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# Breaking Down Barriers

How to address stigma & bust negative myths  
about 3SquaresVT



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# Workshop Outline

- What have you heard about “Food Stamps”?
- What have you wanted to know about 3SquaresVT but been afraid to ask?
- 3SquaresVT: the “real deal”
- Creating positive messages about 3SquaresVT that fit you and your community
- Sharing your positive messages with people in your community
- Common things we hear - how would you respond?
- The current context: now more than ever

# This is a Safe Space!



- We are all bombarded with negative messages about 3SquaresVT and all of the safety net programs everyday, and we can't help but be affected by that.



# What have you heard about “Food Stamps”?

(we want the good, the bad, and the ugly!)



# Negative Myths About SNAP (3SquaresVT)

- There is a lot of fraud and abuse within the 3SquaresVT program
- 3SquaresVT/SNAP is for people who don't want to work
- 3SquaresVT is used for junk, processed foods, convenience food, and soda



<https://youtu.be/RE36wOpV9IM>

# What Can We Do?

- Be armed with accurate information
- Reach people where they are & provide the encouragement they may need
- Provide the one next step for them to take
- Share positive messages
- Spread public awareness

The  
message  
really  
matters!

How can we  
explain the ways  
3SquaresVT helps  
our whole  
community?



# What have you always wanted to know

(but been afraid to ask?)





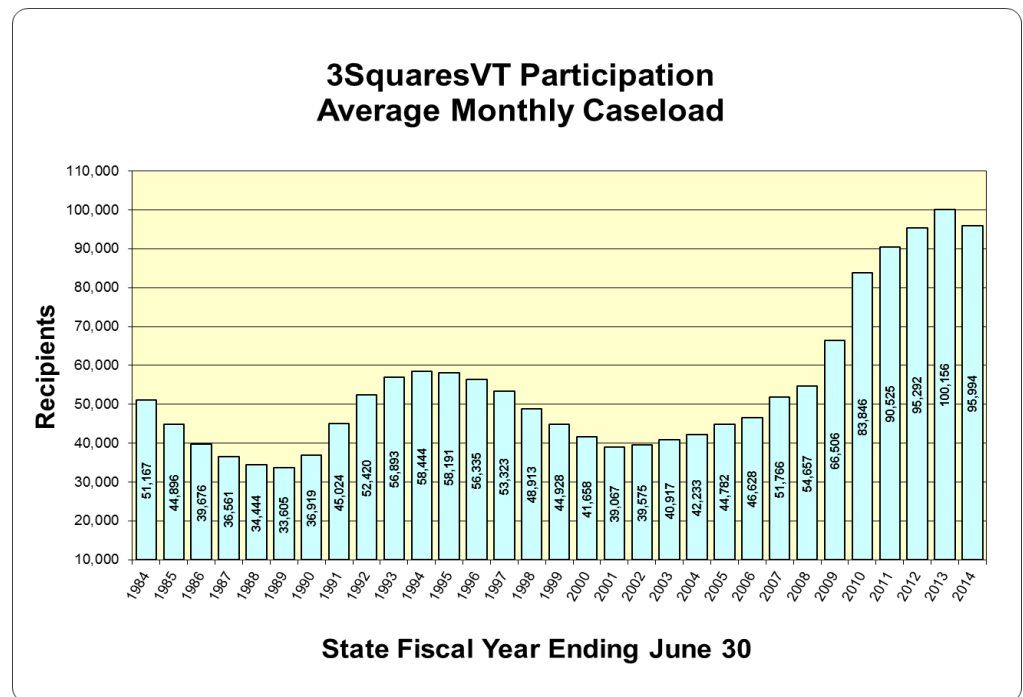


# The “Real Deal” About 3SquaresVT



# Many of Us Will Need 3SquaresVT at Some Point in Our Lives

- One in five children will rely on SNAP at some point in their lives (and one in every two will rely on some form of federal nutrition assistance)
- SNAP is there during economic downturns & disasters

