

## Veteran Food Assistance Awareness Survey Experiment

### Overview

The transition from active-duty service to civilian life is often a point of increased hardship for service members. Military personnel and their families face significant challenges as they transition to civilian life, including increased risk of food insecurity. Food insecurity was present among 11.8% of working-age (18-64) veteran households, with 5.3% living in households with very low food insecurity in 2015-2019 (Rabbitt and Smith, 2021). SNAP remains one of the most effective federal programs addressing food insecurity; however, many eligible veterans and their families are not taking advantage of the program. Barriers, such as lack of information on SNAP, application challenges, and social stigma, impede access to the program.

The Department of Labor, the Department of Defense, and the Veterans Administration have partnered to create the Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) to provide service members with job counseling and information about services and programs for which they might be eligible (Heflin et al., 2016). In recent years, TAP directly provides information to service members on food and nutritional assistance to support them during this transitional period. The two-page handout contains helpful information on programs that can support members during this period (see Appendix A). However, research literature suggests potential behavioral interventions that might be embedded in the document to increase uptake of food assistance program among eligible veteran households.

Drawing from behavioral science principles, we created a research design aimed to potentially improve the salience and clarity of communication of food assistance programs to transitioning service members. We evaluated the effectiveness of concepts such as simplification, social norming, and loss aversion to increase comprehension of available food assistance programs and the likelihood of applying to the programs.

### Methods

#### *Survey Design*

To empirically assess if these changes could improve veterans' understanding of SNAP after reading the flyer, we conducted a series of four randomized survey experiments. To conduct

these survey experiments we contracted with Lucid, a survey platform vendor that has a consumer network available for digital based survey research, to provide us with a web-based sample. We limited our sample frame in each round to US-based veterans, caregivers, and people living below the federal poverty level to represent the characteristics of transitioning service members. There were no repeat participants in any of the four rounds.

We ran a series of A/B tests to evaluate possible variations of the original food assistance flyer (Appendix A). We addressed several issues using behavioral science interventions. After carefully studying the original flyer, our primary concern was that it provides too much information, which might overwhelm readers. We also noted that the flyer does not make explicit the benefits of SNAP participation. Additionally, the flyer is monochromatic and contains a lot of text. We hypothesized that it may not provide recipients with optical anchors to quickly draw key information in a short time frame.

In our A/B tests, we compare the original to a series of alternative flyers. The alternatives simplified the information provided in the flyer, including graphics (including pictures of individuals in uniform) and color to break up the text. These alternatives were designed to make clear that the SNAP benefits were earned benefits and would help meet their family's needs. We also highlighted that it is not uncommon for veterans to receive support, minimizing the stigma they may feel. In each round of our A/B testing, our control group received the original TAP flyer. The treatment group received different designs of the food assistance flyer attempting to improve their understanding of the SNAP program relative to the original (Appendix B-E).

For the purposes of this brief, we focus on the findings from our most successful flyer (Appendix E). For this round, each survey respondent was randomly assigned to receive the control (n= 805), or the simplified flyer designed by our team (n=817). The survey was administered virtually using Syracuse University's Qualtrics software.

### *Survey Questions*

The survey consists of thirteen items across three distinct categories: screener question, demographic information, and experimental outcomes. See Appendix F for the complete survey. Screening questions ensured all participants were either US-based veterans, caregivers, or people living below the federal poverty line. We asked respondents demographic questions, including age, sex, race, and education. Participants were then randomly shown the original or re-designed food assistance flyer. We provided an explanation of what they were viewing and requested that they take time to read the flyer as we would ask them questions about it after. Participants were allotted up to 8 minutes to read through the flyer. Following the opportunity to view the flyer, participants were asked a series of comprehension questions about SNAP and their likelihood of applying to SNAP.

## **Findings**

### *Demographic Information*

Our sample includes US-based veterans, caregivers, and people living below the federal poverty level to represent the characteristics of transitioning service members. Figure 1 below highlights our sample composition, with the majority of our respondents identifying as veterans. Figure 2 shows that the majority of respondents identified their race as White (71%). The second most selected identity was Black or African American (16%). Most of respondents in the survey were between the ages of 25 and 44 (63%) and identified as male (56%). The demographic composition was not statistically significantly different across the treatment and control groups, demonstrating that our randomization process worked as designed.

