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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina Joins National Movement to End Senior Hunger**

*Community organizations come together to increase older adult SNAP enrollment*

**Raleigh, NC (July 13, 2015)** – When it comes to eating a healthy diet, millions of Americans 65 and over face a double whammy: their income is fixed, and their spending on food is consuming a larger portion of their budget.

Nationally, adults aged 65+ have an average annual income of \$41,000, and they spend nearly \$5,200—or more than 12%—on food. Their friends just 10 years younger have a greater income (averaging \$63,000 annually), and they spend less (10.6%) on groceries.

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina, in partnership with the National Council on Aging (NCOA), has joined a nationwide effort to support these older adults by helping them access the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that only 2 out of every 5 seniors who are eligible for SNAP are enrolled in the program. This means that millions of low-income elders are missing out on this vital program, which provides an average monthly benefit of \$113 to help participants buy healthy food. This benefit could put adequate nutrition within reach for many seniors who are struggling to make ends meet.

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is one of more than 30 community organizations around the country that is stepping up its efforts to assist seniors in applying for SNAP. The organizations will use NCOA's free online BenefitsCheckUp<sup>®</sup> tool ([www.BenefitsCheckUp.org](http://www.BenefitsCheckUp.org)) to screen older adults with limited income for SNAP eligibility. In 2014, the initiative helped more than 30,000 seniors apply for SNAP through local partners and assisted more than 300,000 access the SNAP application online.

“We’re excited to be part of this proven effort that has the potential to help tens of thousands of low-income older adults improve their health and financial security,” said Brad Blackwell, Food & Nutrition Services Program Supervisor for the Food Bank. “The Food Bank of Central &

Eastern North Carolina has a strong history of helping seniors in need. We're confident that increasing SNAP enrollment with BenefitsCheckUp<sup>®</sup> and other proven outreach methods will have a profound effect on lives of seniors in the Food Bank's 34-county service area."

To find out more about SNAP eligibility, contact the Food Bank at 1-800-358-8189.

For more information on NCOA's senior hunger initiative, visit <http://www.ncoa.org/SeniorHunger>.

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### **About the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina**

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is a nonprofit organization that has provided food for people at risk of hunger in 34 counties in central and eastern North Carolina for more than 30 years. The Food Bank serves a network of more than 800 partner agencies such as soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, and programs for children and adults through distribution centers in Durham, Greenville, New Bern, Raleigh, the Sandhills (Southern Pines), and Wilmington. In fiscal year 2013-2014, the Food Bank distributed more than 53 million pounds of food and non-food essentials through these agencies. Sadly, hunger remains a serious problem in central and eastern North Carolina. In these counties, more than 651,000 people struggle to access nutritious and adequate amounts of food necessary for an active and healthy life. [www.foodbankcenc.org](http://www.foodbankcenc.org).

### **About NCOA**

The National Council on Aging (NCOA) is a respected national leader and trusted partner to help people aged 60+ meet the challenges of aging. Our mission is to improve the lives of millions of older adults, especially those who are struggling. Through innovative community programs and services, online help, and advocacy, NCOA is partnering with nonprofit organizations, government, and business to improve the health and economic security of 10 million older adults by 2020. Learn more at [ncoa.org](http://ncoa.org) and @NCOAging.