



**Give 3SquaresVT**  
**A BOOST!**



**Testimony provided to the  
Senate Committee on Health & Welfare  
regarding S.215  
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**3SquaresVT could be serving many more Vermonters, and S.215 will make a difference, through prioritizing some of our most vulnerable neighbors and community members.**

# Vermont can opt into and customize the SNAP Restaurant Meals Program (RMP)



**RMP is specifically for people who are:**

- **over 60, or**
- **unhoused, or**
- **have disabilities**

**The State has wide latitude to design restaurant participation criteria**

## The RMP could serve low-income Vermonters with many different needs

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- People without food storage or a place to cook
- People who have the hardest time shopping for food or preparing meals
- People experiencing social isolation
- People looking to participate in their community through sharing a meal

## The RMP could serve many low-income Vermonters with a new and valuable service through 3SquaresVT



- **Over 13,000** people in Vermont have incomes below 185% FPL and are between 60-65, and are eligible for RMP, but not for EBT cash.
- **Over 42,000** people in Vermont have incomes below 185% FPL and have a disability.
- **3,300 people** in Vermont are estimated to be experiencing homelessness.
- By opting into the federal Restaurant Meals Program, the State can help its community partners to ensure that the most vulnerable people know that they can access ready-made or hot meals with their EBT cards.

Data from the 2022 American Communities Survey (U.S. Census), 5 year average; and 2023 HUD findings



## Many kinds of VT restaurants could participate in RMP



- Local diners and cafes
- Food trucks
- Deli Counters
- Chains like Subway or Panera

**The state has wide latitude to design restaurant participation criteria.**

## Restaurants will need support to participate in a Vermont RMP

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- S.215 would create and fund a Restaurant Meals Program Navigator position in AHS to support restaurants through the USDA application Process.
- **Must be included in FY 2025 budget** so that this program can get up and running

## S.215 would create a Transition Plan to a higher minimum 3SquaresVT benefit for everyone who qualifies



Vermont can choose to supplement 3SquaresVT to increase the minimum benefit for all households, so that everyone who is eligible would have a meaningful basic benefit.

- By supplementing with State funding, we can ensure that all households have a minimum benefit around \$100/month to purchase the food they need.

Currently, over 5,000 people enrolled in 3SquaresVT receive less than \$100 per month in benefits; over 2,000 people receive the \$23 federal minimum benefit for 1 and 2 person households. About 1,500 people receive a \$0 benefit.





## S.215 directs DCF to create a plan to use state funding to increase the 3SquaresVT minimum benefit for all household sizes

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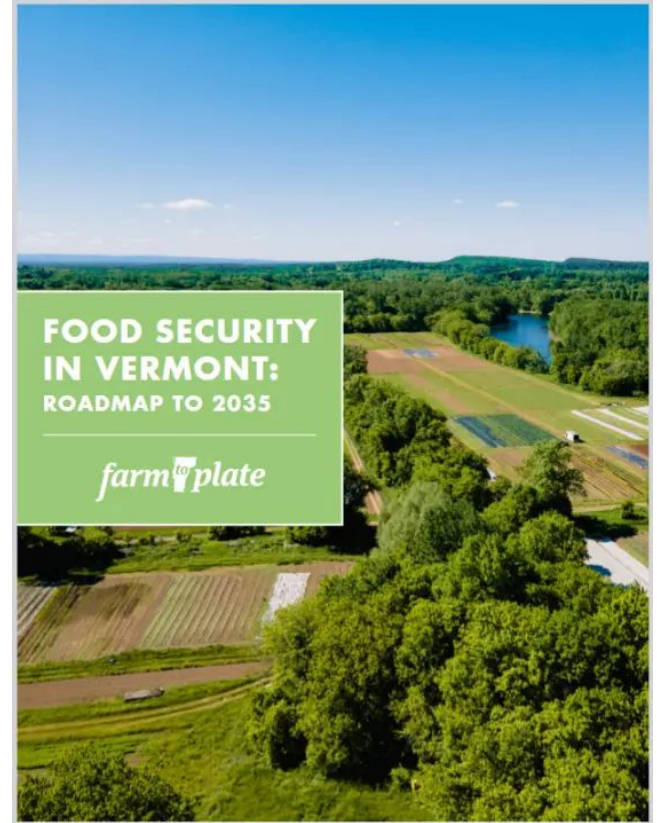


This transition plan is important because then the legislature will be able to make policy choices that will keep us on the road to food security.

The transition plan is intended to give you the information you need to make policy choices that can make a real, every day difference for our most vulnerable neighbors and community members.

Together we can work to ensure that hidden hunger does not exist in Vermont because everyone has the food they need.

**S.215 is so exciting because it would both take immediate steps to help some of the most people enrolled in 3SquaresVT access prepared and hot meals in their community, and it would create a smart plan to increase the lowest benefit amounts for thousands more.**



**S.215 supports the VT Food Security Roadmap strategies G1.1 and G5.1**