



Western Reserve

Area Agency on Aging

Nutrition & Aging

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** serves households with significant economic needs by providing eligible individuals or families with monetary benefits for groceries. The program requires individuals to meet certain income and asset levels and fulfill work requirements (for those between the ages of 17 and 59).

Earlier this month, the State of Ohio **expanded the program's eligibility and payout rules to ease the "benefits cliff."** This cliff occurs when individuals receive a raise at work that places them above the 130% federal poverty limit. This results in a loss of benefits, a stipulation that may prevent them from pursuing promotions, working extra shifts, or seeking higher-paying jobs.

And, recently, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services released a sliding-scale system, allowing households **that earn above 130% of the poverty limit to receive reduced benefits until their income surpasses 200% of the federal poverty limit.** The new benefits model means that SNAP beneficiaries do not have to choose between picking up an extra shift or having enough food to feed their family; they can do both.

Nutrition programs like SNAP are important components of healthy aging. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle as we age starts with **balanced nutrition.** *Balance* means:

- the right mix of protein, carbohydrates, healthy fats, and fiber
- eating a wide variety of foods
- appropriately portioning food at mealtimes, and
- eating "treats" in moderation.

However, achieving nutritional balance can be challenging for many older adults, especially those homebound or with limited incomes.

Fortunately, state and federal nutrition programs offer support. For example:

- **Home-delivered meals** (e.g., "Meals on Wheels") deliver nutritious meals directly to older Ohioans with limited mobility or transportation.
- In addition, **congregate meal programs** offer nutritionally balanced meals in community centers, encouraging socialization.

Older Americans Act dollars fund these programs and are available to anyone aged 60 or older.

- **The Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program** provides coupons for fresh produce at local farmers' markets to individuals 60 or older.

These programs aim to benefit those with the greatest need, including low-income, minority, rural, limited English proficiency, or those at risk of institutionalization.

If you or someone you know needs assistance determining eligibility for or getting connected to one or more of the programs mentioned above, please call Western Reserve Area Agency on Aging's **Aging and Disability Resource Center at (216) 539-9240.**

Advocacy. Assistance. Answers on Aging and Disabilities.