

RESPECT FOR
YESTERDAY,
SUPPORT FOR
TODAY,
PLAN FOR
TOMORROW



Aging Matters

March - April 2023 Newsletter from the Illinois Department on
Aging

Office of
Governor JB
Pritzker

Message From Director Paula Basta



**Be Socially
Engaged While
Practicing
Social
Distancing**

Nutrition is a vital component of our health and well-being, especially as we age. But in communities throughout Illinois, older adults sometimes lack access to the high-quality, nutritious food they need to remain healthy and independent.

**Find a Vaccine
Location Near
You**

Since 1972, the national Senior Nutrition Program has supported older adults by providing nutrition services across the country. Funded by the Older Americans Act, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) provides grants to states to support a network of local programs that deliver nutrition services to older adults. These programs promote healthy eating, decrease social isolation, and support better health. They also provide a gateway for older adults to access other home and community-based services such as falls prevention programs, chronic disease management services, and more.

**IDoA COVID-19
Vaccine
Resources**

In recognition of the anniversary of the Senior Nutrition Program, as well as National Nutrition Month, this newsletter is jam-packed with nutrition-related content, including information about home-delivered and congregate meals, changes to SNAP benefits, and a new restaurant dining opportunity for older adults.

**Looking For
Services?**

That's not all, however. Read on to learn how you can prepare for the April 18 tax filing deadline, check if you're eligible for programs that can help you afford basic needs, nominate an older adult for induction into the Senior Illinoisan Hall of Fame, and more.

Upcoming

As always, the Department on Aging is here to assist you however we can. For information about our programs and services for older adults and persons with disabilities, contact the

Webinar Events

Senior HelpLine toll-free at 1-800-252-8966, 711 (TRS), or via email at aging.ilsenior@illinois.gov. In most instances, we will connect you with a local office in your area.

Please continue to stay safe and well.

#VaxUpIL - All in Illinois Campaign

Sincerely,



Celebrating the Senior Nutrition Program

Celebrate the Senior Nutrition Program

[ACL.GOV/SNP/CELEBRATE](https://acl.gov/snp/celebrate)



This March, we're celebrating National Nutrition Month and the anniversary of the national Senior Nutrition Program!

Funded by the federal Older Americans Act, local senior nutrition programs serve as hubs for adults aged 60 and older to access meals and other nutrition services that strengthen social connections and promote health and well-being.

Each year in the U.S., up to half of older adults are at risk of malnutrition, and more than 10 million face hunger. To combat food insecurity among this population, Illinois' Aging Network provides nutritious, culturally appropriate, and medically tailored meals to older adults at more than 376 congregate dining sites statewide, including senior centers, churches, senior housing facilities and community buildings. Home-delivered meals are also available to older adults who are unable to cook or shop for food on their own.

With the temporary closure of in-person dining sites at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Aging Network responded to a 50% increase in need for home-delivered meals, providing an average of nearly 1 million home-delivered meals per month since March 2020. Congregate dining sites were encouraged to reopen as of July 1, 2021, and all sites have since reopened, adhering to COVID-19 protocols for participants' safety. Some locations continue to provide packaged grab-and-go style meals to participants who prefer an alternative to eat-in dining.

Test your knowledge of the Senior Nutrition Program with a short pop quiz! Answers can be found at the bottom of this newsletter.

1. **True or false:** Adults aged 60 and older who visit congregate dining sites can receive a meal for free, regardless of their income.
2. **True or false:** Meals served through the Senior Nutrition Program can vary in nutrition content because they are not subject to nutritional labeling.

3. **True or false:** Nationwide, four out of five meal program participants say a congregate meal program improved their health.
4. **True or false:** Your local Meals on Wheels program is part of the Senior Nutrition Program.
5. **True or false:** Illinois' Aging Network distributed more than 11 million home-delivered meals and 750,000 congregate meals to older adults last year.

