

# HUNGER AMONG OLDER NEVADANS AMIDST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



**PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY:**  
Nevada Department of Health and Human Services  
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## About the Report

This report is an extension of the [2020 Nevada Food Security Report: \*Combating the Statewide Hunger Crisis\*](#) made publicly available in September 2020 and the 2018 Nevada Office of Food Security (OFS) publication: [Nutrition Programs for Older Nevadans and Preliminary Recommendations](#). This report highlights specific hardships related to food security faced by Nevada's senior population, which has been exacerbated by the *novel coronavirus* (COVID-19) pandemic. Data from charitable food organizations and state programs since the beginning of the pandemic in March through August 2020 is included. An addendum will be created with additional data on senior hunger in Nevada when available.

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*A special thank you to all the dedicated food security partners who work tirelessly to meet every day food needs of Nevadans, amid the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.*

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# INTRODUCTION

The baby boomer generation (older adults born between 1946 and 1964) is the fastest growing population, and food insecure population, in the United States.<sup>1</sup> Food insecurity impacts Nevadans of all ages but is especially prevalent among older people. The older adult population faces unique challenges compared to other age groups. Those living at home are at an increased risk of hunger due to poor health conditions; lack of reliable social support and transportation; low fixed incomes; and disability or functional limitations impacting their ability to obtain or prepare food. Low socioeconomic status is a known cause of food insecurity and impacts older adults due in part to limited financial resources available for purchasing food; often, money goes toward cheaper and less nutritious foods so other life necessities can be paid, such as housing, utilities, and prescriptions.<sup>2</sup>

To address the anticipated increase in need among this population, food security networks across the country have been working to enhance existing and/or implement new nutrition services and programming, and Nevada is no different. In 2017, the Nevada Council on Food Security (CFS) began to prioritize food insecurity among older Nevadans. A comprehensive analysis was conducted in 2017 to assess food systems and programs serving this population at that time. The final report, [\*Nutrition Programs for Older Nevadans, and Preliminary Recommendations\*](#), identified needs, barriers, and strategies to increase food security among older people in Nevada. This report also sparked enhanced collaboration between the CFS and the Nevada Commission on Aging. The report also identified efforts in addition to those conducted by CFS, such as the expansion and creation of senior programs by Nevada's two Food Banks. Additionally, partners like CCSN, Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada, have advocated for increased reimbursement for the Home Delivered Meal Program (HDM).

Despite collective efforts, the struggles and barriers brought on by the pandemic put a significant strain on the Nevada food security network. Among adults, the risk for severe illness from COVID-19 increases with age, meaning older adults are at the highest risk.<sup>3</sup> At the start of the pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) advised older adults stay home to limit their exposure. Many older Nevadans stayed home accordingly, increasing their risk of isolation and food insecurity. State and local organizations were forced to pivot programs and service models to meet the increased need for nutrition programming, while ensuring clients' safety by practicing social distancing. Hunger among older Nevadans is anticipated to continue increasing, as the COVID-19 pandemic persists. This report outlines the response efforts of select State and [charitable food organizations](#) from March to August 2020. The DHHS Nutrition Unit will continue to collect and analyze data related to food insecurity and its impact on this population.

Over the next decade, the number of older people in the U.S. is projected to double. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, by 2030 all baby boomers will be older than the age of 65, expanding the size of the older population so one (1) in every five (5) U.S. residents will be retirement age.<sup>4</sup> Nevada reflects these trends. According to the Nevada State Demographer, between 2014 and 2018, Nevada's population growth has been primarily among adults over the age of 55, with a 19% increase. Not only has the 55 and over population been a large share of Nevada's annual growth, their share of total population has increased from 26.4% to 28.1% during the same timeframe.<sup>5</sup>

Food insecurity is projected to increase among older Nevadans as this population grows. A recent Feeding America report, [\*The State of Senior Hunger in America in 2018\*](#) indicated in 2018 10.7% of older Nevadans were food insecure and 5.3% experienced very low food security. Additionally, for the first time, Nevada is listed among the report's top 10 states for food insecurity and rates of very low food security among older adults. The same data show between 2016 and 2018, hunger among older Nevadans increased by 78% (6% in 2016 v. 10.7% in 2018). During the same time, rates of very low food security among this population increased by 152% (2.1% in 2016 v. 5.3 in 2018). Research shows older adults at greater risk for food insecurity include those who are low income, less educated, Black, Hispanic, separated or divorced, never married, renters, unemployed, living alone, living with a disability, and living with grandchildren.<sup>6</sup>

## ***Social Determinants of Health (SDOH)***

There are several factors related to SDOH that impact and influence an older adult's food security. Environmental factors such as food cost and availability/accessibility, and their communities' walkability, safety, and available transportation impact an older adult's ability to choose foods that support a healthy lifestyle. SDOH impact many health outcomes in older adults, as well as well-being, independence, and quality of life. When these factors are compromised, nutritional intake suffers.<sup>7</sup> More on the impact of the SDOH on senior health and food insecurity can be found in the report [\*Nutrition Programs for Older Nevadans and Preliminary Recommendations\*](#). Barriers experienced by older adults related to SDOH and food access have worsened since the start of the pandemic, due to grocery shortages, sheltering in place mandates/recommendations, and susceptibility to COVID-19.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Older People Projected to Outnumber Children for First Time in U.S. History*, 2018

<sup>5</sup> Hardcastle, J., *Nevada County Population Projections 2019 to 2038*, 2019

<sup>6</sup> FRAC, *Hunger is a Health Issue for Older Adults: Food Security, Health, and the Federal Nutrition Program*, 2019

<sup>7</sup> Wolfe et al., *Understanding the experience of food insecurity by elders suggests ways to improve its measurement*, 2003

In addition, older adults living in frontier and rural Nevada counties face unique challenges due to their remote location, transportation issues, and food deserts. According to the Census Bureau, the top Nevada five (5) Nevada counties with the highest percentage of older adults (65+) are all rural counties, including Storey County, Douglas County, Esmeralda County, Nye County, and Mineral County. Feeding America estimates these five (5) counties are projected to experience an averaged 27% increase in food insecurity among all residents.

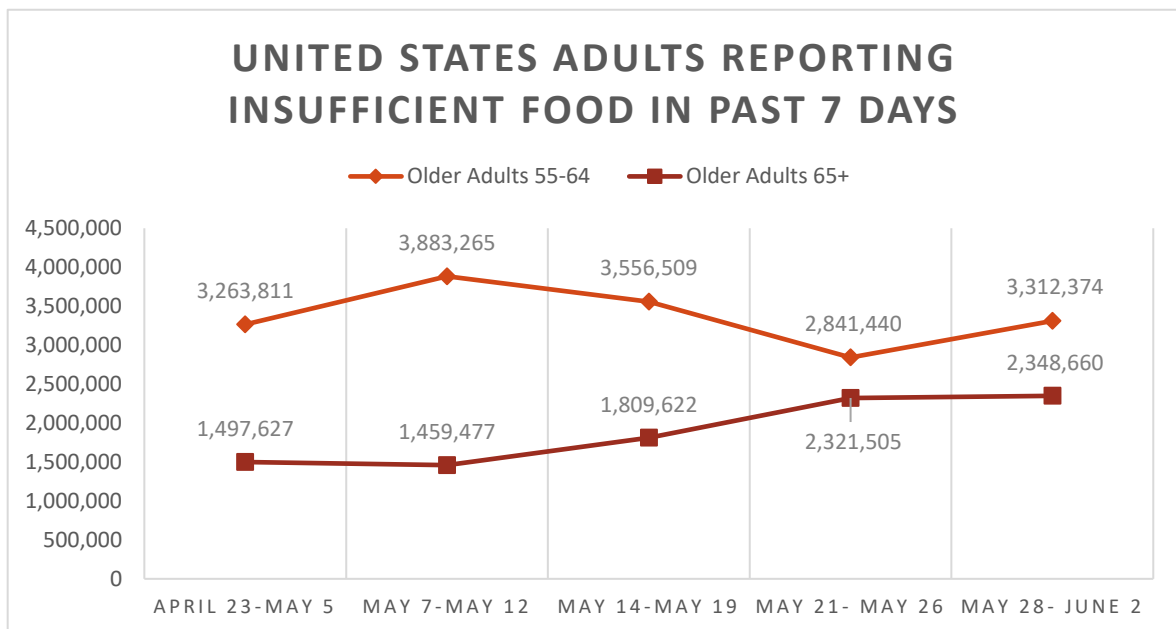
County	65+ Population	2018 Overall Food Insecurity	Projected 2020 Overall Food Insecurity	Projected Overall Food Insecurity % Increase (2018 v. 2020)
Carson City	19.6%	14.7%	19.1%	29%
Churchill County	19.1%	12.6%	15.5%	23%
Clark County	15.1%	12.8%	20.1%	57%
Douglas County	29.7%	11.4%	15.6%	37%
Elko County	11.8%	10%	13.2%	32%
Esmeralda County	35.7%	12.7%	14.8%	16%
Eureka County	16.6%	10.9%	12.9%	18%
Humboldt County	14.4%	9.9%	12.4%	26%
Lander County	16%	9.8%	12.1%	24%
Lincoln County	25.3%	12.2%	14.6%	20%
Lyon County	21.2%	13.2%	17.2%	31%
Mineral County	25.4%	17.2%	20%	16%
Nye County	30.3%	16.2%	20.6%	27%
Pershing County	16.4%	12.2%	14.6%	20%
Storey County	32.2%	11.9%	16.4%	38%
Washoe County	16.8%	11.2%	15.6%	39%
White Pine County	16.8%	11.6%	13.7%	19%