Figure 1: Sample Composition

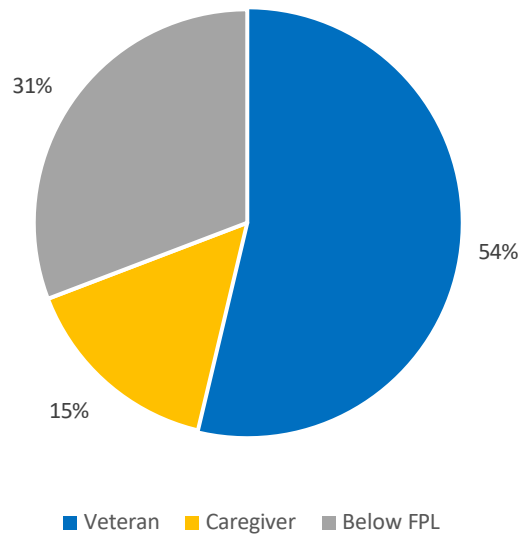
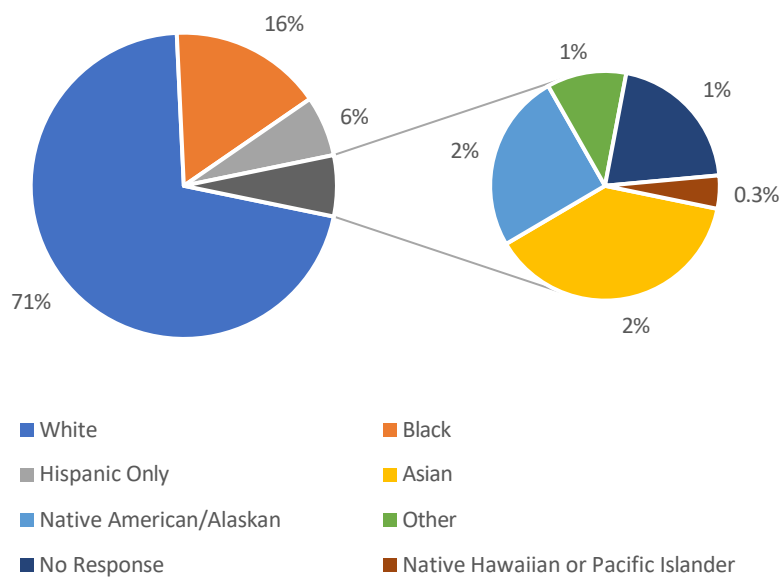


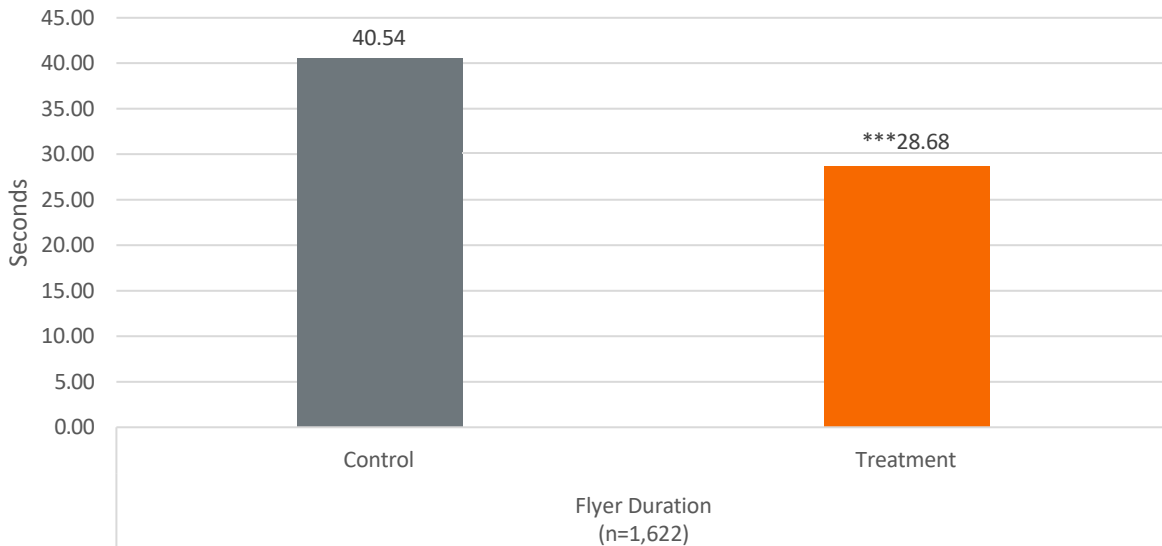
Figure 2: Racial Demographics



### Time Spent on Flyer

Our results show that people do not spend much time reading any versions of the flyer, suggesting that there is extremely limited time to convey essential information. On average, respondents spent around 40 seconds on the original flyer. This short window suggests that flyers informing transitioning service members of available supports should be short, clear, and to the point. Interestingly, as shown in Figure 3, respondents spent about 12 seconds less reading the shorter flyer that we designed, which focused exclusively on the SNAP program.