Additional resources and information:

Find a [congregate meal site in your area](#)

Become a volunteer to prepare or deliver meals to older adults by contacting your local [senior center](#)

Subscribe to the Department on Aging's [Nutrition and Wellness Newsletter](#) to receive tips, recipes, and more from our staff nutritionist

Federal Changes Reduce SNAP Benefits for Older Adults, Families

YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR MORE IN SNAP BENEFITS IF

The infographic is divided into three sections. The top section is dark green and contains the title. The middle section is split into two columns: the left column is green and features an icon of two people with an upward arrow, with the text 'The number of people in your household increased'; the right column is light green and features a downward arrow with a dollar sign inside, with the text 'Your income went down'. The bottom section is light yellow-green and features a bar chart with three bars of increasing height and an upward arrow, with the text 'Your housing, medical, or child care expenses went up'.

The number of people in your household increased

Your income went down

Your housing, medical, or child care expenses went up

If you receive SNAP/Link benefits, formerly known as food stamps, you may have noticed that your benefits were reduced this month. During the pandemic, the federal government issued emergency supplemental benefits to SNAP, the program otherwise known as LINK or EBT in the state of Illinois. Since April 2020, all Illinois SNAP households have received their regular monthly benefit from the 1st to the 20th of the month and a separate emergency SNAP issuance after the 21st of the month. **Emergency SNAP was issued for the last time in February 2023.**

As a result of these federal policy changes, the average one-person household is seeing their benefits go down by \$86 per month.

SNAP participants should make sure that all of their information is complete and accurate to ensure they receive the maximum SNAP/Link benefits they are eligible for.

If you have experienced certain changes, you may be eligible for more in SNAP benefits:

- The number of people in your household increased

- Your income went down
- Your housing, medical, or child care expenses went up
- You pay child support expenses for a child not in your home

If you experienced one of these changes, the Illinois Department of Human Services can help you understand the impact on your benefits. Visit abe.illinois.gov or call the hotline at **1-800-843-6154**.

If your SNAP benefits don't last you through the month, you can get free groceries from a local food pantry. Use the [Find Food IL map](#) to find places in your community offering free food or meals. Adult aged 60 and older can also visit a [congregate dining site](#) for lunch on weekdays.

Older Adults Can "Dine Around Town" at the Morris Chop Shop in Morris, Ill.



Grundy County community members aged 60 and over, their spouses, and caregivers can enjoy a special menu for dine-in or take-out at the Morris Chop Shop through a new senior dining program, which launched earlier this year. "Dine Around Town" is a partnership between the Morris Chop Shop, the Community Nutrition Network and Senior Services Association, and the Meals on Wheels Foundation of Northern Illinois, and funded in part by AgeGuide of Northeastern Illinois. Chop Shop owners Jackie Clisham and Tim Berner are offering seven low-cost menu favorites, adapted to meet nutritional requirements for older adults, during their dinner service on Sunday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings.

According to Elizabeth Bowman, outreach coordinator for the Community Nutrition Network, it was certainly a team effort that led up to the Dine Around Town program's grand opening in early February.

Together with the Chop Shop owners and a registered dietician from AgeGuide, the Community Nutrition Network helped create a delicious menu that meets all federal nutritional guidelines for adults aged 60 and over. They then worked with CatMatt Software Solutions to set up the Senior Dine system, order special Senior Dine debit cards for participants, and train restaurant staff in how to accept payment through the app. In the weeks leading up to the launch, Bowman spearheaded outreach to the local community, resulting in a tremendous response. In the first month of the program, 247 participants enjoyed 174 meals provided by

the Morris Chop Shop.

Read more:

[Morris Chop Shop announces new low-cost menu for customers age 60 and older](#)

AgeOptions and Arab American Family Services Open New Congregate Meal Site in Niles



On March 8, AgeOptions and Arab American Family Services cut the ribbon at the grand opening of a new congregate dining site in partnership with Al Bawadi Grill, which will provide culturally appropriate meals to Middle Eastern older adults. [View additional photos](#) from the grand opening courtesy of Arab American Family Services.

March is Developmental Disabilities (DD) Awareness Month



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

#DDAM2023
#DDawareness2023
#BeyondTheConversation

Every March, the National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities (NACDD) and its partners collaborate to lead Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month (DDAM). The campaign highlights how people with and without disabilities come together to form strong communities. It raises awareness of the inclusion and contributions of people with DD in all aspects of community life, and it's a time to explore the work we still need to do to remove barriers.

