

Health Disparities Task Force Meeting |MINUTES

August 27, 2020 / 1:00 P.M. – 2:00 P.M. | Location: Via WebEx/Teleconference

Meeting called by:	Office of Minority Health and Disparities Elimination	Approximately: 62 ppl
Type of meeting:	Weekly Health Disparities Task Force	
Facilitator:	Monique Anthony, Director	

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Focus: Role and Importance of Federal Nutrition Program in Tennessee

Presenter: Sarah Henson, Nutrition Advocate, Tennessee Justice Center (TJC)

Summary: Main goal is to end hunger in Tennessee, Protect and strengthen the federal nutrition programs: SNAP, WIC, Child Nutrition Programs. TJC Action include policy liaisons, SNAP casework, webinars trainings, provide facts sheets/briefs.

Tennessee is the 10th worst in poverty, our rate is 15.3% prior to COVID-19. Food insecurity and Tennessee hits a lot harder in the Hispanic, Latin and Black communities. Supporting federal nutrition programs help fight food insecurity along with race and health disparities. Food insecurity rates are especially high among vulnerable groups and these rates are even higher due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

SNAP works towards fighting food insecurity as a long-term resolution. For every \$1.00 administered for SNAP brings \$1.75 back into the economy. SNAP eligibility includes meeting gross income and net income. Additionally, you can qualify through categorical eligibility. Categorical eligibility means an applicant is already receiving assistance already from SSI or families first. There are differences in eligibility for seniors/people with disabilities.

SNAP for non-citizens – Ineligible

- Undocumented
- Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients
- Students with temporary visas

SNAP for non-citizens – Eligible

- Children under 18 (IF qualified immigrant)
- Qualified immigrant adults after 5 year waiting period
- Legal permanent resident – LPR

SNAP Updates:

- Tennessee's SNAP participation has dropped while most other states have increased.
- SNAP applicants are having a hard time reaching someone over the phone.
- SNAP participants are all receiving the maximum household limits.
- SNAP participants can purchase groceries online or at the farmers market.
- initial and recertification interview waivers – interview not required for recertifying.

WIC Benefits include:

- Healthy food via EBT funds
- Nutrition education
- Breastfeeding support
- Social service referrals

Our WIC program is meeting Spanish, Latin and Black family's needs a little better than SNAP. Only 1 in 7 who receive free school meals access summer meal programs. Access to healthy food is crucial to child developed. Pandemic EBT is a new program to replace the missed meals due to school closures. TN opted to have an application rather than just send it to kids or schools. PEBT extension might possibly have through this school year otherwise TN loses \$50M. We are working with the Governor to see about other options, so we do not miss out on this funding.

Opportunities for Action

- Ask Gov. Lee/State to move to direct issuance
 - [Submit a comment](#) with TN Immigrant refugee Rights Coalition
- Share on social media, your network
- Call your [Senators](#) (202) 224-3121 or email to urge to pass the HEROES Act
- **Join our Tweetstorms** - #FeedTN
- **Nutrition Note Newsletter** – [sign up here](#)

TJC Nutrition Team

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Focus: Tennessee Recovery Project

Presenter: Julia

Summary: Through the Tennessee's Recovery Program we been given grants for across the state where we collaborate with FEMA and SAMSA. All 95 counties have crisis services that support this program, each team in these counties received training from SAMSA. There is a 1-800 number setup to receive calls from anyone in these 95 counties that need support. A lot of calls have been centered around people calling to deal with isolation issues, anxiety surrounded by changes with school starting, unemployment wage issues or domestic violence. We receive a lot more calls outside of that range as well. This hotline representative suggests referral support and may even recommend a counselor for additional support.

We monitor these programs on a biweekly basis so that we can market this program based on each county's needs. We are hearing that people are getting this information out through education departments, healthcare programs etc. We want to engage people where they are with a phone call to begin that process of healing. We are the first in the nation to have a program like this available. We are being monitored closely to see if this is something that might be useful in other states.

Resources mentioned during call:

WIC RESOURCES

TJC Resources

WIC 101 webinar

WIC & Healthcare Providers webinar

Other resources

www.thewichub.org

www.signupwic.com

<https://www.tn.gov/health/health-program-areas/fhw/wic.html>

<https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/FRAC-Poverty-Hunger-Health-and-the-Federal-Nutrition-Programs-2020.pdf>

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 3, 2020 from 1pm-2pm via WebEx. WebEx details are as follows: Meeting number (access code): 610 214 092

Meeting password: Health

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