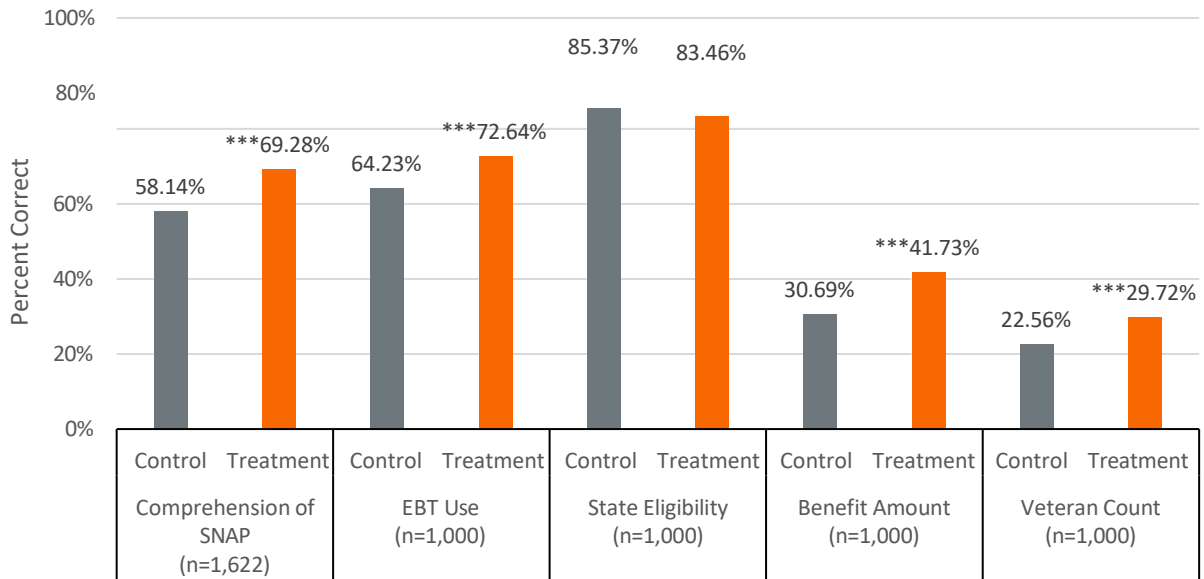
Figure 3: Flyer Duration (Seconds) by Treatment Group



### Comprehension Questions

We asked a series of comprehension questions on SNAP to evaluate how successful the flyer was in informing our sample about available food assistance. Figure 4 demonstrates that the group that received the new flyer scored higher on questions designed to identify an accurate understanding of which program provides food assistance (about 10 percentage points), where they can use the electronic benefit card (8.5 percentage points), the size of average SNAP monthly benefit (11 percentage points), and the number of veterans on SNAP in a given year (7 percentage points). Importantly, we observe this improved comprehension even though the respondents spend around 30 percent less time reading the flyer.

Figure 4: Comprehension Responses by Question and Treatment Group

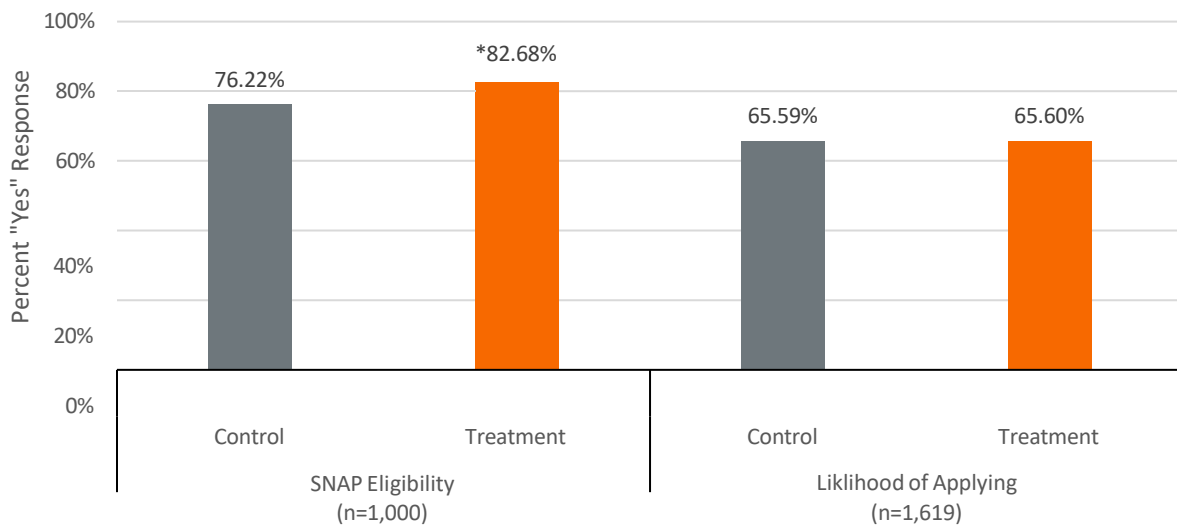


\*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.1

### Thoughts on SNAP

Respondents who received the new flyer were six percentage points more likely to report that they could determine if their family was eligible for SNAP based on the information from the flyer. In the final question, we asked about intentions to apply for SNAP, and we found no difference between those who received the original and new flyer.

