

New Bedford Council on Aging and Coastline Elderly Services Join National Movement to End Senior Hunger



*Community organizations come together to help
eligible older adults enroll in SNAP*

When it comes to maintaining a healthy diet, millions of Americans age 65 and over face significant obstacles: their income is fixed, and their spending on food is consuming an increasingly larger portion of their budget.

The New Bedford Council on Aging and Coastline Elderly Services in partnership with the National Council on Aging (NCOA), has joined a nationwide effort to support these older adults by helping them access the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that only 2 out of every 5 seniors who are eligible for SNAP are enrolled in the program. This means that millions of low-income elders are missing out on this vital program, which provides an average monthly benefit of \$113 to help participants buy healthy food.

This benefit could put adequate nutrition within reach for many seniors who are struggling to make ends meet.

The New Bedford Council on Aging and Coastline Elderly Services are two of more than 30 community organizations around the country that are stepping up their efforts to assist seniors in applying for SNAP. The organizations will use NCOA's free online BenefitsCheckUp® tool (www.BenefitsCheckUp.org) to screen older adults with limited income for SNAP eligibility. In 2014, the initiative helped more than 30,000 seniors apply for SNAP through local partners and assisted more than 300,000 access the SNAP application online.

"We're excited to be part of this proven effort that has the potential to help tens of thousands of low-income older adults nationwide improve their health and financial security," said Debra Lee, Director of The New Bedford Council on Aging. Both agencies have a strong history of helping seniors in need.

"We're confident that increasing SNAP enrollment with BenefitsCheckUp® and other proven outreach methods will have a profound effect on lives of seniors in New Bedford," said Coastline's Chief Executive Officer Paula Shiner.

To find out more about SNAP eligibility, contact The Council on Aging at (508) 991-6250 or Coastline Elderly Services at (508) 999-6400.

For more information on the collaborative effort please visit us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/New-Bedford-Council-on-AgingCoastline-Elderly-Services>

For more information on NCOA's senior hunger initiative, visit <http://www.ncoa.org/SeniorHunger>.
