Senior Hunger in Colorado:
An Aging Population, a Growing Need

Hunger Free Colorado

The state's leading anti-hunger organization leveraging the power of collaboration, system change, policy change and social change to end hunger in Colorado

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Objectives

The goal of this presentation is to have you leave with a clear understanding of:

- Older adult hunger in Colorado
- How to recognize the signs of hunger
- What you can do to address hunger, as an individual and as part of an organization

Older Adult Hunger in Colorado

An issue defined by:

- The need in Colorado
- The gaps in services
- The opportunities to solve this issue
- The partnerships required

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Older Adult Population in Colorado

2010 Census Statistics for **Coloradans**

Total 60+ Populations: **818,905**

- Male: 45.9% Female: 54.1%
- Colorado has the 7th fastest growing population 85+

- 61% of older adults are not aware of programs they may qualify for
- Less than 10% of qualifying Colorado seniors are enrolled in SNAP

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Older Adults and Economic Insecurity

- Average Social Security benefit is $16,008 (2013)
- 13.2% of older Coloradans experience the threat of hunger
- 28% of disabled older adults are food insecure
- Largest expense is health care

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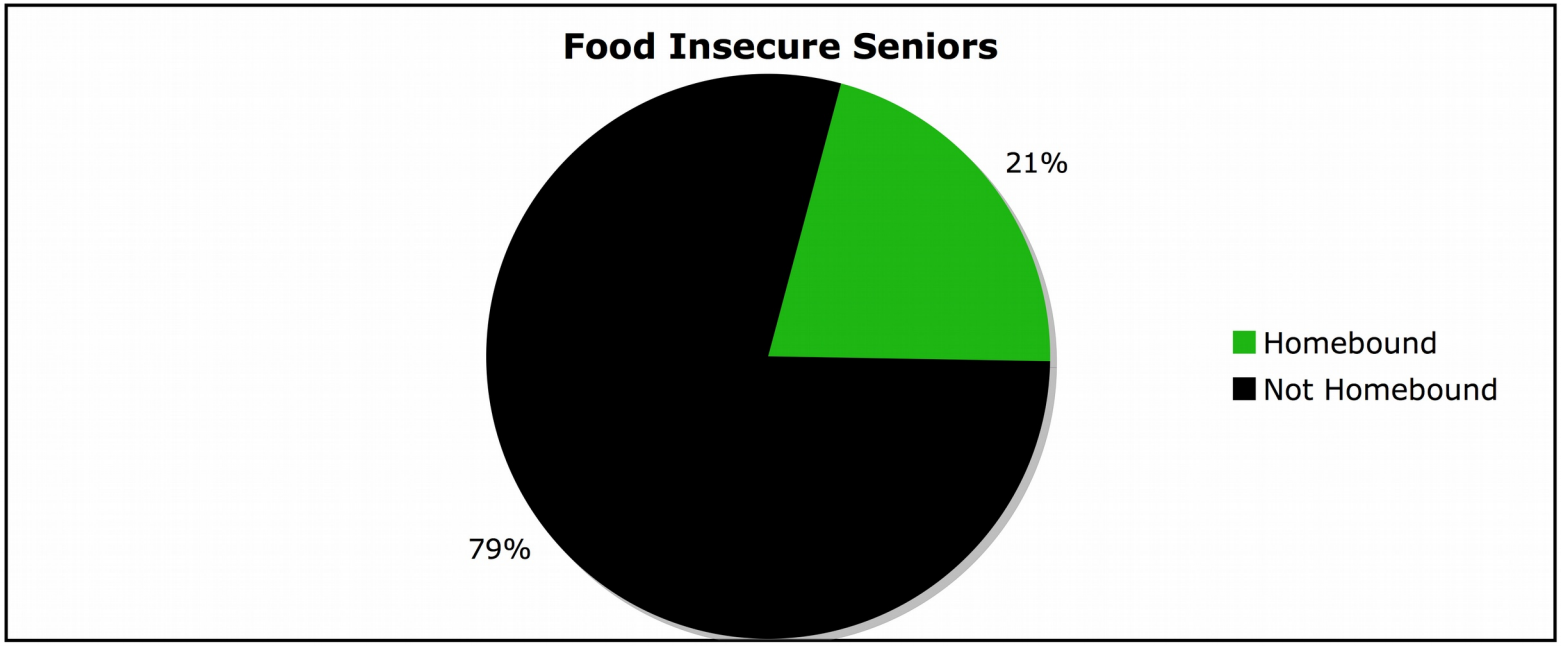
A Snapshot of Food Insecurity