Figure 5: Application Responses by Question and Treatment Group

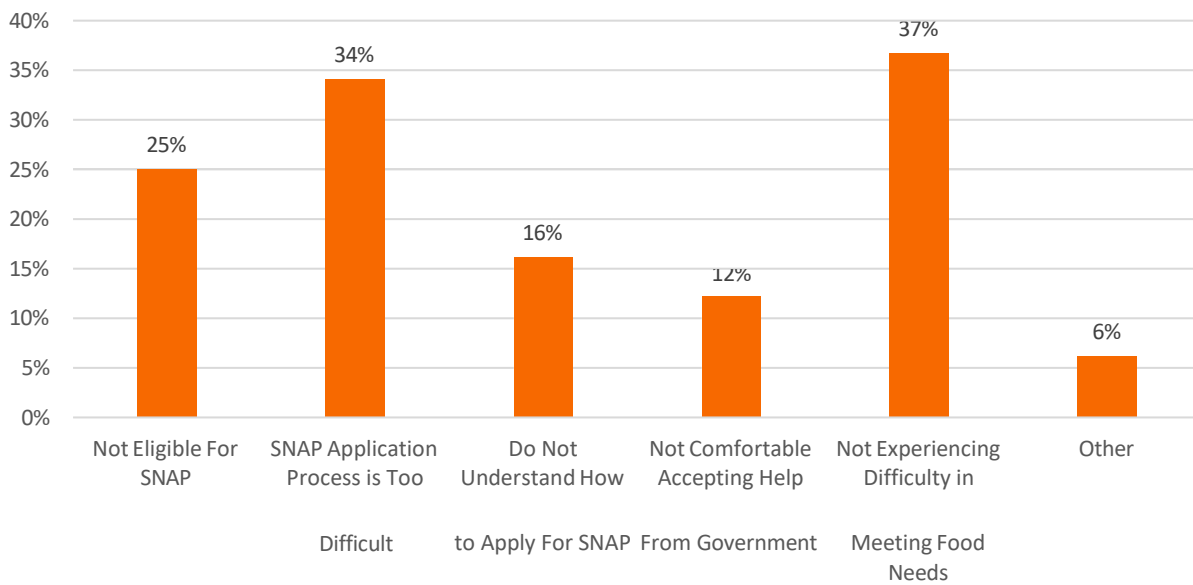


\*\*\*p<.001, \*\*p<.01, \*p<.1

### Obstacles to Applying to SNAP

In addition to the comprehension questions, we also asked respondents to choose among factors that would stop them from applying to SNAP. Figure 6 reports the frequency of responses to this question. The largest category for the respondents were those who reported that they would not apply because they were meeting their family’s food needs. Another 25 percent said that they were not eligible. Interestingly, about half said that either the process was too difficult or that they did not know how to apply, suggesting that the VA might improve SNAP take-up by providing clear instructions or outreach with counselors to sign up veterans.

Figure 6: Obstacles to Applying for SNAP Benefit



### Discussion

This study aimed to estimate the impact of different food assistance flyer designs on respondents’ awareness of available supports and the process for applying to them. We used insights from behavioral science to alter the original design. We find that respondents baseline levels of time spent reading information flyers is minimal, suggesting that information materials need to be clear and concise. Our results also suggest that our simplified flyer that focuses on the salience of SNAP and social norming increases respondent’s understanding of SNAP and key features of the program. However, the simplified flyer does not change the respondent’s reported intention of applying to SNAP.

## **Works Cited**

Heflin, C. M., Hodges, L. B., & London, A. S. (2016). TAPped out: A study of the Department of Defense's Transition Assistance Program. *The Civilian Lives of US Veterans: Issues and Identities [2 volumes]*, 61.

Rabbitt, M, P., and Smith, M.D. (May 2021). *Food Insecurity Among Working-Age Veterans*, ERR-829, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

# Appendix

## Appendix A: Original TAP Flyer

# Getting Started with Food and Nutrition Services

In support of your Whole Health and well-being, this guide will help you understand the healthy food classes and nutrition services available from VA and USDA, and help you apply for food assistance benefits if needed.



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Choose VA

### Are you and your family members getting enough nutrition?

VA's Nutrition and Food Services (NFS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are working together to address Veterans' nutritional needs and food insecurity.

### What is food insecurity?

Food insecurity means your access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources.

### What programs are available to me and my family members?

Some of the programs available to Veterans and their family members include:

- USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Helps low-income individuals and families buy nutritious food with an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, which appears similar to a debit card.
- USDA SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) – SNAP recipients can receive services through the SNAP E&T Program which helps participants gain the skills, training, or work experience they need to increase their ability to obtain regular employment and meet the needs of employers.
- VA MOVE! – A Weight Management Program that is available to every Veteran receiving VA health care and provides Veterans with a variety of ways to participate in a comprehensive lifestyle intervention.
- WHA Healthy Teaching Kitchen – A VA program thru which Veterans learn to prepare, cook, and eat healthy dishes that support nutrition and self-care.
- WHA Whole Health – A VA program that empowers and equips you to take charge of your health and well-being. It centers around **what matters to you**, not what is the matter with you. This means your health team will get to know you and develop a personalized health plan specifically for you, taking into account your values, needs, and goals to live your best life.