Food security partners have worked to consider SDOH in their programming, resulting in several innovative programs and new collaborations. These efforts and enhancements must continue and be focused to successfully reach and serve this population during this difficult time. These programs continue to grow throughout the state and are described in this report.

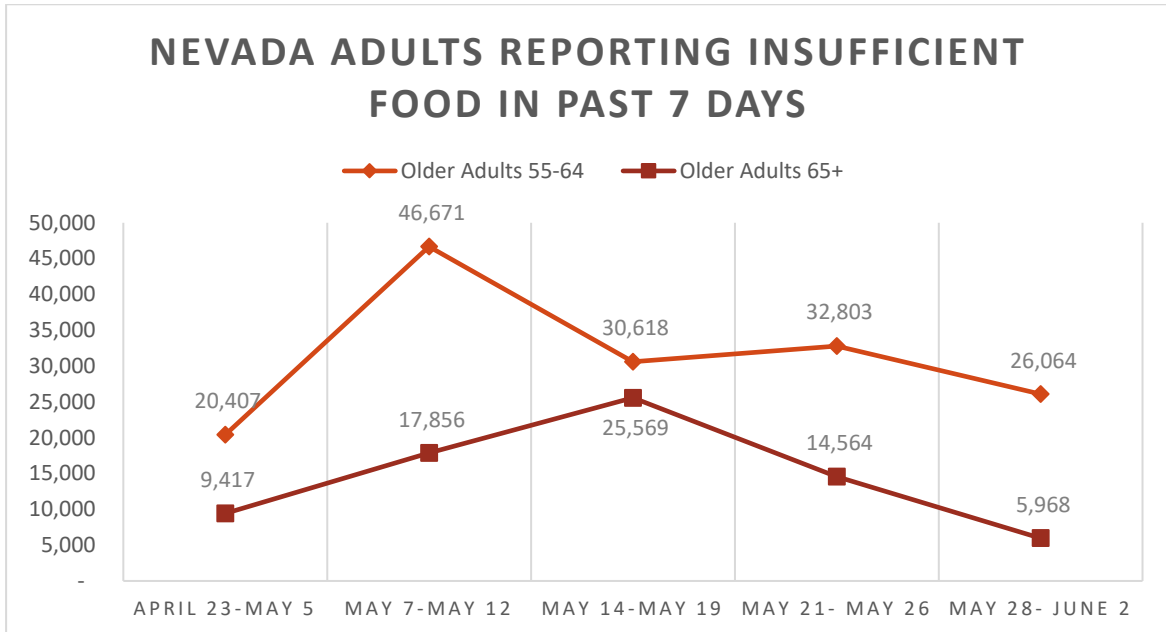
## Impact of COVID-19 on Older Adults' Food Security

The pandemic further threatens food security among this population, as older adults are disproportionately vulnerable to contracting and experiencing severe illness from COVID-19. Maintaining good health, consuming a nutritious diet, and/or managing an existing chronic disease can be challenging for older adults experiencing food insecurity. Sheltering in place can be difficult for older adults who live in poverty, occupy crowded housing, take public transportation, or have jobs requiring social contact.<sup>8</sup> It is anticipated COVID-19 will continue to exacerbate the existing, and growing, issue of food insecurity among older Nevadans.

In April 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau released the experimental data product, [The Household Pulse Survey](#). According to this data, food insecurity among older Nevadans ages 55-64 has been consistently higher than that of 65 and older since the last week in April 2020. Additionally, older adults reporting insufficient food in the past seven (7) days peaked in early May for older adults 55-64, then in mid-May 2020 for older adults 65+. Data fluctuations and differences between the two (2) age groups may be due to the issuance of Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT), and/or an increase in services targeting specific age groups.



<sup>9</sup> FRAC, Helping Older Adults Struggling Against Hunger Access Food in the Age of COVID-19, 2020



While the Census Household Pulse Survey data may be inconclusive at this time, the DHHS Nutrition Unit will continue to track and evaluate this data set to assess any trends over the following six (6) months to better understand the impact of COVID-19 on older adults.

## ***COVID-19 Response Efforts***

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, state and community-based food security partners have worked to enhance and expand capacity and programming to meet the increased need for nutrition programming and services statewide. Summaries of select partners' experience and strategies are outlined in the following sections. These agencies/organizations are a snapshot of the incredible statewide efforts in place to serve older Nevadans during these unprecedented times.

## ***State Senior Nutrition Programs: DHHS***

The Nevada DHHS provides support for the health and wellbeing of its residents across the lifespan. Nevada DHHS administers many essential services to ensure public health is protected and individuals achieve a high level of self-sufficiency, including older people. Nevada DHHS programs work with various community partners statewide to ensure older Nevadans get the nutrition and care they need. Immediately after the economic shutdown, federal and state responses allowed for flexibilities relating to program budgets and administration to overcome the barriers to serving older Nevadans due to COVID-19.



## ADSD

The DHHS Aging and Disability Services Division (ADSD) represents Nevada's older adults, and individuals of any age who are living with physical, intellectual, and/or developmental disabilities or special health care needs. There are several specific programs within ADSD to support and protect older adults, such as providing transportation solutions, homemaker services, and home delivered meals (HDMs). In response to COVID-19, ADSD increased its efforts and response to ensure the safety and wellbeing of older Nevadans, including issuing funding opportunities for partners to enhance supports for a variety of services. Additionally, ADSD allowed congregate meal sites to transition to drive-throughs or to-go meal models. Focus areas included nutrition programming and implementing a coordinated rapid response effort to ensure older Nevadans had access to proper nutrition, social supports, and telehealth services throughout the pandemic.

*Funding:* Through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, ADSD has awarded over \$4.1 million in funding to community-based organizations to support services related to food insecurity statewide, including mobile and stationary food pantries, and home-delivered grocery and meal programs. Funding continues to be available for community providers to respond to the ongoing pandemic.

*Nevada COVID-19 Aging Network (Nevada CAN):* Effective March 26, 2020, the Nevada CAN was created to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on older Nevadans through an integrated, statewide mobilization of all available resources to ensure every older Nevadan had access to medical, social, and daily essentials in their home. Nevada CAN strived to reduce COVID-19 exposure and impact, by ensuring all older adults were safe, that their basic daily requirements and medical needs were met, and that they were free from social isolation during the pandemic.

Nevada CAN initiatives included an online form, which links to a database accessed by ADSD case managers who connected older adults to service providers based on their needs. Case managers facilitated service connection in collaboration with three (3) Nevada CAN Action Teams:

1. **Food and Medication** – supporting local efforts to ensure all older adults have access to needed medication and nutrition.
2. **Social Service and Volunteer support** – providing social services, one-on-one and group connections with older adults to support them during periods of isolation.
3. **Telehealth Resources** – providing access to telehealth and telemedicine statewide in coordination with elder's primary care providers.