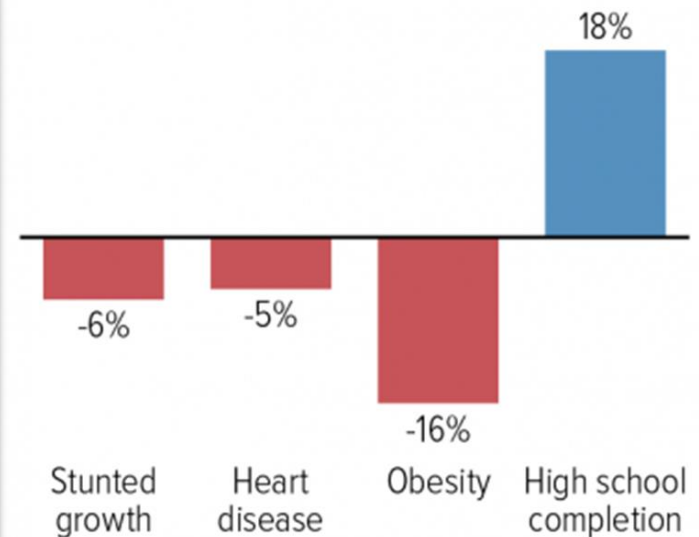


# 3SquaresVT Helps Communities

- Improved health outcomes leads to decreased healthcare costs.
- Children perform better in school and become more productive adults, leading to increased social and economic stability.

## Children With Access to SNAP Fare Better Years Later

Percentage-point change in outcomes for adults who received SNAP as children, compared to adults who did not receive SNAP as children



Source: Hoynes, Schanzenbach, and Almond, "Long Run Impacts of Childhood Access to the Safety Net," National Bureau of Economic Research, November 2012.

# 3SquaresVT Helps the Local Economy



- Every \$1 in 3SquaresVT benefits generates about \$1.70 in economic activity.
- Being able to double your money at farmers markets means that our local farmers benefit too!

# The Benefit is More Than You May Think

- Average monthly benefit is about \$230 per household in VT; trend is more for families, less for individuals
- 9 out of 10 households receive \$50 or more in average monthly benefits
- Consider what this additional monthly food income could mean for someone you know!



# You Can Choose What You Eat

- Fruits & Vegetables
- Breads and Cereals
- Dairy Products
- Meats and Seafood
- Snacks, Candy, Ice
- Non-alcoholic Beverages
- Cold Prepared Foods
- Fruit and Vegetable Seeds and Plants



**Key tenets of the program are hunger alleviation and food choice.**

# 3SquaresVT Connections

## **3SVT Families with Children:**

- 98% of 3SVT households eligible for Medicaid
- 100% of kids eligible for free school meals
- 100% of age appropriate group eligible for WIC



3SquaresVT households are automatically eligible for phone assistance. They may also qualify for fuel assistance. Seniors may be eligible for CSFP.



<https://youtu.be/7gPyHzm31sk>





<https://youtu.be/PsHaEeKm8gl>



# Creating Positive Messages About 3SquaresVT

that fit you and your community





# Tell a Story

Stories of real people are very powerful - and we all know someone we care about or respect who needs the safety net...

- Could be about yourself, or about someone you know
- Can be anonymous (“a friend of mine” or “one of the moms at my school” or “one of my neighbors”, etc.)



# Sharing Positive Messages About 3SquaresVT

with people in your community





## How Could You Respond?

- “I don’t want to take help from the government.”
- “So-and-so only gets \$16 a month. It isn’t worth it.”
- “I can make ends meet. I don’t really need it even if I’m eligible.”
- “I’ve never been on assistance before. I don’t know where to start.”
- “My kids get school meals, so we’re ok.”
- “I don’t want to take money away from people who really need it.”

