



A PROFILE OF ELDERLY PARTICIPATION IN THE FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

Office of Analysis, Nutrition and Evaluation

Revised January 2, 2007

Historically, low-income seniors age 60 and older who qualify for benefits in the Food Stamp Program participate at very low rates – about half the overall rate among all eligibles. The Food Stamp Program is still, however, the Nation’s largest elderly nutrition assistance program, serving nearly 2 million seniors in an average month.

Number of households with elderly (thousands).....	1,856
Percent of all households.....	17%
Number of elderly individuals (thousands).....	2,047
Percent of all participants.....	8%
Average household size.....	1.3
Percent of elderly living alone.....	71%
Average monthly gross income.....	\$690
Percent of poverty guidelines.....	81%
Percent with social security income.....	68%
Percent with SSI income.....	56%
Percent with earned income.....	4%
Percent with no income.....	2%
Average deduction from income.....	\$360
Percent with excess shelter deduction.....	69%
Percent with medical deduction.....	15%
Average monthly benefit per household.....	\$87
Average monthly benefit per person.....	\$67
Percent with minimum benefit.....	16%
Percent with maximum benefit.....	14%
Average certification period (months).....	17
Participation rate among eligible elderly (2004).....	28%
Percent of total benefits that could be issued to elderly (2004).....	35%

Note: All statistics are for fiscal year 2005 unless otherwise noted.

Source: Barrett (2006). [Characteristics of Food Stamp Households: Fiscal Year 2005](#). Report prepared for the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

Barrett and Poikolainen (2006). [Food Stamp Program Participation Rates: 2004](#). Report prepared for the Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.