Three (3) action teams were established to coordinate efforts among providers and fill gaps/troubleshoot challenges, including the Food and Medication Action Team (FMAT). The FMAT was comprised of several cross-sector partners, including Nevada Senior Services, ADSD, the DHHS Nutrition Unit, Helping Hands of Vegas Valley (HHOVV), the Community Food Pantry, and the Sanford Center for Aging.

Between March 31, 2020, and July 26, 2020, 1,179 “Request for Assistance” forms were submitted through Nevada211.org, the Nevada CAN website. The most requested assistance category at 22% were related to food assistance.

Rapid response efforts slowed as priority services stabilized. Accordingly, ADSD transitioned the Nevada CAN effort into a sustainable model through the no wrong door system, Nevada Care Connection. This transition will enable the state to incorporate rapid response efforts to meet emergency needs into long-term planning efforts of Nevada Care Connection. Stand-alone efforts, such as the coordination and training for telehealth services and the Nevada Ensures Support Together (NEST) collaborative for social support, will continue through the University of Nevada, Reno infrastructure.

### ***ADSD: Partners***

ADSD’s work could not be executed without their network of sub-awardees. Since March 2020, ADSD has been working with approximately 35 subrecipients to administer nutrition programs to older adults. In response to the pandemic, ADSD sub-awarded additional funding to support efforts to meeting the increasing need, as it relates to food insecurity. In August 2020, ADSD administered a survey to their partner agencies on how funding impacted operational changes made in response to COVID-19. Respondents (n=27) provided feedback on programmatic adaptations, client impact, and an estimated number of people served. This survey provided firsthand insight to what Nevada seniors and programs supporting them have faced. A selection of survey responses from the survey are highlighted on the next page.

*"We have experienced a great need in our community. We have taken this time to educate seniors on programs and resources that are available to them in the community. Our partners came together to provide immediate services. We found that many needed help prior to the pandemic and will continue to need assistance after it is over. Therefore, many of them have been enrolled onto our "Golden Grocery" program for continued nutritional assistance. We are also looking to enhance our program by adding additional services to help our seniors with feelings of isolation."*

**- Helping Hands of Henderson, delivered 708 meals between March and August 2020.**

*"[ADSD] allowed us to add COVID homebound clients to the homebound delivery. Most seniors want to stay home and stay safe. Giving them food options so they don't have to go shopping or go out helps them choose to stay safe. We also distributed masks, weekly COVID updates, fliers, ADSD information, nutrition information, coupon booklets, and the senior scoop to homebound clients., and make telephone calls weekly to check on other congregate clients."*

**-Pleasant Senior Center, Winnemucca, Nevada, Delivered 8,882 meals between March and August 2020**

*"We have been providing food of all types for our seniors. These have been distributing 25 lb. food boxes containing cheese, milk, butter, spinach, lettuce, Ham, onions, apples, potatoes, and chicken. This was once a week for the months of May to the end of August 2020. We received 168 boxes per week to distribute. This was a program that we received from Food Bank Northern Nevada. We also had multiple amounts of all types of food that we handed out in large boxes and grocery bags, such as cereal, oatmeal, canned goods of all types, and a large variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. This was very welcomed by all who received it and it was greatly appreciated by all."*

**-William N. Pennington: Life Center Coalition for Senior Citizens, Reno, NV, Delivered 7,000 meals between March and August 2020**

Additional comments from select partners on their experiences serving older Nevadans throughout the pandemic can be found in the Appendix.

## ***ADSD: Waivers***

ADSD also implemented several COVID-19 waivers through direct communication and guidance with program sponsors and operators. The following waivers broke down administrative barriers and allowed for the transfer of funding between nutrition programs to increase accessibility to programs serving older Nevadans.

*Signature/Sign-in logs for meals waiver:* Effective March 30, 2020, Nevada ADSD nutrition sub-recipients were not required to collect signatures or sign-in logs from clients receiving a meal during the pandemic. Sub-recipient staff-maintained records of client participation.

*Declaration triggered disaster relief authority in the Older Americans Act (OAA):* The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster declaration was approved on Saturday, April 4, 2020. Prior to the FEMA declaration, ADSD requested a waiver for an additional 10% transfer above the normally permitted 40% between funding sources for congregate and HDM programs. Upon approval of the FEMA declaration, ADSD had full transfer authority for all funds under the OAA to support services addressing needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. This will remain in effect until the FEMA disaster declaration is lifted.

*Waived nutrition requirements:* Effective March 30, 2020, all dietary nutrition requirements are waived throughout the COVID pandemic for meals funded through Families First Coronavirus Act (FFCRA) and the CARES Act. This will remain in effect until the FEMA disaster declaration is lifted.

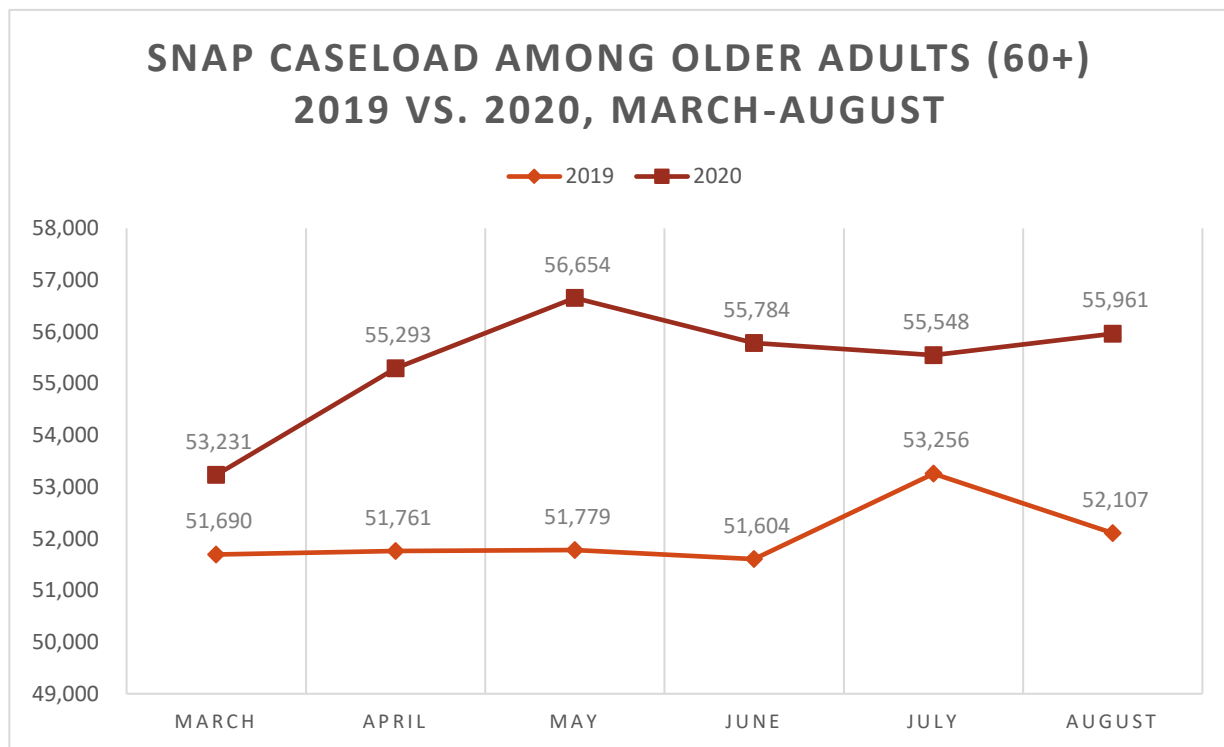
## ***Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS)***

The mission of Nevada DWSS is to engage clients, staff, and the community to provide public assistance benefits to all who qualify and reasonable support for children with absentee parents to help Nevadans achieve safe, stable, and healthy lives. DWSS serves older adults through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

## ***DWSS: SNAP***

SNAP offers nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and families including older adults. SNAP benefits help supplement an individual's or a family's income to help buy nutritious food. The Nevada SNAP outreach team and partners worked diligently to address the influx of new applicants throughout the beginning of the pandemic, as summarized in the [2020 Nevada Food Security Report: Combating the Statewide Hunger Crisis](#).

