

SCREEN & INTERVENE QUICKSTART GUIDE

Why Screen for Food Insecurity?

1. There are 63,380 individuals experiencing food insecurity in Montgomery County. 30,070 are children.
2. Many residents do not know what resources are available to them. Notably, 64% of eligible MoCo residents do not participate in the SNAP (food stamp) program.
3. Food insecurity increases the likelihood of adult chronic diseases, and childhood developmental, academic and emotional challenges.

How to Screen for Food Insecurity?

There are two simple, nationally validated questions which are best provided in writing, and can be added to client intake materials. Any participant answering EITHER question with a "1" or "2" response is considered to be experiencing FOOD INSECURITY.

"Within the past 12 months we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more."

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. Often true | 3. Never True |
| 2. Sometimes True | 4. Don't Know |

"Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more."

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------|
| 1. Often true | 3. Never True |
| 2. Sometimes True | 4. Don't Know |

If They Screen Positive, What Next?

1. **Refer to food assistance resources:**
 - a. For food assistance organizations, visit the Food Council's Online Food Resource Map at <https://mocofoodcouncil.org/food-assistance-resource-map/>
 - b. For discounted groceries, call the SHARE Network at (301) 864-3115.
 - c. Visit <https://www.eatsmart.umd.edu> for low cost recipes in English and Spanish
2. **Do they receive SNAP (food stamps) benefits?** Check eligibility and apply online at <https://mydhrbenefits.dhr.state.md.us/> or over the phone with Maryland Hunger Solutions at (410) 528-0021 x6026, or in person at these locations <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HHS-Program/Program.aspx?id=CYF/CYFPubA-FoodStamps-p1679.html>

Are they 60+?

Seniors may qualify for Senior Congregate Meals, Cold Box Program, or Meals on Wheels. Call **(240) 777-3810** for information.

For info on the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, call **(240) 777-3000**

Senior Nutrition Hotline: **(240) 777-1100**

Are they pregnant or is there a child under 5 in the household?

They may qualify for the Women Infants and Children (WIC) Program, which provides health education, healthy foods, breastfeeding support, and other services. Call **(301) 762-9426** or go to www.cciweb.org.

School-aged children in the house?

They may qualify for free or reduced price meals at school. Visit <https://www.myschoolapps.com> for eligibility information.

For free meals for children during the summer vacation, call **(301) 284-4900** or email SummerFoodProgram@mcpsmd.org.

Would they like to increase their benefits dollars at Farmers Markets?

For a list of farmers markets that accept SNAP and WIC, visit <https://marylandfma.org/2019-maryland-market-money-redux/>

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q “Should I drop out of the SNAP (food stamps) Program because I might be deemed a “public charge” and lose my path to citizenship?”

A Refer to the attached Protecting Immigrant Families “Public Charge: Does This Apply to Me?” chart for advice relating to specific immigration statuses, but the generally accepted practice is to recommend that you continue to get the help you need. Using healthcare and other services can help you and your family become healthier, stronger and more employable. Stay tuned for any changes that may occur, and consult with an immigration attorney if you have questions about your individual situation.

Q “I am eligible for SNAP, but some members of my family are undocumented, so I am concerned about sharing my address with the County/State.”

A At the present moment, sensitive personal/identifying information is not shared between departments, and stays within the Department of Human Resources(State) or Department of Health and Human Services (Montgomery County). There is no indication that this will change in the future.

Q “If I enroll in SNAP, I’ll take away benefits from someone who needs it more than me.”

A While the majority of SNAP recipients are children, the elderly or people with disabilities, SNAP is an entitlement program, meaning that everyone who qualifies will receive it.

Q “I won’t qualify for SNAP because I am employed, and SNAP is only for those who are unemployed or extremely poor.”

A Most SNAP recipients work, but sometimes even working 40 hours a week is not enough to make a living wage in some places where expenses are extremely high. If you meet the income requirements, you can receive SNAP benefits.

Q “It’s not worth it to apply for SNAP because I’ll probably only receive a few dollars per month.”

A While the minimum benefit amount for SNAP is \$15 per month, the average individual monthly amount is closer to \$100, and the minimum benefit amount for seniors over the age of 62 is \$30 per month.

Q “I am between the ages of 18 and 49 without kids and I don’t have a disability, so I don’t qualify for SNAP, right?”

A If you are working, training or volunteering for a minimum of 80 hours per month but still meet the income requirements for SNAP, you may participate in the program for as long as you are eligible.

Q “Can I be on more than one benefits program at the same time, and can I go to more than one food assistance provider to get free food?”

A Yes, you can receive benefits for more than one assistance program, and you can visit as many different food assistance providers as you want to receive free food.

For more information about any services or programs in this Screen & Intervene QuickStart Guide, call 311, Montgomery County’s information request hotline, or visit www.infomontgomery.org, or www.auntbertha.com.

Please see the attached “Montgomery County Basic Needs Resources List” for a more comprehensive list of services and programs and contact information divided into categories.

