest:

Access to nutritious, healthful food is vital for the community members we serve. FY 2025, FBNN served 7,916 of our neighbors aged 60 and over through our Mobile Harvest Program, representing 23% of our overall neighbors we serve.

Senior Nutrition & Wellness Program / Senior Boxes:

The Senior Nutrition and Wellness Program (commonly known as Commodity Supplemental Food Program) is a U.S. Department of Agriculture program that provides a monthly box of nutritious, shelf-stable foods to supplement the diets of low-income seniors aged 60 and over. FBNN served 4,178 seniors aged 60 and over – which is 99.5% of the overall percentage served by this program for FY 2025.

Produce on Wheels:

Produce on Wheels is a mobile market bringing fresh fruits and vegetables directly to senior communities at no charge and offers high-quality produce. This program is tailored for older adults. In FY 2025, FBNN served 4,209 neighbors representing 85% of the total number of neighbors served by this program.

Prescription Pantry:

A prescription pantry is a program that partners healthcare providers with food banks or pantries to give eligible patients a "prescription" for healthy food, often to help manage diet-related chronic conditions like diabetes or heart disease. FBNN served 137,957 neighbors - about 45% of the total number of people served by this program in FY 2025.

School Pantries:

School pantries are food pantries located at schools to help students and their families who are experiencing food insecurity. FBNN's school pantry program served 2,183 neighbors - about 5.7% of the total number of people served by this program in FY 2025.

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Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program



The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) isn't just for young families—people age 60 and older may be eligible for SNAP benefits too. The SNAP eligibility rules are different—and often easier—for people ages 60 and up.

Age Bracket

60–64:	21,840
65–69:	18,296
70–79:	22,061
80–89:	7,507
90+:	1,248
Total:	70,952

Many seniors live on Social Security or retirement savings.

SNAP helps cover food costs, freeing up money for other essentials like rent, utilities, or medicine.

SNAP is a federal benefit — not charity. Most seniors have paid taxes for years that support programs like this. It's designed to help older adults stay healthy and independent.

SNAP rules for older adults are more flexible than many realize:

- Retirement income counts, but certain medical expenses can be deducted, which may help you qualify.
- You don't need to be completely low-income — many seniors who think they're "just above the limit" still qualify.

SNAP benefits can be used for fresh produce, meats, dairy, and other nutritious foods — helping prevent diet-related illnesses like heart disease and diabetes.

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PL 119-27 (HR 1) and changes to the safety net



Work-requirement changes for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs)

The age exemption for ABAWDs is extended up to age 65 from the pre-HR 1 age of 55. In other words, adults over 65 are exempt from the time-limit rule.

Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) / Heat & Eat energy assistance treatment

For households without an elderly or disabled member: If they receive certain third-party energy assistance payments (e.g., via a state law) or are in a state with a “Heat & Eat” program, they will no longer automatically qualify for a SUA just by virtue of receiving energy assistance. The deduction for excess shelter costs is restricted in that scenario.

However, for households that include an elderly or disabled member, the prior treatment remains — i.e., they still count the energy assistance for SUA and shelter deduction purposes.

Implication for seniors: If a SNAP household has an elderly member (which many senior households will), they retain the favorable treatment under this change. So older adult households are protected under this benefit-deduction provision.

“Thrifty Food Plan” (TFP) reevaluation and benefit stability

The law amends the statute for how the TFP (which underlies maximum monthly SNAP allotments) can be reevaluated. Under the new law, evaluations cannot increase the cost beyond inflation, and the next reevaluation may not occur before October 1, 2027.

Implication for seniors: While this applies to all SNAP households, it means slower growth in potential benefit increases (which could affect older adults on fixed incomes who rely on full benefit amounts).

Cost shift to the states:

The law shifts more cost burdens to states (e.g., administrative costs, state matches). Some states might respond by tightening eligibility, reducing outreach, or shrinking benefits — each of which affects older adults dependent on these supports.

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Policy Recommendation



Problem: Many seniors struggle with the paperwork, technology, and frequent renewals required for SNAP.

Policy options:

- Extend certification periods for older adults (e.g., 36 months instead of 12 months).
- Use “Elderly Simplified Application Projects” (ESAPs) — these allow simplified forms, telephone interviews, and longer certification periods for seniors and people with disabilities.
- Automatic enrollment or data-matching with Social Security or SSI systems to identify and enroll eligible seniors.
- **Allow permanent waivers of in-person interview requirements for those 60+ or with disabilities.**

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Policy Recommendation



Problem: The standard SNAP formula often underestimates seniors' actual living expenses.

Policy options:

- Increase the medical expense deduction cap or automatically apply a standard medical deduction (SMD) without requiring documentation for small recurring costs (prescriptions, copays, etc.).
- Adjust the shelter deduction rules to better reflect the true cost of housing for older renters and homeowners, especially in high-cost areas.
- Implement a Senior Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) that ties maximum SNAP benefits for 60+ households to a senior-specific index, such as the CPI-E (Elderly Consumer Price Index).
- Protect seniors' savings by raising or eliminating the asset test for older adults (so modest retirement savings don't disqualify them).

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Policy Recommendation



Problem: Physical mobility and technology barriers keep many seniors from accessing or using SNAP benefits.

Policy options:

- Expand SNAP Online Purchasing with senior-friendly interfaces, phone-ordering, or local grocery partnerships.
- Allow home-delivered groceries paid for with SNAP (pilot programs exist in NY, MN, and AZ).
- Integrate SNAP enrollment into senior service hubs, such as Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) and congregate meal sites.
- Transportation stipends or partnerships with senior centers and other nonprofit organizations for those unable to shop independently.