

Congress Must Protect and Strengthen the Federal Food and Nutrition Programs in the End of the Year Spending Package

SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the cornerstone of the nation's nutrition and food security safety net, helping to put food on the table for over 41 million people each month. While government investments increased food security from 2019 to 2021, food security levels decreased once these temporary benefits ended and are now lower than pre-pandemic levels.

SNAP Action Needed

Congress must:

- Protect the Thrifty Food Plan benefit adjustments;
- Permanently extend replacement benefits and fully replace stolen benefits to SNAP participants (H.R. 6005/S. 3089); and
- Improve EBT security by providing resources for the transition to chip cards (H.R. 7585/S. 3893).

Thrifty Food Plan

The Thrifty Food Plan (TFP), created in 1975, is the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s lowest-cost model to maintain a healthy diet. This plan determines the maximum SNAP benefit based on current dietary guidelines, food consumption data, and cost of food items at retailers.

Thrifty Food Plan evaluations must adjust the SNAP benefit to reflect the reality of market rates and evolving dietary guidelines.

The bipartisan 2018 Farm Bill directed USDA to update the TFP. The resulting 2021 update was the first in 49 years to include an increase in SNAP benefits. This increase averages out to a modest \$1.19 per person per day. This is different from the annual cost of living adjustment which only considers inflation based on the consumer price index, not changes to nutrition science or consumer behavior.

Protect the Thrifty Food Plan from cuts.

The last Farm Bill created a pathway to update the TFP every five years. This will align current dietary guidelines

with the SNAP benefit amount. Regular adjustments protect SNAP recipients' purchasing power while controlling fiscal impact over time.

SNAP Replacement Benefits for Victims of Skimming

Since 2022, criminals have stolen SNAP benefits from individuals and families through "skimming" crimes. Federal policy provides replacement benefits to victims—but only through December 20, 2024. Given criminals' evolving tactics, replacement benefits should be made permanent in the Farm Bill to protect individuals and families long-term.

Disaster and Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations Priorities

Congress also must use the end-of-the-year spending package to protect and strengthen benefits and access to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and the commodity assistance programs - The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

Finish Fiscal Year 2025 Appropriations Without Harmful Policy Riders

We urge Members of Congress and Senators to fully fund the anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs and to reject efforts to add any new provisions or policy riders that would weaken the effectiveness, operation, reach, and eligibility of essential government programs.