Historically, SNAP enrollment among older Nevadans has been low for various reasons, including misconceptions regarding monthly benefit, administrative barriers, and stigma. Despite these barriers and additional concerns related to social distancing, the current economic crisis led to an increase in SNAP caseloads among older adults compared to 2019; demonstrated in the table below. Between March and April 2020, SNAP caseloads among older adults increased by 6.4%. SNAP caseloads for this age group peaked in April 2020, then decreased slightly to level out between June and August 2020, averaging 55,764 caseloads over three (3) months.



### ***DWSS: SNAP Waivers and Rule Flexibilities***

While there were no national waivers granted for SNAP related to seniors, there were SNAP waivers and rule flexibilities/suspensions enacted to streamline program administration, breaking down barriers for hungry older adults to remain on, or enroll, in SNAP. These flexibilities likely contributed to the increase in SNAP cases among older Nevadans. For instance, Nevada DWSS received a waiver allowing for the issuance of emergency allotments for SNAP participants via Pandemic SNAP (P-SNAP). P-SNAP increased all cases to the maximum SNAP allotment for household size, regardless of income. Nevada SNAP participants received this supplement March through August 2020.

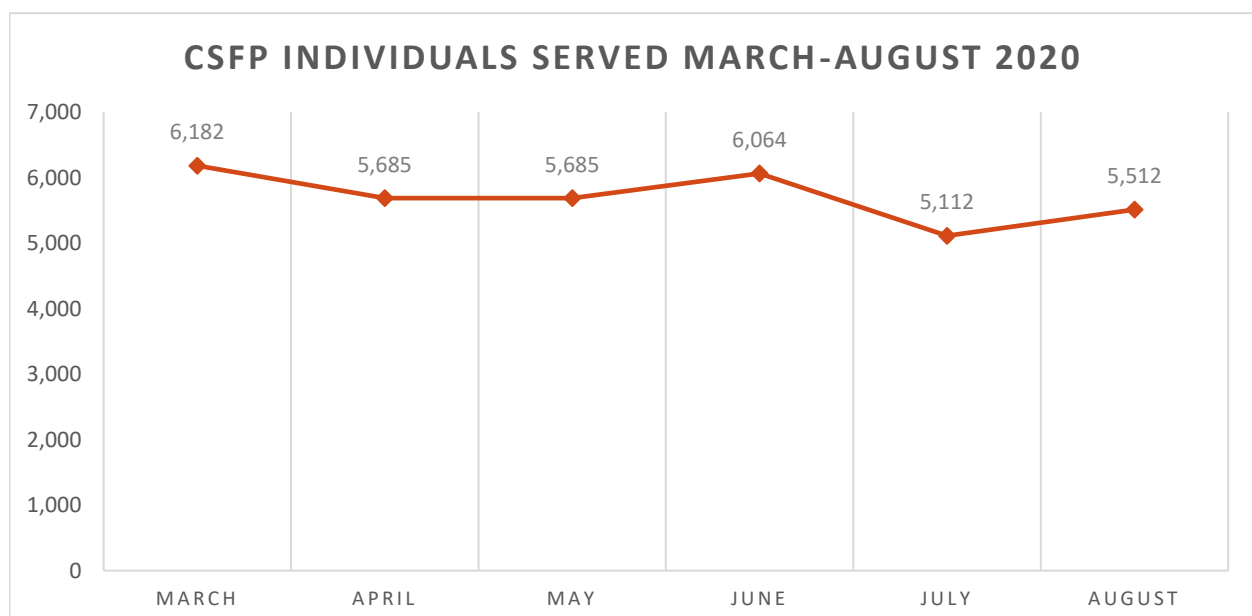
Additionally, effective June 2020, Nevada electronic benefit transfer (EBT) holders can use their SNAP and TANF benefits at any retailer who accepts online EBT for personal pick-up with delivery available from Amazon and Walmart in zip codes where they currently deliver. Online SNAP/TANF will be available indefinitely to cardholders. An overview of additional waivers and rule flexibilities can be found in the [2020 Nevada Food Security Report: Combatting the Statewide Hunger Crisis](#).

## Statewide Senior Nutrition Programs: NDA

The Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) mission is to preserve, protect, and promote Nevada agriculture. Part of this mission includes ensuring the availability of nutritious foods for food-insecure Nevadans. The NDA has continued to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure a safe and continuous food supply for all Nevadans, including administering new funding to producers and community nutrition partners through programs made available by the CARES Act. Specific information regarding NDA programs can be found in the [2020 Nevada Food Security Report: Combatting the Statewide Hunger Crisis](#). The NDA administers several federal nutrition programs including the Commodity Supplemental Food Distribution program, which specifically services seniors, through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

### Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)

CSFP provides USDA approved food boxes to income-eligible seniors over the age of 60. Food packages include a variety of foods.



There are currently 115 active CSFP sites in Nevada. The decrease from month to month was presumably due to a lack of comfort visiting sites, as well as senior housing facilities refusing outside food donations. However, CSFP continues to ensure safety measures are followed during COVID-19, which include operating drive-through only distributions.

## *CSFP: Waivers*

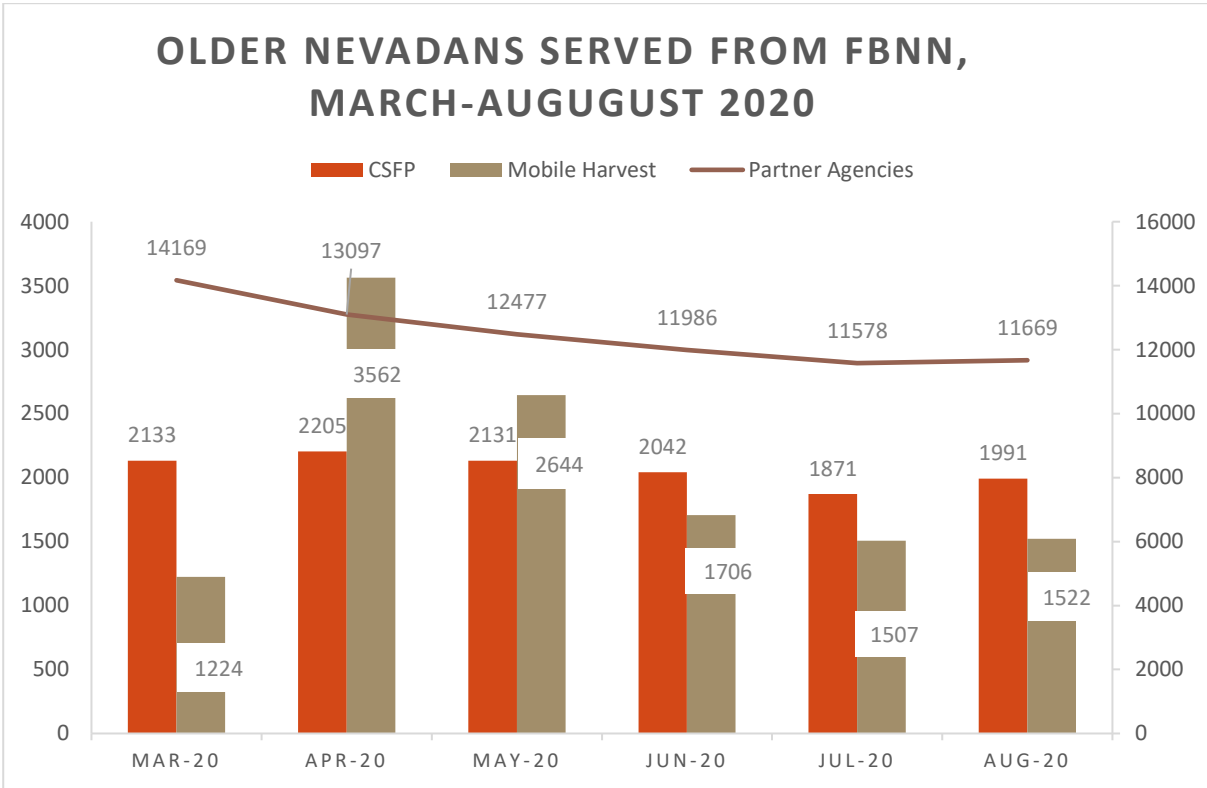
While there were no national waivers specifically granted for the CSFP, states had an option to waive the signature requirement for seniors to receive their monthly food package. NDA waived this requirement in March 2020 and has since extended the waiver through December 31, 2020. This is the only waiver for the program.

