

# The Problem: Older Adult Food Insecurity is Rising While Help is Declining

Older Ohioans (age 60+) now make up nearly 1 in 4 of all food pantry visitors across Ohio. Visits to food pantries by older Ohioans increased by 107% over the decade leading up to the pandemic, and have continued to accelerate. During the pandemic, some older Ohioans with incomes low enough to qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) received Emergency Allotments that boosted their benefit amounts. Those benefits stopped after February 2023.



"It [SNAP emergency allotments] was really a godsend. Getting access to healthy food and my health declining is my biggest worry. It will affect my weight and mental health."

62-year-old single woman with diabetes in Jackson County who lost \$230 per month in SNAP benefits



## The Impact: Worsening Health Outcomes, Reduced Quality of Life

Nearly one in two older adults are at risk of malnutrition. Food insecurity increases rates of anxiety, depression, diet-related diseases, and more.

Fortunately, research has shown that SNAP participation is associated with a reduced likelihood of nursing home and hospital admissions among low-income older adults. It reduces depression and leads to better nutritional outcomes and lower healthcare costs.

"I will no longer be able to buy as much fruits and vegetables or meats or enjoy snacks. I went from \$281 a month to \$23! I now have to go to 6 food pantries a month just to try to balance what I get and save my \$23 for what I don't get there. I feel unimportant to our country."

61-year-old disabled woman in Mahoning County who lost \$258 per month in SNAP benefits



## The Opportunity: Invest in Direct Food Assistance for Older Ohioans

Amendment HC0305 would impact 70,000 one- to two-person 60+ households by bringing their monthly SNAP allotments to \$50 per month. This investment builds on the commitment made by the 134th Ohio General Assembly to keep older Ohioans connected to SNAP by easing administrative burdens through an Elderly Simplified Application Project.

The Ohio Legislative Service Commission estimates this investment in Ohio's aging population will cost the State of Ohio just \$21 million per year over the biennium, with very little to no additional administrative cost. It's a down payment we must make as we reckon with how to serve Ohio's rapidly aging population affordably and with dignity.