NACDD's 2023 theme, *Beyond the Conversation*, focuses on the question, "what next?" With this theme, NACDD plans to highlight change and innovation – what individuals and communities are doing to move past talking to take action on education, employment, accessibility, and more.

[Visit ACL's DDAM page](#)

Celebrating Women's History Month

Women's History Month provides an opportunity to celebrate the contributions of women to our history, culture, and contemporary society, and to highlight the impact of women on America's social and economic well-being. As we reflect on the progress women have made, we must also reaffirm our commitment to advancing rights and opportunities for women of all ages and backgrounds, including those of older generations.

According to the National Council on Aging, there are currently 7 million more older women in the U.S. than older men. Older women have lower median incomes than men (\$20,431 vs \$34,267), and are [more likely to live in poverty](#) as a result of wage discrimination and having to take time out of the workforce for caregiving.

Find resources to support women caregivers [on IDoA's website](#), along with information about programs to address inadequate nutrition, social isolation, and other risk factors among older women.

Also, use [these ideas from Home Care Powered by AUAF](#) to celebrate Women's History Month with the women in your life, and learn about some of the older women making history in

Illinois via the links below:

[90-year-old college graduate Joyce DeFauw](#)

[Record-setting octogenarian power lifter Shirley Webb](#)

[Beloved Catholic nun and newly published author Sister Jean](#)

Public Input Opportunity: HUD Fair Housing Proposed Rule

The federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) seeks comments on a [recently published proposed rule](#) implementing the Fair Housing Act's mandate to "affirmatively further fair housing" with actions to overcome patterns of discrimination, promote fair housing choices, and eliminate disparities in housing opportunities. The Fair Housing Act offers protections on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), familial status, and disability.

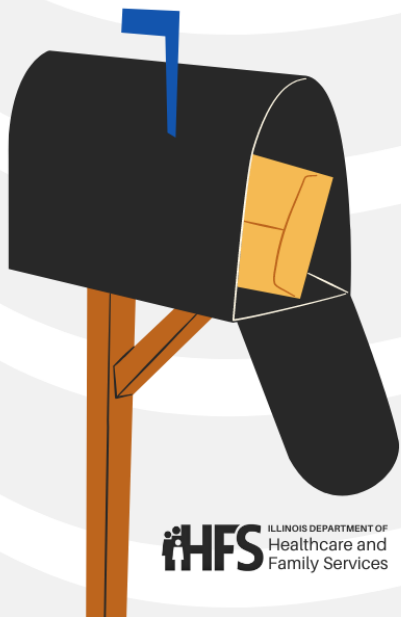
The proposed rule provides that housing programs must consider people with disabilities and accessibility needs as central concepts when assessing and addressing barriers to fair and equitable housing, and even explicitly requires that these programs consult with organizations that advocate on behalf of older adults and people with disabilities — such as centers for independent living and aging and disability resource centers.

Read [Secretary Fudge's op-ed](#), [President Biden's Statement](#), [HUD's Press Release](#), [AFFH NPRM Fact Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions](#), and the [Quick Reference Guide](#) to learn more about the proposed rule.

Then, submit your comments by April 10, either [online through regulations.gov](#) or by mail by following the instructions in [this guide](#).

For more information and resources on housing for people with disabilities and older adults, visit the [Housing and Services Resource Center](#), a partnership between ACL and HUD. The HSRC [Fair Housing page](#) compiles a variety of additional resources for the aging and disability networks, including the [Engaging the Disability Community in Fair Housing Planning Webinar Series](#).

Don't Risk Losing Your Health Insurance



MEDICAID MEMBER!

Updating your address is *easy, fast and free*



CALL 877.805.5312 OR TTY: 877.204.1012
MON-FRI 7:45AM - 4:30PM



WWW2.ILLINOIS.GOV/HFS/ADDRESS

iHFS ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF
Healthcare and
Family Services

DON'T RISK LOSING YOUR HEALTH INSURANCE

Medicaid members: Illinois Medicaid needs to send you paperwork. If you've moved within the past three years, update your address to avoid surprises and get updates about your insurance. Call **877-805-5312** between 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. or visit [medicaid.illinois.gov](https://www.medicaid.illinois.gov).