## **Charitable Food Assistance**

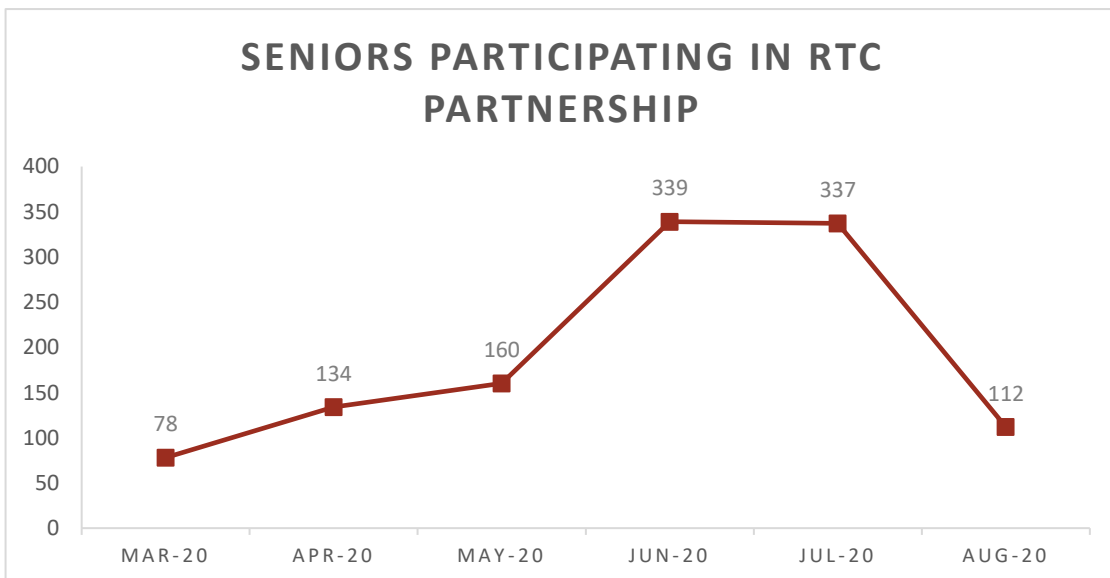
The charitable food sector is a critical component to addressing local food insecurity. Nevada is fortunate to have several charitable food organizations throughout the state, providing support to Urban and Rural areas. Despite significant challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, charitable food organizations are equipped to pivot and expand distribution models quickly to meet the need in their communities. These organizations do not require specific income and asset limits, allowing them the flexibility to serve any individual or family experiencing food insecurity. Federal nutrition assistance programs serve as the first line of defense against hunger for older Nevadans, but not all older Nevadans qualify for these programs or use these programs for various reasons. Participation rates in these programs among eligible older people is low, partially due to misconceptions regarding eligibility, low benefit amounts, the application or recertification process, and attitudes towards government assistance. As a result, the charitable food sector is a critical source food for many older adults across Nevada.

## *Food Bank of Northern Nevada (FBNN)*

The FBNN has tailored its nutrition programs to serve seniors (60+) to address the growing need in Northern Nevada's aging community. Throughout the pandemic, FBNN continues to provide food to seniors through their Mobile Harvest program and their network of partner agencies' pantry sites. Between March and April 2020, there was an 191% increase in number of older adults served through the FBNN Mobile Pantry Program, then a 58% decrease between May and July 2020. FBNN attributes this to several factors, including the issuance of Pandemic EBT and other organizations expanding programming during this time.



As a result of the pandemic, FBNN began a new collaboration with the Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) to provide home delivered food boxes to homebound seniors and seniors with disabilities.





FBNN's nutrition education program, Seniors Eating Well, is a series of classes designed to improve the health, nutrition knowledge, and behaviors of older adults. Seniors Eating Well focuses specifically on reducing sodium intake, increasing healthy fats, healthy snacking, preparing fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, reading nutrition labels, and increasing physical activity. One (1) in-person Senior Eating Well session took place in March 2020, with 40 older adults attending. To adhere to social distancing guidelines, Seniors Eating Well is now held virtually, though the virtual model is proving to be difficult and not as successful.

Throughout the pandemic, FBNN launched several new programs for older adults, including Produce on Wheels, Senior Pantries, and expanded CSFP home delivery. The goal of Produce on Wheels is to increase older adults' access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Produce on Wheels began distributions to 19 locations in Washoe, Churchill, Carson, Lyon, and Mineral counties, visiting 19 sites two (2) times per month. To qualify for the program, older adults must be over 60 years of age and reside in the communities served. The distributions take place at low income senior apartment complexes and senior centers.

FBNN senior pantries will open in November 2020. These pantry sites are either existing community pantries with hours dedicated just for seniors, or new pantries opening at low income senior apartment complexes.

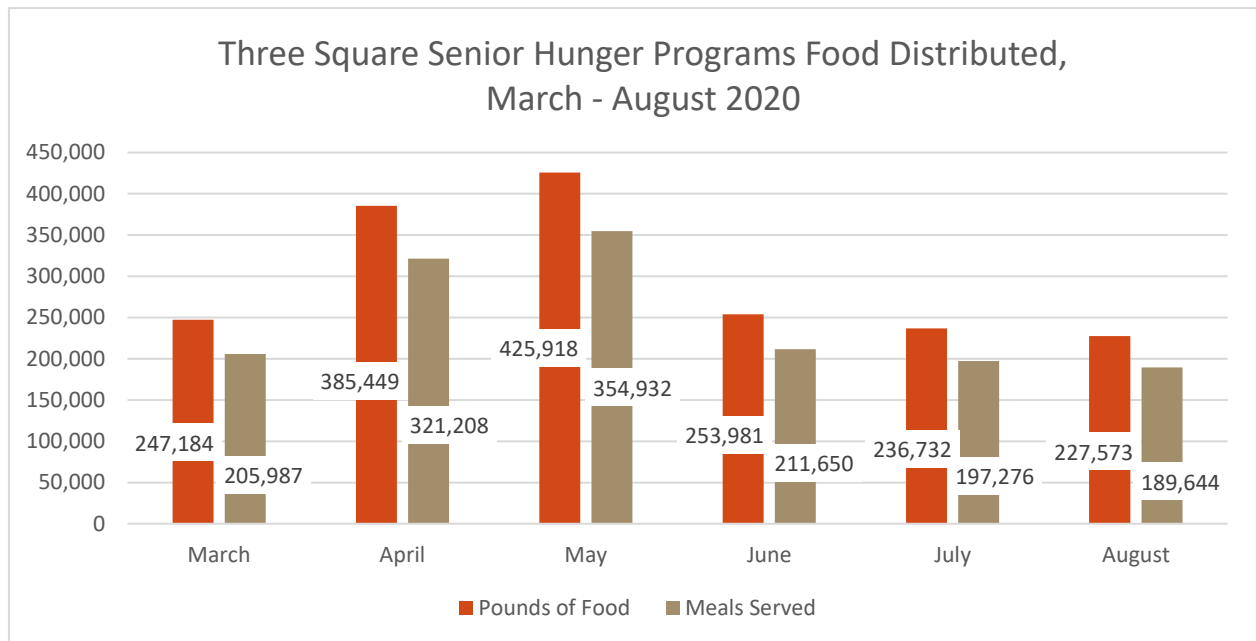
In October 2020, FBNN expanded their CSFP home delivery. FBNN will be able to offer this to an additional 40 older adults. Currently FBNN has filled 23 of 40 spots. This expansion is focused on Reno and Sparks. Between March and August 2020, FBNN's CSFP program provided an average of 2,062 meals a month. These numbers are reflected in the NDA CSFP data.

