

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee, my name is Carol Pace. I am a volunteer with AARP Colorado. AARP has over 670,000 members in Colorado and is focused on Coloradans age 50 and above, and their families.

AARP supports HB 23-1158, Colorado Commodity Supplemental Food Grant Program

This is about need. Older adults have an increased risk of being hungry or food insecure, and AARP has this as a priority concern for seniors. Research, including that sponsored by AARP, shows that some of the reasons for seniors to experience hunger or food insecurity include being on Fixed Incomes, having Limited Mobility, and experiencing Changes in Health.

Research also shows that older adults face food insecurity because of their concerns about paying for Food, amongst other basic needs, such as paying for Medicine or Medical Care, paying for Utilities, paying Rent or Mortgage and paying Transportation or Gas for a car. Additional issues include that older adults may be home-bound or that transportation to food resources may be challenging.

Colorado food access statistics and rates show that older Coloradans are continually at higher risk of food insecurity, and that it is compounded by racial and ethnic disparities (Black & Hispanic seniors have higher food insecurity), geographical locations within the state, food deserts and other factors.

Feeding America has issued the annual report The State of Senior Hunger, and the 2021 data was issued just this week.

Feeding Colorado has developed a statewide map of food insecurity by county (reference #1 below), and you can see Colorado counties and areas that are most heavily affected.

Food resources are critical to address food insecurity in older adults. We ask that the committee support HB 23-1158.

Sincerely,

Carol Pace, AARP Volunteer Advocate

References on Food Insecurity in Older Adults

1. Feeding America, Colorado Food Insecurity Rates by Colorado County. map.feedingamerica.org/county/2020/overall/colorado
2. Ziliak JP, Gundersen C. The State of Senior Hunger in 2021. Prepared for Feeding America, 2023.
3. AARP. AARP Policy Book 2021-2022: Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs: Policy (Benefits and eligibility; Extended families; Technology for delivering benefits; Outreach and education; Healthy eating and nutrition; Work requirements). policybook.aarp.org
4. AARP. AARP Policy Book 2021-2022: Drive to End Hunger (DTEH). endseniorhunger.aarp.org
5. Frongillo EA, Warren AM. An Evaluation Report: Senior Food-assistance, Related Programming, and Seniors' Experiences Across the Feeding America Network: Senior Food Insecurity Exploratory Research. Feeding America, 2022.
6. Gundersen C, Ziliak J. Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2020: An Annual Report. Prepared for Feeding America, 2022.
7. Feeding America, "Hunger in America 2014: A Report on Older Adult Clients and Households of the Feeding America Network in 2013: Baby Boomers and Beyond – Facing Hunger After Fifty," July 2015. Sponsored in part by AARP Foundation.