Free Income Tax Preparation Assistance Available

**AVOID THE FRUSTRATION
AND THE COST
SEE IF YOU QUALIFY FOR
FREE TAX FILING**

Low-to-moderate income families and older adults needing assistance filing their 2022 income taxes can receive free help through several trusted programs across Illinois.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS), American Association of Retired Persons' (AARP) Foundation Tax-Aide Program, and the Ladder Up Tax Assistance Program, provide free basic income tax return preparation with electronic filing to qualified individuals in select locations statewide.

The [IRS' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\)](#) and [Tax Counseling for the Elderly \(TCE\)](#) programs offer free basic tax return preparation to qualified individuals needing assistance in preparing their own tax returns. People making \$60,000 or less, persons with

disabilities and limited English-speaking taxpayers can take advantage of this service. In addition, the TCE program offers free tax help, particularly for those who are 60 years of age and older, specializing in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to seniors. VITA and TCE sites are generally located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations across the country.

The [AARP Foundation Tax-Aide Program](#) provides free tax assistance, with a special focus on taxpayers over the age of 50 or who have low-to-moderate income. Availability is determined at the local or community level. AARP membership is not required to receive assistance.

In Chicagoland, the [Ladder Up Tax Assistance Program](#) (TAP) provides free basic tax return preparation for families earning up to \$60,000 and individuals earning up to \$32,000 annually. IRS-certified volunteer tax preparers assist in filing federal and state returns.

Taxpayers can search for a free tax assistance provider closest to them by visiting IDOR's website tax.illinois.gov. Individuals with questions should contact IDOR's Taxpayer Assistance Division at **800-732-8866**.

Taxpayers may also visit any of IDOR's offices located in Chicago, Des Plaines, Fairview Heights, Marion, Rockford, and Springfield to receive assistance. Staff at these locations can help with any Illinois state income tax filing inquiries and are available weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

COVID-19 is Out This Spring



**COVID-19
is out this
spring.**

Get boosted today.

 [Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov)

 1-800-232-0233

In:

Pastels

Spring Cleaning

Morning Walks

Out:

COVID-19

Spring means new beginnings! Get your booster shot of protection to let the fresh air in and keep COVID-19 away.

[Vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) #AllInIllinois #LongLiveIllinois

April is National Volunteer Month

Observed annually in April, National Volunteer Month is dedicated to promoting, encouraging, and celebrating volunteerism. Volunteering can be a meaningful way for older adults to stay active and give back to their communities, and there are many volunteer opportunities available to fit your skills and interests.

[Intergenerational volunteer programs](#) are mutually beneficial for older and younger people, while other volunteer programs provide an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of older adults. Get started by contacting your local [Area Agency on Aging](#) to learn how you can volunteer to help manage an older adult's monthly bills, deliver meals, and more.

Are you already a volunteer in your community, or do you know someone who is? Help IDoA recognize our Aging Network volunteers throughout the month of April. Submit a photo and a brief description of a volunteer's contributions to Aging.Communications@Illinois.gov for a chance to be featured on our social media channels.

Give Yourself a Boost with Benefits



The cost of living keeps going up – which can be hard if you're living on a fixed income. April 10-14 is Boost Your Budget™ Week, the perfect time to see if you qualify for benefits programs that can help you pay for food, medicine, housing, and more. The National Council on Aging's BenefitsCheckUp® tool, available in English and Spanish, is free and confidential and will give you a personalized list of benefits to explore. Answer a few short questions and get a list of programs that could help you.

[Start your checkup.](#)

Nominations Still Open for 2023 Senior Illinoisan Hall of Fame Awards



The Illinois Department on Aging is accepting nominations for the 2023 Senior Illinoisan Hall of Fame awards, open to adults aged 65 and older who excel in the categories of community service, education, performance and/or graphic arts, and the labor force.

Nominations for 2023 inductees must be submitted by June 1. For more information or to submit a nomination, visit

Employment Opportunities

Did you know that in 2021, the State of Illinois moved to a fully electronic hiring process? The below video from the Illinois Department of Central Management Services shares five easy tips to help when applying for employment with the State of Illinois, including with the Department on Aging. These tips will make the process as smooth and user-friendly as possible.



For a full list of open positions, check the [State of Illinois job board](#).