### *Three Square Food Bank*

Three Square's Senior Hunger Programs department was established in February 2018 in order to address the specialized needs of food insecure older adults. Since the program's inception, Three Square's Senior Hunger Programs has tailored population-specific programming to connect older adults to resources such as Golden Groceries (described below), non-food community resources, community meals, and nutrition education programs in Southern Nevada.

In response to COVID-19, Senior Hunger Programs continued to serve Golden Groceries while expanding efforts with home delivered groceries. Community meal and nutrition education programs were placed on hold as of March 2020. Between March and August 2020, Three Square served 62,914 older adults through Senior Hunger Programs. Of the 62,914 older adults served, 12,293 (19.5%) older adults were supported by funding from ADSD.

**Golden Groceries:** Throughout the pandemic, Senior Hunger Programs continued to operate the Golden Groceries program which provides supplemental, healthy groceries to Nevadans ages 60 and older. Golden Groceries partners who remained open adjusted their operations to take all necessary safety precautions while maintaining their specialized days and hours dedicated to the aging population. Some sites experienced periodic closures due to volunteer needs. There are currently over 30 Golden Groceries locations. Curbside and home delivery options expanded during the shutdown, including the launch of a temporary Senior Hunger Programs home delivery program. At the beginning of the shutdown, Golden Groceries experienced an increase in participation. As more resources came available for seniors, participation began to stabilize. From March through August 2020, 50,510 older adults were served through Golden Groceries efforts.



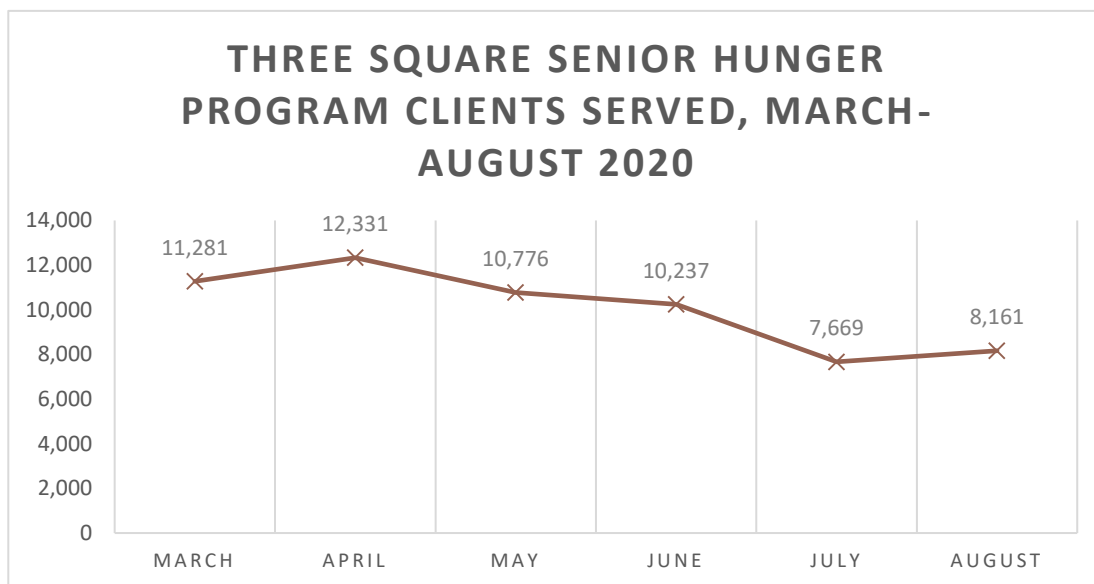
### **Home Delivery Expansion**

**RTC of Southern Nevada:** The week of March 16, 2020, Senior Hunger Programs received a call from RTC, who wanted to help provide home delivered groceries to older adults. By the end of the same week, the first set of paratransit busses were conducting home delivered groceries to homebound seniors. Between March and June 2020, 3,099 seniors were served by RTC. This program concluded in June 2020 as Senior Hunger Programs built additional capacity for clients to be served through their agency partners.

**Nevada HAND:** Already a Golden Groceries partner, Nevada HAND expanded its Golden Groceries efforts to include an additional 17 locations. Three Square's team packed and delivered Golden Groceries, then Nevada HAND's team hand-delivered the groceries to the doors of their residents. This additional service was available between April – June 2020 and served 4,048 seniors.

**Central Christian Church:** Three Square has multiple agency partners with a high volunteer capacity to help the community. A new partnership was established with Central Christian Church to help more older adults in the community by conducting home deliveries and facilitating mass food distributions serving four (4) apartment complexes. From May –August 2020, 3,082 seniors received home delivered groceries from Central Christian Church. 2,175 seniors were serviced at apartment complexes from June – August 2020.

**Three Square Center:** Throughout the pandemic older adults called the Three Square Center, many regarding services for the very first time. From August to October 2020, 13,936 calls were received. Of those calls, 34% (4,736) were from seniors and of the senior callers 67% (3,179) were new callers to Three Square. In addition to food assistance, seniors were provided with assistance for the SNAP, Energy Assistance Program (EAP), Project Reach, Medicare Part D Extra Help or Low-Subsidy (LIS), Medicare Savings Program (MSP), and Medicaid.



**Senior Hunger Steering Committee:** The Senior Hunger Steering Committee is hosted by Three Square’s Senior Hunger Programs and comprises of multiple partners dedicated to improving the quality of life for the aging population. Since March 2020, the committee met multiple times a month to share successes, challenges, and efforts across the network. Through these meetings, partners collaborated to address gaps, including how to improve the referral process, develop unique partnerships, and increase the number of seniors served.

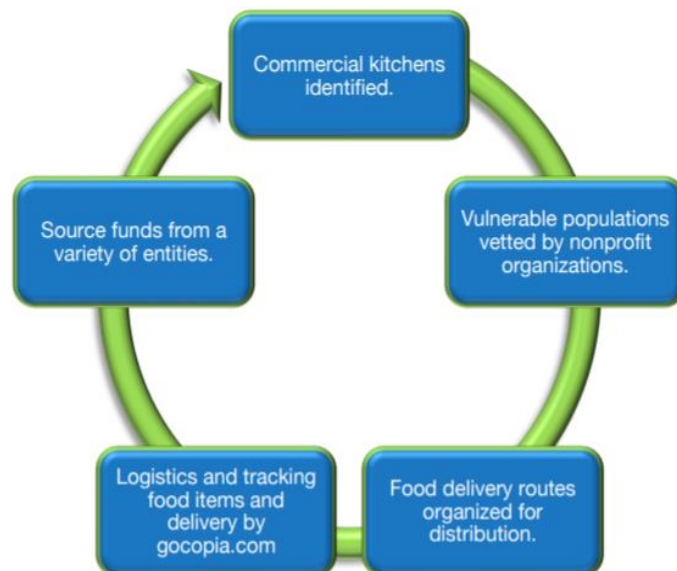
## *Delivery with Dignity*

Delivering with Dignity was launched on March 23, 2020 as an emergency response to the health care and economic crisis created by COVID-19. Since its inception, Delivering with Dignity has grown exponentially in its effort to help the most vulnerable and isolated individuals in both southern and northern Nevada. This program collaborates with local restaurants, nonprofits, and private corporations to deliver meals to homebound Nevadans.

The purpose of this program is to uplift the most vulnerable among us with delicious, prepared meals delivered safely to their doorstep. Additionally, this provides job security for culinary workers and local vendors and mobilize heroic volunteers.

**“Triple Threat” Criteria:** Delivering with Dignity is intended strictly for individuals, and families who live with them, who meet the following criteria:

1. At highest risk based on CDC guidelines for COVID-19.
2. Ineligible or currently not being served by any community organizations for provision of food to their homes.
3. Financially unable to meet their food needs without leaving their home and do not have a reliable support system of friends and family to assist.