NOTE: You do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to participate in SNAP. For more information, please visit: [www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility)

### HOW DO I APPLY FOR SNAP?

You must apply for SNAP in the state where you currently live because each state has a different application form and process. A member of your household must contact your state agency directly to apply.

### WHAT DO I DO IF I AM PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO GO TO A SNAP OFFICE OR CONTACT THE OFFICE?

If you are unable to go to or call your local SNAP office and do not have access to the internet, you may have another person act as your authorized representative by applying and being interviewed on your behalf. You must designate your authorized representative in writing.

Note: Please contact your SNAP state agency directly to apply and to request information about the status of your application. USDA FNS does not process applications or have access to case information.

### WHERE CAN I GET MY STATE SNAP INFORMATION?

You can contact your state agency by visiting your local SNAP office, visiting your state agency's website, or calling the toll-free SNAP information Number at 1-800-221-5689. You can find your state SNAP agency online at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>



### How do I get into VA Nutrition and Food Programs?

What you eat is very important to your health. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) provide nutrition education and counseling for Veterans across VHA's health care facilities and most clinics. There are many programs, telehealth visits, groups, or individual appointments available to you. Visit <https://www.nutrition.va.gov> to learn more.

### How do I get help from a Dietitian?

RDNs are VA's food and nutrition experts. RDNs have special training to offer medical nutrition therapy and work as part of the health care team and Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) in the treatment and prevention of disease. RDNs promote healthy lifestyle choices and create personal nutrition plans for individuals of all ages using a Whole Health approach. To contact a dietitian:

- Call your local VA to schedule an appointment
- Ask your local VA about same day appointment availability
- Ask your VA PACT or health care team for a referral
- Send a secure message via MyHealthVet by signing in at: [www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home](http://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home)

### How do I avoid gaining weight or how do I lose weight?

MOVE! is a weight management, health promotion program designed to improve the lives of Veterans. MOVE!'s core ideas—encouraging healthy eating behavior, increasing physical activity, and promoting even small weight losses—are easy to follow and based on the latest nutrition science. With the help of your MOVE! care team, you can reduce health risks, prevent or reverse certain diseases, improve your quality of life, and even live longer! For more information about MOVE! visit [www.move.va.gov](http://www.move.va.gov)

### What foods should I eat?

MyPlate is the Federal nutrition symbol, developed by the USDA that serves as a general healthy eating guide on what and how much to eat from each of the five food groups – fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy. To learn what the right amounts are for you to eat and drink based on your age, sex, height, weight and activity level, etc. Get your own MyPlate Plan at [www.myplate.gov/myplateplan](http://www.myplate.gov/myplateplan).

MyPlate encourages simple ways to get started on eating healthy. Download the Start Simple with MyPlate app on your phone to set simple, achievable, daily goals to help you eat healthy or visit [www.MyPlate.gov](http://www.MyPlate.gov) for more tips and resources to get started today.

## OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

### How do I know if I am eligible for SNAP?

You must meet certain income and resource requirements to be eligible for SNAP and receive benefits. If your state agency determines you are eligible to receive SNAP benefits, you will receive benefits backdated to when you submitted your application.

### Are there other USDA programs my family and I may be eligible for?

You or your family members may be eligible for assistance through other USDA programs such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, the Summer Food Service Program and USDA food distribution programs. Please visit the USDA FNS website at: [www.fns.usda.gov/partnerships/military-veteran-families](http://www.fns.usda.gov/partnerships/military-veteran-families) for a complete listing of nutrition assistance programs that may be available to you.

### Helpful Links

USDA SNAP  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility>

USDA SNAP E&T  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/et>

VHA NFS FOOD INSECURITY:  
[https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Food\\_Insecurity.asp](https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Food_Insecurity.asp)

VHA NFS RECIPES:  
<https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Recipes.asp>

GET HELP FROM A DIETITIAN  
[https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Get\\_Help\\_from\\_a\\_Dietitian.asp](https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Get_Help_from_a_Dietitian.asp)

WHOLE HEALTH  
<https://www.va.gov/wholehealth>

VA MEDICAL CENTER LOCATOR  
<https://www.va.gov/find-locations>

WIC  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>

MYPLATE  
<https://www.choosemyplate.gov>

Appendix B: Flyer 1 Shortened Version of the Original Flyer

**Behavioral Intervention:**

The primary intervention with this alternative is simplification. We pared down the programs to focus on the SNAP program exclusively.