Interested in a job with Illinois' Aging Network? The Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging is seeking to hire a President and CEO. For more information about this employment opportunity, call Anita Brown at 309-674-2071 or visit the Central Illinois Area Agency on Aging office between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

[View the job description](#)

The Palatine Township Senior Citizens Council also has two open employment opportunities: Latino Liaison and Social Services Representative. Applicants can email their resume and letter of interest to Nancy Frenk at nfrenk@ptscc.org.

[View both job descriptions](#)

Winter Events Recap



Happy 50th anniversary to the Palatine Township Senior Center!

Staff members from IDoA, Palatine Township, Northwest Community Hospital, Palatine Park District, AgeOptions, and Little Sisters of the Poor attended their 50th anniversary open house on Feb. 23.

[View more photos.](#)

AgeOptions and Arab American Family Services open new congregate meal site in Niles

[View photos from the grand opening](#)

Upcoming Events

The [Illinois Commission on LGBTQ Aging](#) will meet on Tuesday, March 14 at 3 p.m. Stakeholders and members of the public are invited to attend using the link below.

[Join meeting](#)

Join from the meeting link

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=mf5781c0f8d0f538b64b4c4600852e074>

Join by meeting number

Meeting number (access code): 2453 734 9582

Meeting password: efEQUFq637

Tap to join from a mobile device (attendees only)

+1-312-535-8110,,24537349582## United States Toll (Chicago)

+1-415-655-0002,,24537349582## US Toll

Join by phone

+1-312-535-8110 United States Toll (Chicago)

+1-415-655-0002 US Toll

Global call-in numbers

Join from a video system or application

Dial [24537349582@illinois.webex.com](tel:24537349582)

You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.

Also on Tuesday, March 14 at 3 p.m., the [Resident and Family Support Council](#) will meet to discuss the Authorized Electronic Monitoring in Long-Term Care Facilities Act, which specifies guidelines for installing a camera in your room.

Registration is not required for this meeting. Join the Zoom call by clicking the link below.

[Join the Resident and Family Support Council](#)

The [Senior Housing Residents' Advisory Council](#) will meet on April 26.

[Join meeting](#)

OLDER AMERICANS MONTH



AGING UNBOUND: MAY 2023

Every May, the Administration for Community Living (ACL) leads the nation's observance of Older Americans Month (OAM). In 2023, ACL has chosen the theme, *Aging Unbound*. With this theme, we will have the opportunity to explore an array of aging experiences without being boxed in by expectations and stereotypes.

ACL and IDoA will be discussing the positive aspects of growing older, why everyone has a role to play in combating ageism – and how we all benefit when older adults remain engaged, independent, and included in their communities.

Stay tuned for event information and resources that you can use to celebrate OAM in your community!

Check Your Answers to Our Senior Nutrition Program Pop Quiz

1: True. Older adults are encouraged to call ahead to reserve a spot, but there is no charge for congregate meals. While donations of between \$2 and \$6 per meal are often suggested, no one will be turned away for their inability to pay.

2: False. All meals served through the Senior Nutrition Program must provide at least one-third of the daily recommended dietary allowances established by the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Academy of Sciences—National Research Council.

3: True, according to the Administration for Community Living.

4: False. Typically, federal and state-funded meal programs allow for home-delivered meals on weekdays only, depending on location. Illinois participates in a public/private partnership program known as Meals on Wheels, which can help fill gaps in nutrition services by supplying holiday, weekend, and emergency meals, as well as meals that meet special dietary needs.

5: True. Our data shows that 11,106,688 home-delivered meals and 756,084 congregate meals were distributed in federal fiscal year 2022.

Items of Interest

[Healthy Meal Planning: Tips for Older Adults](#)

[How Much Should I Eat? Quantity and Quality](#)

[How To Read Food and Beverage Labels](#)

[Cooking Is a SNAP: Refresh Your Diet with Healthy Spring Recipes](#)

[Hanover Township Receives Grant to Expand Senior Mental Health Services](#)

The Illinois Department on Aging does not discriminate in admission to programs or treatment of employment in programs or activities in compliance with appropriate State and Federal statutes. If you feel you have been discriminated against, call the **Senior HelpLine** at (800) 252-8966; (888) 206-1327 (TTY)



[**Visit our website**](#)