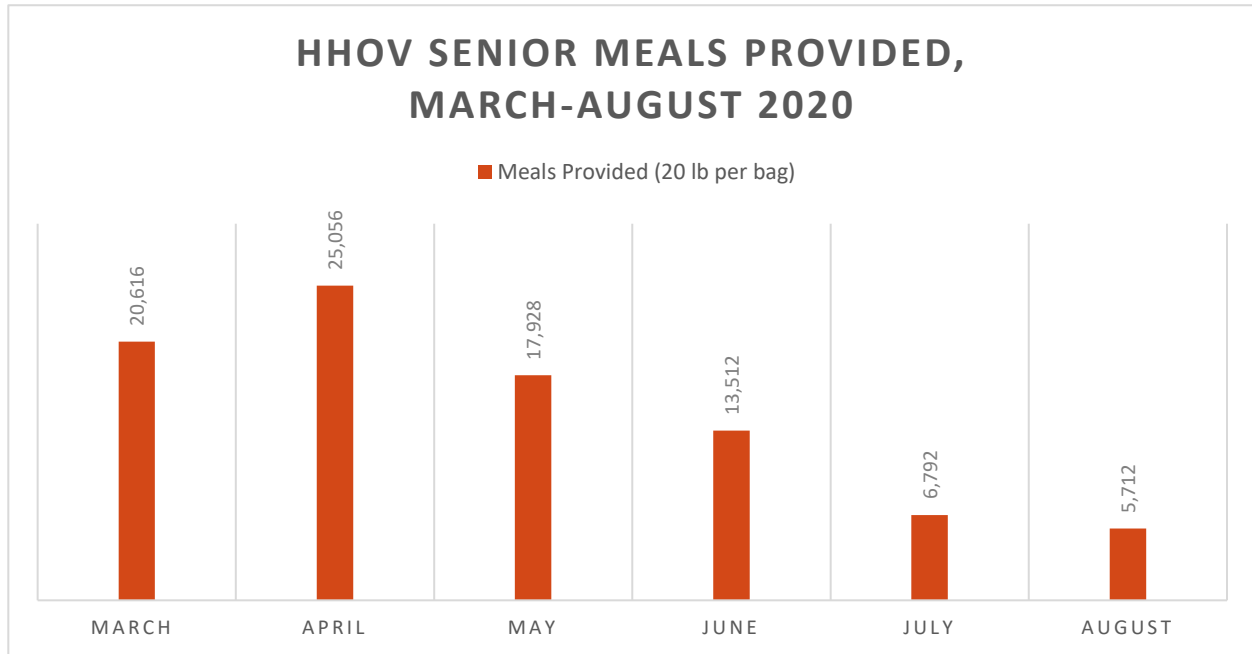
The Delivering with Dignity (DWD) model was widely successful, serving 212,844 meals in southern Nevada throughout the first 34 weeks of implementation. The model was so successful that it was established in northern Nevada as well. The northern Nevada program served over 32,612 meals in the first 20 weeks of operation. Delivering with Dignity has brought together over 167 Food Heroes (volunteers delivering meals) and provided employment support to over 80 restaurant workers at participating restaurants. DWD continues to be sustainable through voluntary community contributions, Cares Act funds (Clark County) and Nevada Aging and Disability Services Division. Delivering with Dignity has received recognition nationally and was recently replicated in Orange County California.

### *Helping Hands of Vegas Valley (HHOVV)*

HHOVV provides several free services for older adults, including nutrition programming. In response to the pandemic, HHOVV established new nutrition programs and expanded pantry services to include emergency food bags. After the economic shutdown, there was an increase in calls from older people concerned they would run out of food. HHOVV worked diligently with other local agencies to ensure no older person in Clark County went hungry. Each HHOVV client was given a 20-pound pre-packed bag of food throughout March, April, and May 2020. Prior to the pandemic, this program serviced approximately 1,200 senior citizens a month. During the first three (3) months of the pandemic an additional 1,000 clients were served each month.

In response to the pandemic, HHOVV also implemented a new home-delivered, chef prepared, meal program, in partnership with Diamond Events. This program provided seven (7) healthy meals each week to homebound older adults and their dependents. This program was originally expected to last approximately 12 weeks, serving 200 seniors a week, for a total impact of 16,800 meals served. To continue this program, HHOVV collaborated with Delivering with Dignity. After the first 12 weeks of the new partnership, HHOVV provided food to 165 older people. HHOVV has since secured additional funding to run this program through February 2021.

As HHOVV navigated changing community needs brought on by the pandemic, it was evident rural communities in southern Nevada were not receiving the same level of support as the urban communities. To address this unmet need, HHOVV created an additional HDM program serving older people in rural areas. HHOVV worked in collaboration with the Salvation Army, however it was determined groceries alone were not enough without other food sources such as congregate meals. Ultimately, HHOVV began a collaboration with Tivity. Tivity provides 30 prepared meals to clients in rural communities with very limited contact through a one-time delivery per month model. HHOVV is currently piloting this program.

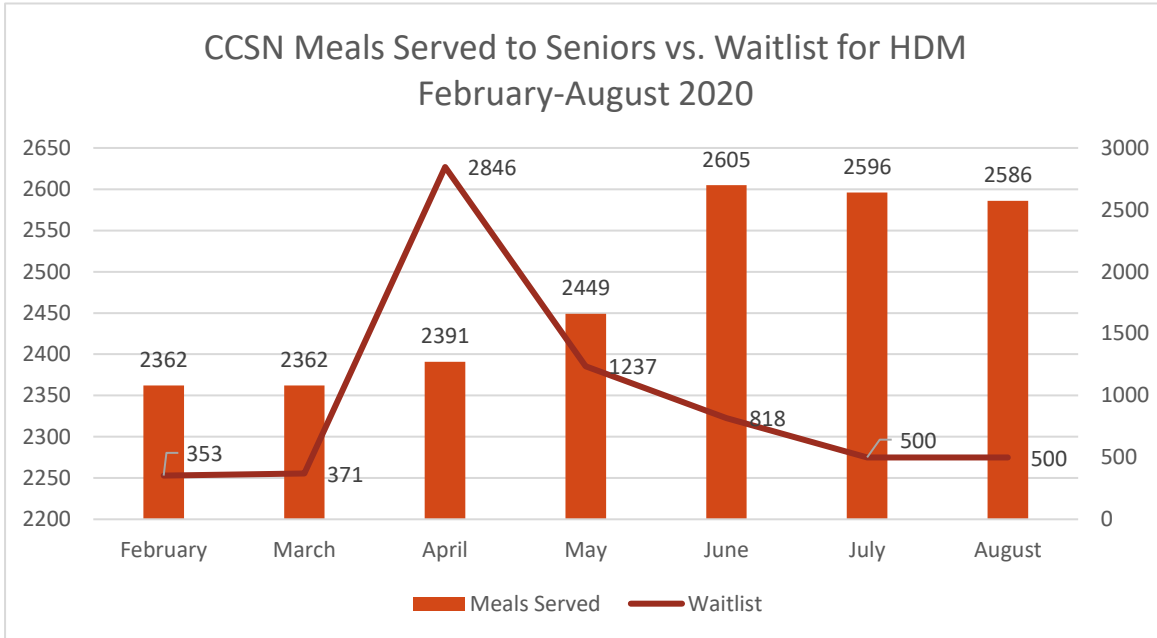


### *Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada (CCSN)*

CCSN has a long-standing commitment to fighting hunger and improving nutrition for low-income and fixed income clients, including a focus on homebound seniors. In response to COVID-19, CCSN developed an emergency response plan for their Meals on Wheels (MoW) program by working closely with the Southern Nevada Health District (SNHD) and following all CDC recommendations. CCSN implemented several changes to ensure they could continue to feed the growing number of CCSN MoW clients. CCSN continues to prioritize clients with severe health conditions and/or with documented needs preventing them from cooking meals.

To adhere to social distancing guidelines, CCSN MoW drivers transitioned to placing meals outside client's doors, informing the client the meal has been delivered, and then observing (from a socially distanced position) the client physically acquire the meals prior to moving onto the next client. Between March and August 2020, CCSN provided 17,351 HDM meals to older adults in southern Nevada. Number of meals served gradually increase between March and June 2020. Numbers of meals served between June and August 2020 have remained consistent, averaging about 2,296 HDM per month. After the start of the pandemic, there was a sharp increase in the number of older adults on the HDM waitlist. Within one week of the initial Stay-at-Home Order, the Call Center received over 2,500 requests to receive Meals on Wheels.

