

U.S. SENATOR BOB CASEY



CHAIRMAN Special Committee on Aging

The Tools for Ensuring Access to Meals (TEAM) Act of 2022 (S. 5095)

U.S. Senator Bob Casey (D-Pennsylvania)

Why do we need the TEAM Act?

An estimated **5.2 million, or 6.8 percent**, of adults ages 60 and older lack reliable access to food in the United States. Adults with disabilities also experience limited food access, often referred to as food insecurity, and are **two times more likely** to be food insecure than their nondisabled counterparts. For older adults and adults with disabilities, access to nutritious food can support their ability to remain healthy and independent.

There are structural barriers, like accessible transportation and siloed systems of support, that can limit an eligible older adult or adult with disabilities from accessing federal nutrition assistance programs administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Administration for Community Living and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service.

Black older adults face food insecurity at more than four times the rate of white older adults. Similarly, Hispanic older adults are two times more likely to be food insecure than their non-Hispanic white counterparts. Nutrition assistance programs improve healthy food access for older adults and adults with disabilities and foster social connections. These programs serve as an entryway to broader services and support individuals in remaining in their community.

What will the TEAM Act do?

The TEAM Act establishes a new nationwide pilot program to innovatively address hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition among older adults and adults with disabilities. Specifically, the bill will:

- Equip federal agencies with tools and best practices for implementing interagency collaborations that address food insecurity and reduce barriers to participation in federal nutrition programs
- Provide \$5 million in annual funding to the Administration for Community Living to award non-profits, local aging and disability service providers, and government entities grants to pilot innovative models that promote access and participation in federal nutrition programs
- Evaluate the effectiveness of programs conducted on the state and local level and improve data collection

Supporters: The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Food Research & Action Center, Meals on Wheels America, The National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs, The National Council on Aging, The National Down Syndrome Congress, The Pennsylvania Association of Area Agencies on Aging, The Philadelphia Corporation for Aging