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**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**Choose VA**

## Are you and your family members getting enough nutrition?

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### Helpful Links

USDA SNAP  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility>

NOTE: You do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to participate in SNAP. For more information, please visit: [www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility)

## HOW DO I APPLY FOR SNAP?

You must apply for SNAP in the state where you currently live because each state has a different application form and process. A member of your household must contact your state agency directly to apply.

## WHAT DO I DO IF I AM PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO GO TO A SNAP OFFICE OR CONTACT THE OFFICE?

If you are unable to go to or call your local SNAP office and do not have access to the internet, you may have another person act as your authorized representative by applying and being interviewed on your behalf. You must designate your authorized representative in writing.

Note: Please contact your SNAP state agency directly to apply and to request information about the status of your application. USDA FNS does not process applications or have access to case information.

## WHERE CAN I GET MY STATE SNAP INFORMATION?

You can contact your state agency by visiting your local SNAP office, visiting your state agency's website, or calling the toll-free SNAP Information Number at 1-800-221-5623. You can find your state SNAP agency online at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>

**CONTACT US**    **VISIT US ONLINE** [VA.gov](http://VA.gov)    **GIVE US A CALL** 1-800-221-5689    **VISIT US IN PERSON** at your local VA Medical Center



Appendix C: Flyer 2 Simplified Version of the Original Flyer with Veterans Image

**Behavioral intervention:**

We added a photo of a service member and his child to the previous simplified flyer. The photo breaks the blue/white color scheme. In addition, the photo is meant to help readers identify with the program and reduce stigma. It shows that this is a program designed to help veterans AND their families.

# Getting Started with Food and Nutrition Services

In support of your Whole Health and well-being, this guide will help you understand the healthy food classes and nutrition services available from VA and USDA, and help you apply for food assistance benefits if needed.

**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**Choose VA**

## Are you and your family members getting enough nutrition?

VA's Nutrition and Food Services (NFS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are working together to address Veterans' nutritional needs and food insecurity.

## What is food insecurity?

Food insecurity means your access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources.

## What programs are available to me and my family members?

Some of the programs available to Veterans and their family members include:

- USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) - Helps low-income individuals and families buy nutritious food with an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, which appears similar to a debit card.

## OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

### How do I know if I am eligible for SNAP?

You must meet certain income and resource requirements to be eligible for SNAP and receive benefits. If your state agency determines you are eligible to receive SNAP benefits, you will receive benefits backdated to when you submitted your application.


### Are there other USDA programs my family and I may be eligible for?

You or your family members may be eligible for assistance through other USDA programs such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, the Summer Food Service Program and USDA food distribution programs. Please visit the USDA FNS website at: [www.fns.usda.gov/partnerships/military-veteran-families](http://www.fns.usda.gov/partnerships/military-veteran-families) for a complete listing of nutrition assistance programs that may be available to you.

### Helpful Links

USDA SNAP  
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility>

NOTE: You do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to participate in SNAP. For more information, please visit: [www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility)



## HOW DO I APPLY FOR SNAP?

You must apply for SNAP in the state where you currently live because each state has a different application form and process. A member of your household must contact your state agency directly to apply.

## WHAT DO I DO IF I AM PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO GO TO A SNAP OFFICE OR CONTACT THE OFFICE?

If you are unable to go to or call your local SNAP office and do not have access to the Internet, you may have another person act as your authorized representative by applying and being interviewed on your behalf. You must designate your authorized representative in writing.

Note: Please contact your SNAP state agency directly to apply and to request information about the status of your application. USDA/FNS does not process applications or have access to case information.

## WHERE CAN I GET MY STATE SNAP INFORMATION?

You can contact your state agency by visiting your local SNAP office, visiting your state agency's website, or calling the toll-free SNAP Information Number at 1-800-221-5688. You can find your state SNAP agency online at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>

**CONTACT US**    **VISIT US ONLINE** [VA.gov](http://VA.gov)    **GIVE US A CALL** 1-800-221-5688    **VISIT US IN PERSON** at your local VA Medical Center

**Behavioral interventions:**

In addition to the simplification and the photo, this flyer incorporates social norming. Notice the red banner. First, we used a new color to draw attention to it. The banner incorporates social norming: many veterans use the program. This design was included to reduce stigma.

We also include the average benefit amount (\$400) so veterans will understand the magnitude of the benefit. We want the veterans to understand that it is worth the administrative burden. We also include some information on eligibility since many believe they are ineligible.

**Access the food benefits you earned and join the over 1 million veterans who already participate in SNAP.**

**What is SNAP?** → A program that provides you with **additional income** to purchase food of your choice for you and your family.

**How does it work?** → You receive an **electronic benefit transfer card (EBT)**, like a debit card, for use at participating grocery stores.

**Are you eligible?** → Income limits to qualify vary by state and family size. If your monthly income is below the range listed by your family size, you may be eligible for SNAP.