Additional staff were enlisted to wade through the thousands of requests to schedule them for delivery and connect them with other resources while they waited. Production was ramped up and additional routes were added to meet the need. In a little over a month, weekly deliveries went from 2,188 to over 2,400.



CCSN also referred clients who can prepare their own meals to Three Square Food Bank and other organizations who are providing groceries to seniors. CCSN will continue to work with SNHD to continually assess what procedures are in place across the agency and to prioritize the health of both clients and employees.

## CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic is a threat to all Nevadans, especially older people. Older adults are at higher risk of experiencing severe symptoms and may face challenges accessing food amidst closures and shelter in place mandates and recommendations. The long-term effects of COVID-19 on food insecurity among older Nevadans is anticipated to remain a public health concern, due to the projected growth of this population over the next decade. Since the start of the pandemic, the Nevada food security network has assessed and implemented innovative solutions and new partnerships to address barriers and increased need for nutrition services among this population.

The Nevada DHHS Nutrition Unit will continue to monitor state and national data to assess trends in hunger among elders, as well as work with other state, city, and community-based organizations to identify strategies to continue to address this issue effectively and efficiently.

## ADDITIONAL SURVEY RESPONSES FROM ADSD

*“When the initial ADSD grant was requested/granted we were informed we could request additional monies. We requested an additional grant to continue the program. We were initially not notified of the status, and then were told it is on hold (still). We did not feel we could end this program to these clients at this time, so the program is continuing with COVID CARES Act monies. These clients are depending on these home delivered meals as they still do not feel safe going into the community to shop for their own supplies. Clients have stated they "haven't eaten this good in a long time," the meals are "delicious, and there is absolutely no comparison. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you," and one client stated this food program "blows (another competitors) food away!" Also, 10% of the clients receiving this food delivery program are surveyed once per month. The surveys show that 95% of the clients stated they would not be able to prepare their own meals without this program. This has been an invaluable service to the most vulnerable population during the pandemic as it not only provided nutrition to our most vulnerable population, but it also provided them with some human interaction that was "contactless" and safe.”*

-Clark County Social Services

*“Our numbers have increased significantly. It's so easy for the senior to drive up to get a meal. Our packaging materials have also increased significantly, straining our budget. Also have had to use more volunteers to distribute curb side meals.”*

-White Pine Nutrition Program

*“Most our clients have been grateful and very thankful that we continued to offer our meals to them, since we are still closed. The congregate clients were concerned that they would not be able to get our meals due to the closure, thankfully we received funding from ADSD. We have about 800 clients, 410 on our regular program pre COVID and currently 390 was existing waitlist and congregate clients that were coming in to eat per COVID closure.”*

-City of Henderson Black Mountain Senior Nutrition

*“Our Meals on Wheels program has not skipped a beat since the start of our COVID-19 building closure (March 12, 2020) in preparing and delivering our MOW program in Fallon/Churchill County. Food is prepared and then packaged up for delivery to approximately 235 home bound seniors. Feedback has been that they are very happy with their meals and are very thankful this program is available to serve their daily nutritional needs.”*

-Coalition for Senior Citizens

*“What we have found through this pandemic is people who have never had to ask for help or food are finding themselves in that position. The food resource has been instrumental in helping the community.”*

-East Valley Family Services



*“Louise is 93 and still living independently with support from friends and some community services. Before COVID she grocery shopped weekly, either getting rides or doing a short walk with her walker to the 99-cent store. Louise told me “I haven’t left my apartment in over 60 days and have been relying on friends to bring me groceries. It’s been hard, a can of soup and some crackers is a staple these days. These meals have been a Godsend. They are fresh and healthy, and the weekly delivery is great because I don’t have much storage space. If it weren’t for this program, I don’t know how I would be eating now. And who knows how long this will last.”*

*“Lawrence and Val both have multiple medical conditions and Lawrence has no teeth or dentures. They are following the state’s guidelines and not going out in public during COVID. They also have a very small kitchen with only a microwave but no working stove. “This is great, getting these meals, and making soft foods we can chew but are healthy and fresh – we are very grateful!”*

*“Eddie has hypertension and usually tries to follow a healthy diet but with COVID had no choice but to order food delivery or rely on friends to get and deliver his groceries. Eddie said, “the meals have all been super and much better for me than ordering take out 7 days a week. I’m very thankful for the meals and that they are healthy meals and it’s kept me from having to go out there and risk my life.”*

-Anecdotes from Dignity Health- St. Rose Dominican Hospitals

*“N4 might not be considered an "official" COVID-related nutrition service subrecipient, however, we are a COVID-19 elder relief subrecipient and have utilized this and other state grant funds to address the nutrition needs of elders and people with disabilities in our Community Care program. Our Community Care Partners (direct support staff) provide support with meal planning, food shopping, etc. to ensure people at-risk during the pandemic do not have to go to a grocery store where physical distancing cannot be guaranteed. Our Community Care Partners also support people with going through drive-through and getting takeout meals.”*

-Neighbor Network of Northern Nevada (N4)

*“Clients are very happy that we were able to provide the Drive-thru during these unprecedented times. One of their requests has been to keep the drive thru open and allow them to choose when we open. Many have benefited from this wonderful service.”*

-City of Mesquite Senior Center

*"This has been a nice and safe way to stay connected to our volunteers and clients. In fact, the recipients enjoy feeling special with the professionally prepared meals. They were able to physically see the volunteer delivery person, and some interacted with the recipients which we continue to hear about. Delivery volunteers wear masks, gloves and do not make personal contact with the recipients. The protocol is to call the recipient, ring the doorbell and leave the food at the door. Then they step back and make sure the recipient picks up their food before moving on to the next location. For many of these recipients, the meals last two days each. Our respite coordinator has great appreciation for this program as it has enhanced her relationship with respite voucher recipients."*

-Seniors in Service

*"We have noticed a significant need for food in our community, however, the majority of the clients we have served are under the age of 60. We have learned that we need to make sure we are getting the word out about this funding so that we are able to assist more people in need. There have been a few seniors who we have been able to assist, one story in particular stands out. We had one gentleman who was referred to us by a nurse after finishing his chemotherapy in Las Vegas. He had to stop working when COVID hit. He lives in an RV, powered by solar panels, with no refrigeration. He had a butane stove, but no access to butane. Nurses advised him to eat more fruits and vegetables, but he had no way of keeping them cool, so he was mostly living off of canned foods. With the help of another grant, we were able to purchase a propane stove, propane, and a cooler. ADSD COVID allowed us to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables and other healthy groceries for him. This gentleman kept insisting there are others in need, and he would be fine, but he was so appreciative that we had given him access to healthy food."*

-Nye Communities Coalition

## Resources

For more information regarding local and federal food security programs and COVID-19 relief efforts, visit the following websites:



## Acronym Glossary

Acronym	Definition
ADSD	Aging and Disability Services
CAN	COVID-19 Aging Network
CARES	Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security
CCSN	Catholic Charities of Southern Nevada
CDPHP	Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
CFCW	Bureau of Child, Family, and Community Wellness
CFS	Council on Food Security
CSFP	Commodity Supplemental Food Program
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
DPBH	Division of Public and Behavioral Health
DWSS	Division of Welfare and Social Services
EAP	Energy Assistance Program
EBT	Electronic Benefit Transfers
FBNN	Food Bank of Northern Nevada
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FFCRA	Family First Coronavirus Response Act
FMAT	Food and Medication Action Team
FNS	Food and Nutrition Services
HDM	Home delivered meals
HHOV	Helping Hands of Vegas Valley
LIS	Low Income Subsidy
MoW	Meals on Wheels
MSP	Medicare Savings Program
NDA	Nevada Department of Agriculture
NEST	Nevada Ensures Support Together
OAA	Older Americans Act
OFS	Office of Food Security
P-EBT	Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer
RTC	Regional Transportation Commission
SDOH	Social Determinants of Health
SNAP	Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

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