

PROTECTING SNAP:

A Federal Lifeline for America's Health, Economy, and Stability

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** is a federal commitment to prevent hunger among Americans with low incomes, and in doing so, safeguards the nation's health and strengthens its agricultural economy. By boosting food-purchasing power through normal channels of commerce, SNAP reduces hunger, improves health (from birth outcomes to chronic disease management), lowers health care costs, and stabilizes Americans facing trade-offs with rent, medicine, and utilities. It is especially vital for older adults, people with disabilities, veterans, and families with children — and it drives local economic activity for farmers and retailers.

IN SHORT, SNAP IS AMERICA'S FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST HUNGER AND A PROVEN PUBLIC HEALTH AND ECONOMIC STABILIZER.



USDA MUST ACT NOW TO PREVENT HUNGER DURING THE SHUTDOWN

Allowing hunger to deepen during a government shutdown is a policy choice:

42 million Americans must not go hungry.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has both the authority and the precedent to use contingency and carryover funds to keep SNAP operating. It must act now to ensure November benefits and beyond are issued on time and families do not experience disruptions.

KEY ACTIONS



1. DEPLOY CONTINGENCY FUNDS

IMMEDIATELY to prevent any interruption in SNAP benefits. If those funds are insufficient, USDA should use its discretion to transfer additional resources — using the same mechanism applied to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) or any other lawful means — to fully fund November benefits.



2. QUICKLY COMMUNICATE clearly with states and recipients that October benefits are secure and November benefits will be protected.



3. AFFIRM THAT FUNDING PROGRAMS THAT FEED FAMILIES IS A FEDERAL RESPONSIBILITY, not optional spending.

USDA must act swiftly and transparently to prevent hunger, stabilize families, and uphold its obligation to the American people.

PROTECTING SNAP IS PROTECTING AMERICA'S HEALTH, ECONOMY, AND FUTURE.

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RESTORE SNAP: REVERSE THE DEEPEST CUTS IN PROGRAM HISTORY

The budget reconciliation law (H.R. 1) cuts \$187 billion from SNAP, the largest reduction ever enacted. These cuts shift unprecedented costs to states, expand punitive eligibility time limits, and eliminate protections for veterans, older adults, families with low incomes, and humanitarian-based noncitizens.

The Restoring Food Security for American Families and Farmers Act of 2025 would repeal these provisions and reestablish SNAP as a fully federally funded, countercyclical support that protects families during economic downturns. Congress should act swiftly to pass this legislation and prevent further harm to state budgets, local economies, and millions of households.

PROTECT SNAP CHOICE AND STRENGTHEN ACCESS

Efforts to restrict what foods SNAP participants can buy are costly, ineffective, and harmful. SNAP recipients' diets mirror those of other low-income households; restrictions ignore structural drivers of poor nutrition — insufficient income, affordability, and limited retail access. States should be allowed to focus on running the program effectively under the new burdensome mandates of H.R. 1, including lowering error rates, versus spending administrative funds and staff time on what does not work.

A 2025 industry study found that proposed food restrictions would impose \$1.6 billion in up-front compliance costs and \$759 million in annual costs, disproportionately burdening small and rural grocers — many of which may drop out of the program entirely, which would worsen food deserts.

Rather than restricting choice, policymakers should invest in solutions that work: strengthening benefit adequacy, expanding incentives for fruits and vegetables and improving access to affordable, healthy food, and supporting rural retailers.

PRESERVE THE USDA FOOD SECURITY REPORT

USDA's plan to discontinue its *Household Food Security Report* after October 2025 would erase the nation's most important measure of hunger. Since 1997, this report has provided the benchmark for accountability and policy evaluation, showing how many families struggle to put food on the table. The data is essential to ensuring that SNAP and other federal nutrition programs can effectively respond to the need.

The 2023 data revealed 47.4 million people — including 13.8 million children — faced food insecurity, or one in seven U.S. households. Ending this report would hide the effects of policy decisions like H.R. 1 and make hunger invisible. Reliable and accurate data published annually gives lawmakers the transparency essential for effective policymaking and for protecting the millions who rely on federal nutrition programs.

PROTECT USDA'S CAPACITY AND SERVICE DELIVERY

USDA's proposed reorganization, developed without sufficient input, would severely disrupt the federal nutrition programs that tens of millions of Americans rely on. Relocating staff out of Washington, D.C., and consolidating and moving regional offices would erode institutional knowledge, slow technical guidance to states, and repeat the costly disruptions seen in past relocations. Programs such as SNAP, WIC, school meals, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) depend on USDA's regional capacity for oversight and timely approvals. Closing offices would remove critical expertise and delay essential waivers, payments, and program updates. Additionally, cuts to USDA Rural Development staffing would further weaken food system investments, infrastructure projects, and local economic resilience across rural America.

Congress and USDA must pause the reorganization, engage stakeholders transparently, and maintain strong regional capacity and institutional expertise to ensure USDA remains fully equipped to administer the programs that feed, serve, and stabilize the nation.

OPPOSE UNLAWFUL DATA COLLECTION AND DEFEND SNAP'S INTEGRITY

USDA has ordered states to turn over personal and sensitive data on SNAP participants and applicants or otherwise face potential noncompliance penalties, including suspension or loss of SNAP administrative funding. In over 60 years of federal-state partnership, USDA has never required such a sweeping disclosure of personally identifying information (PII). Federal law restricts USDA's access to PII, and for decades, the agency has relied on anonymized data or small samples to perform oversight. Threats to privacy undermine confidence in SNAP, discouraging eligible households from applying.

SNAP matters. It feeds families, improves health, strengthens local economies, and upholds America's promise that no one should go hungry.



USDA AND CONGRESS MUST:

1. Release SNAP contingency funds and transfer additional funds to prevent interruptions in November SNAP benefits now.
2. Repeal the SNAP cuts in H.R. 1.
3. Preserve the national food security data system.
4. Stop USDA's proposed reorganization.
5. Reject costly restrictions that threaten SNAP access and choice.
6. Oppose unlawful data collection and defend SNAP's integrity.