Family Size	Monthly Income Limit
1	\$1,395 - \$2,146
2	\$1,887 - \$2,903
3	\$2,379 - \$3,660
4	\$2,870 - \$4,416



Do you sometimes worry that your food will run out before you have money to buy more?

You could be benefiting from an additional \$400 a month for your family's food needs.





**How do you apply?** → Apply online in the state where you currently live: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>

*If you qualify for SNAP, you are likely eligible for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman's Infants and Children (WIC) and free or reduced-price lunch within schools.*

**Behavioral interventions:**


This flyer is quite similar to the previous one. We move a few items around. The red banner provides a loss frame. Behavioral science literature has repeatedly shown that people are more likely to respond to something they believe they have earned rather than something they may qualify for. We are attempting to prompt their “loss aversion” with this banner.

U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

**Veterans,  
Access the food benefit you earned!**



Do you sometimes worry that your food will run out before you have money to buy more?

If so, you're not alone.

Each year over **1 million** veterans use SNAP to support their food needs.

Visit [VA.gov](http://VA.gov) for more information.

## Getting Started with SNAP

**What is SNAP?** → The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides eligible families with the nutritious foods their family needs from their local grocery store. Families use an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, like a debit card, to purchase food.

**What are the benefits?** → The average monthly benefit in 2021 for a household was \$400. These funds can be used to purchase food at SNAP-participating grocery stores.

**Are you eligible?** → Income limits to qualify vary by state and family size. If your monthly income is below the range listed by your family size, you may be eligible for SNAP.

Family Size	Monthly Income Limit
1	\$1,395 - \$2,146
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**How do you apply?** → You can apply in the state where you currently live. You can find your state SNAP agency:

1. Online at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>
2. Call 1-800-221-5689 to ask for more info

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If you qualify for SNAP, you are likely eligible for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Woman's Infants and Children (WIC) and free or reduced-price lunch within schools.

## Intro

My name is Hannah Patnaik, and I am the Managing Director of the Maxwell X Lab at Syracuse University. My team and I are conducting a short comprehension survey to see whether a food assistance flyer conveys clear information to the reader. The survey should last around 15 minutes, and will ask basic demographic questions and comprehension questions. We hope to use the data collected from this project to help ensure that veterans and their families are receiving the information they need to ease the transition back to civilian life. Your individual responses will remain completely anonymous. Thank you again; we really appreciate your help!

## Screenener

Are you a veteran?

- Yes
- No

## Demographic Questions

What is your age?

- Under 18
- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 - 74
- 75 - 84
- 85 or older

What is your race? You can select multiple.

- Hispanic or Latino
- White



- Black or African American
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Asian
- Native American or Alaska Native
- Other

What is your sex?

- Male
- Female
- Intersex
- Prefer not to say

Please check your highest level of education completed.

- No high school
- High school diploma
- Associate degree
- Bachelor's degree
- Master's degree
- Professional degree
- Doctorate degree

## Instructions

On the next page, you will see a flyer that provides key information on services available to many families. Please read the flyer carefully. You will have up to 8 minutes to read the flyer. After completing that task, we will ask you a series of questions about the services.

## Flyer



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U.S. Department  
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VA's Nutrition and Food Services (NFS) and the U.S Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) are working together to address Veterans' nutritional needs and food insecurity.

## What is food insecurity?

Food insecurity means your access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources.

## What programs are available to me and my family members?

Some of the programs available to Veterans and their family members include:

- USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Helps low-income individuals and families buy nutritious food with an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card, which appears similar to a debit card.
- USDA SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) - SNAP recipients can receive services through the SNAP E&T Program which helps participants gain the skills, training, or work experience they need to increase their ability to obtain regular employment and meet the needs of employers.
- VA MOVE! – A Weight Management Program that is available to every Veteran receiving VA health care and provides Veterans with a variety of ways to participate in a comprehensive lifestyle intervention.
- VHA Healthy Teaching Kitchen - A VA program thru which Veterans learn to prepare, cook, and eat healthy dishes that support nutrition and self-care.
- VHA Whole Health - A VA program that empowers and equips you to take charge of your health and well-being. It centers around **what matters to you**, not what is the matter with you. This means your health team will get to know you and develop a personalized health plan specifically for you, taking into account your values, needs, and goals to live your best life.

