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# Two-Thirds of Eligible Older Adults in Northeast Tennessee Aren’t Taking Advantage of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

**JOHNSON CITY, Tenn.** – The First Tennessee Area Agency on Aging (FTAAAD) is excited to announce a partnership with the Tennessee Commission on Aging and Disability and the Tennessee Department of Human Services. This partnership is designed to expand outreach, screening and application-assistance efforts for adults 60 and older for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in Upper East Tennessee.

The goal of this SNAP outreach project is to inform and educate older Tennesseans who may be eligible to enroll in SNAP, and to screen current beneficiaries for additional medical and housing expense deductions which could result in increased monthly benefits with which to pay for food items.

Only approximately a third of potentially-eligible seniors in Northeast Tennessee are enrolled in this important nutrition program. Increased participation from this age group not only results in more money for food purchases and a reduction in food insecurity, but also increased funds flowing into communities through local retailers.

Food insecurity affects nearly 27 percent of older adults in this part of Tennessee. Of those, 11.13 percent of all Tennesseans ages 60 and older are considered food insecure on a daily basis. An additional 15.8 percent of Tennesseans 60 and older are marginally food insecure, meaning they have experienced the threat of hunger in the past 12 months. Food insecurity is associated with a number of poor health outcomes in seniors, which increases the public-health challenges for local communities. Better nutrition reduces the chance of long-term hospital stays and increases the likelihood that older adults can remain in their own homes as they age.

Northeast Tennessee:

* + 150,624 total population aged 60 and older
  + 16,764 food insecure
  + 23,798 marginally food insecure   
    *\*Source: State of Senior Hunger in America 2014*

Any adults 60 and over who live in Carter, Greene, Hancock, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi or Washington counties and are interested in learning more about the SNAP program, or who need assistance completing an application, can call FTAAAD’s Information & Assistance line at 1-866-836-6678.

**About First Tennessee Development District Area Agency on Aging and Disability**FTAAAD’s mission is to improve the quality of life for older adults and adults with disabilities who live in the eight counties of Northeast Tennessee by advocating, setting policy, identifying local needs, providing services, coordinating resources, and providing information to promote a continuum of care which supports independence, choice, and empowerment for those we are committed to serve. For more information, call 423-928-3258 or visit [www.ftaaad.org](http://www.ftaaad.org).

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