- Vast majority of food insecure older adults are not homebound



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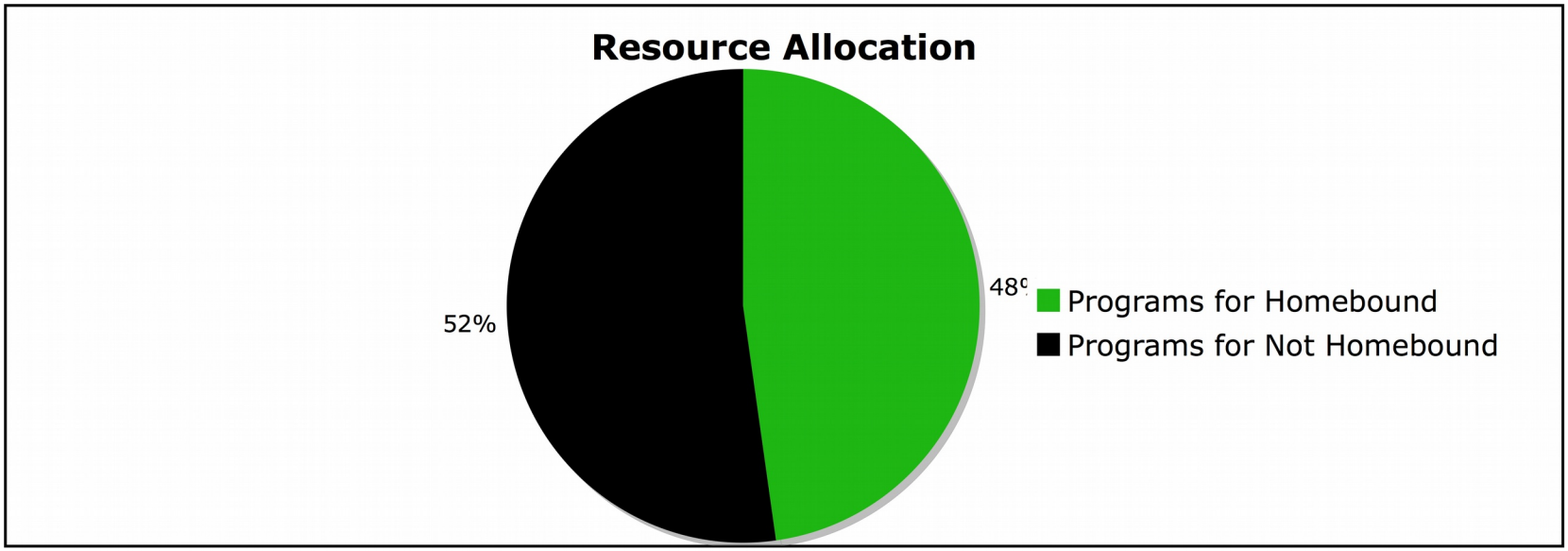
A Snapshot of Food Insecurity

- Program expenditures are almost equal for serving seniors who are homebound vs. not homebound



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Food Insecurity is Associated with Poorer Nutritional Quality

- Fewer vegetables, fruit and dairy products
- Lower intake of calcium, magnesium, zinc, vitamins A and B-6

Source: Am J Clin Nutr. 2014 Aug;100(2):684-92

Hunger Causes Stress for Entire Family

High levels of stress:

- Inability to fight acute infections
- Contributing factor to heart disease, diabetes, obesity
- Interferes with brain functioning, learning
- Interferes with ability to parent

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What Can We Do?
Older Adult Nutrition Programs

- Home-delivered Meals: homebound seniors
- Congregate Meals: mobile seniors able to go to a community meal
- Commodities Supplemental Food Program (CSFP): eligible seniors, income dependent
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): eligible seniors, income dependent

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The Opportunities

- Screen older adults for food insecurity
- Increase SNAP and congregate meal participation
- Spread awareness of the issue
- Educate older adults of available programs
- Support older adults in programs

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Screening for Food Insecurity

Questions to ask

"When was the last time you worried that you would run out of food before you had money to buy more?"

"Medication and healthy food can be expensive, but both are important; would you like information on resources that can help stretch your budget?"

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Connecting Seniors to Resources:

Hunger Free Colorado Hotline

- Screen and enroll residents in federal nutrition programs
- Connect to food resources
- Connect patients to free nutrition classes
- Faxed referrals: refer patients to Hunger Free Colorado for the food resource hotline staff to call (available later this fall)

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SNAP Qualifications Specific to Seniors/Disabled

- Higher Income Allowances
- Deductions for Monthly Medical Expenses over $35.00… NO CAP
- Additional Shelter Deduction
- Phone Interviews
- 24 month Redeterminations

Benefit Amounts

Single: Maximum benefit is $189.

Couple: Maximum benefit is $367.

Elderly/ disabled who share food can do separate cases.

Biggest complaint: participant receives the minimum amount of $16.00!.

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Would you pass up $16 you saw on the street?
That equals $192.00 a year!!

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Dispelling Myths

Will receiving benefits take away from a family who may need it more?

Will you still be able to receive meals-on-wheels?

How long will you have benefits for?

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Spread the word…
Sign someone up!

Imagine how SNAP benefits could help a person who is eligible for the program.

Help those in need around you by sharing the information you learned today!

You can be the first step in helping others or yourself.

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There's a Place for You at the Table

Contact Hunger Free Colorado

www.hungerfreecolorado.org

1-855-855-4626 (hotline)

720-328-1284 (main office)

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