NOTE: You do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to participate in SNAP. For more information, please visit: [www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility)

## HOW DO I APPLY FOR SNAP?

*You must apply for SNAP in the state where you currently live because each state has a different application form and process. A member of your household must contact your state agency directly to apply.*

## WHAT DO I DO IF I AM PHYSICALLY UNABLE TO GO TO A SNAP OFFICE OR CONTACT THE OFFICE?

*If you are unable to go to or call your local SNAP office and do not have access to the internet, you may have another person act as your authorized representative by applying and being interviewed on your behalf. You must designate your authorized representative in writing.*

*Note: Please contact your SNAP state agency directly to apply and to request information about the status of your application. USDA FNS does not process applications or have access to case information.*

## WHERE CAN I GET MY STATE SNAP INFORMATION?

*You can contact your state agency by visiting your local SNAP office, visiting your state agency's website, or calling the toll-free SNAP Information Number at 1-800-221-5689. You can find your state SNAP agency online at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>*

CONTACT US

VISIT US ONLINE [VA.gov](http://VA.gov)

GIVE US A CALL 1-800-221-5689

VISIT US IN PERSON at your local VA Medical Center



### How do I get into VA Nutrition and Food Programs?

What you eat is very important to your health. Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDNs) provide nutrition education and counseling for Veterans across VHA's health care facilities and most clinics. There are many programs, telehealth visits, groups, or individual appointments available to you. Visit <https://www.nutrition.va.gov> to learn more.

### How do I get help from a Dietitian?

RDNs are VA's food and nutrition experts. RDNs have special training to offer medical nutrition therapy and work as part of the health care team and Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) in the treatment and prevention of disease. RDNs promote healthy lifestyle choices and create personal nutrition plans for individuals of all ages using a Whole Health approach. To contact a dietitian:

- Call your local VA to schedule an appointment
- Ask your local VA about same day appointment availability
- Ask your VA PACT or health care team for a referral
- Send a secure message via MyHealtheVet by signing in at: [www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home](http://www.myhealth.va.gov/mhv-portal-web/home)

### How do I avoid gaining weight or how do I lose weight?

MOVE! is a weight management, health promotion program designed to improve the lives of Veterans. MOVE!'s core ideas—encouraging healthy eating behavior, increasing physical activity, and promoting even small weight losses—are easy to follow and based on the latest nutrition science. With the help of your MOVE! care team, you can reduce health risks, prevent or reverse certain diseases, improve your quality of life, and even live longer! For more information about MOVE! visit [www.move.va.gov](http://www.move.va.gov)

### What foods should I eat?

MyPlate is the Federal nutrition symbol, developed by the USDA that serves as a general healthy eating guide on what and how much to eat from each of the five food groups – fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy. To learn what the right amounts are for you to eat and drink based on your age, sex, height, weight and activity level, etc. Get your own MyPlate Plan at [www.myplate.gov/myplateplan](http://www.myplate.gov/myplateplan).

MyPlate encourages simple ways to get started on eating healthy. Download the Start Simple with MyPlate app on your phone to set simple, achievable, daily goals to help you eat healthy or visit [www.MyPlate.gov](http://www.MyPlate.gov) for more tips and resources to get started today.

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## Comprehension Questions

### OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

#### How do I know if I am eligible for SNAP?

You must meet certain income and resource requirements to be eligible for SNAP and receive benefits. If your state agency determines you are eligible to receive SNAP benefits, you will receive benefits backdated to when you submitted your application.

#### Are there other USDA programs my family and I may be eligible for?

You or your family members may be eligible for assistance through other USDA programs such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, the Summer Food Service Program and USDA food distribution programs. Please visit the USDA FNS website at: [www.fns.usda.gov/partnerships/military-veteran-families](http://www.fns.usda.gov/partnerships/military-veteran-families) for a complete listing of nutrition assistance programs that may be available to you.

#### Helpful Links

##### USDA SNAP

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility>

##### USDA SNAP E&T

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/et>

##### VHA NFS FOOD INSECURITY:

[https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Food\\_Insecurity.asp](https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Food_Insecurity.asp)

##### VHA NFS RECIPES:

<https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Recipes.asp>

##### GET HELP FROM A DIETITIAN

[https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Get\\_Help\\_from\\_a\\_Dietitian.asp](https://www.nutrition.va.gov/Get_Help_from_a_Dietitian.asp)

##### WHOLE HEALTH

<https://www.va.gov/wholehealth>

##### VA MEDICAL CENTER LOCATOR

<https://www.va.gov/find-locations>

##### WIC

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic>

##### MYPLATE

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov>

Which program listed below provides food assistance to veterans who run out of money to buy food for their families?

- VA Move
- VHA Healthy Teaching Kitchen
- VHA Whole Health
- SNAP
- Don't Know

SNAP benefits are provided via an electronic benefit card, like a debit card. Where is the most likely place one would use the electronic benefit card?

- By mail
- Local food pantry
- SNAP food distribution center
- Local grocery store
- Don't know

True or False. Each state has its own eligibility rules for SNAP.

- True
- False
- Don't Know

Which number is closest to the average SNAP monthly food benefit?

- \$400
- \$10
- \$125
- \$40
- Don't Know

Each year approximately how many veterans use SNAP?

- 10,000

- 1 million
- 100,000
- 10 million
- Don't Know

## Thoughts on SNAP

Based on the information provided, were you able to determine if your family is eligible for SNAP?

- Yes
- No

Based on the information provided, how likely are you to apply for SNAP?

- Extremely unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Somewhat likely
- Extremely likely

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