

Rising Poverty Among Washington Seniors Leads to Hunger

The **Seattle King County Aging and Disability Advisory Council** highlights the urgent need to address senior poverty and food insecurity in Washington. The "age wave" has reached the state, but too many seniors are struggling to meet their basic needs. Senior poverty has increased sharply since 2020, with nearly **1 in 10 seniors** living in poverty. In 2023, **9.3% of households** with a person over age 65 experienced food insecurity. Many seniors qualify for only the **minimum SNAP benefit** of \$23 per month. Additionally, the **Meals on Wheels waitlist currently stands at 601 seniors**, reflecting the growing demand for nutrition support.

Invest in Senior Nutrition Services – \$35.4 Million Ongoing Request

Area Agency on Aging (AAA) nutrition programs are vital, providing over **3.2 million meals to 49,000 seniors and people with disabilities** in 2023 through community meals, Meals on Wheels, and senior center pantries. **Governor Inslee's proposed \$28 million** is a start but falls short of the **\$35.4 million needed** to sustain services and meet the rising demand.

Why Senior Nutrition Programs Matter:

- **Promote Health & Prevent Hospitalizations:** Regular meals reduce risks of diabetes, heart failure, and falls.
- **Combat Loneliness:** Group meals reduce isolation, a health risk equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day.
- **Connect Seniors to Safety Nets:** Senior centers serve as hubs, offering services and referrals to essential care.

Other Key Bills:

- **[HB 1165](#):** Expand property tax exemptions for seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans.
- **[SB 5606](#):** Fully fund the Long-Term Care Ombuds Program to protect residents in long-term care.
- **[SB 5691](#):** Adopt the Department of Social and Health Services report recommendations addressing a regulatory oversight plan for continuing care retirement communities.
- **[HB 1217](#):** Protect tenants with rent and fee increase limits and lease parity.
- **[HB 1402](#):** Address barriers to employment by limiting driver's license requirements in job postings.
- **[SB 5486](#):** Ensure accessibility with open captioning in movie theaters.

[Dementia Action Collaborative Funding](#): Support funding for dementia services to aid caregivers, individuals with dementia, and persons who treat and/or educate others about dementia.