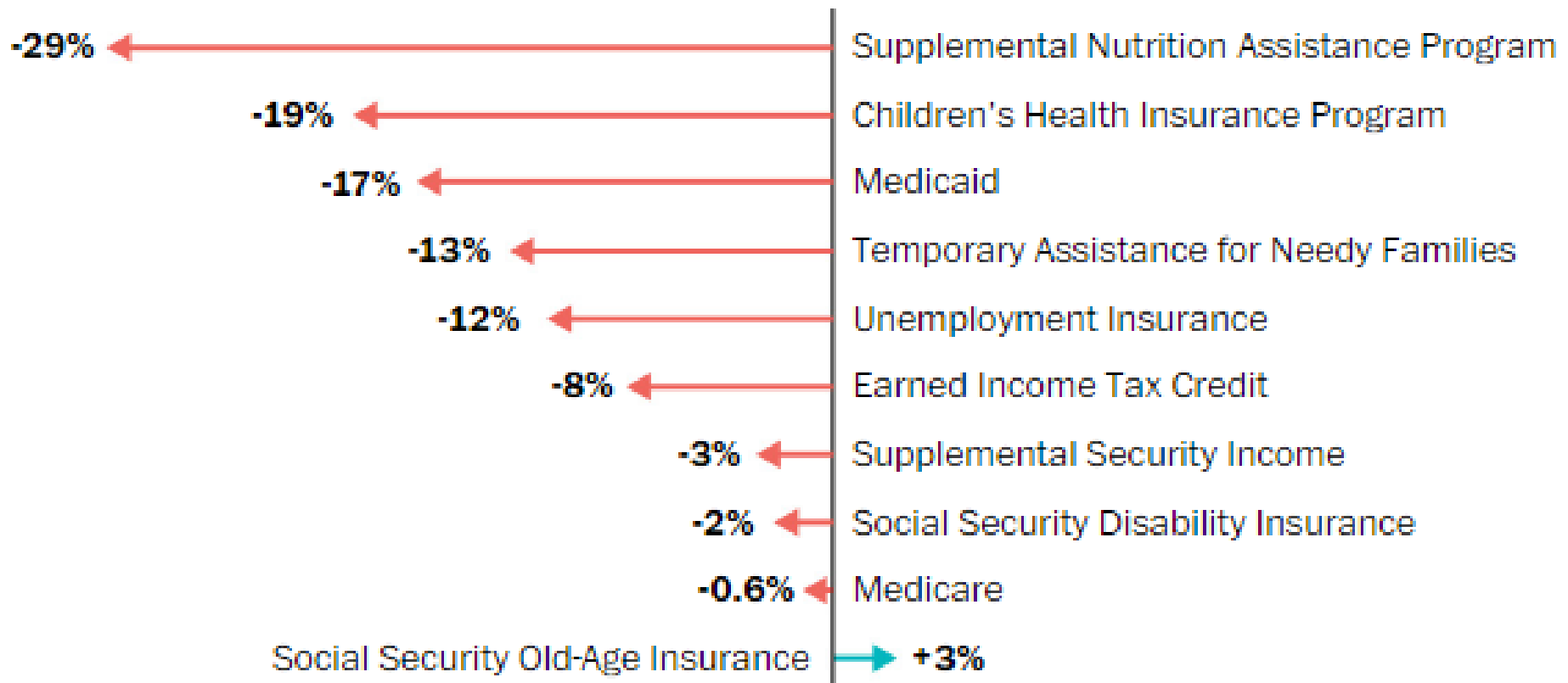
Pick a couple, then pair up and practice! We’ll come back together and you can share your best ideas!



# The Current Context



# Trump Administration Proposed Budget Targets The Most Vulnerable



# The Impact on Vermont

*Under the Trump administration's proposed budget, it would cost Vermont \$29 million per year to make up for SNAP cuts alone.*

*(\$29 million would pay for every school-age child in Vermont to get free breakfast and lunch at school every day)*



# The Need for 3SquaresVT is a Symptom, Not a Cause

- Wages don't match the cost of living
- Not enough good paying, full-time jobs
- Taxes fall most heavily on those in the middle
- Health care costs keep rising, and coverage keeps declining

# Who Is Food Insecure in Vermont?

1  
in  
7

Children

Vermonters

1  
in  
9

Senior Hunger

↑ 86%

# 3SquaresVT



Thank you  
for being a  
champion of  
the safety  
net for  
everyone in  
your  
community!

## HOW CAN WE HELP?



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