


SNAP Emergency Allotments:

VIRGIN ISLANDS

As of March 1, 2023, all Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants will suffer cuts to their SNAP benefits each month. This will affect **more than 11,083 households in the Virgin Islands**.

When this “hunger cliff” hits, on average, each SNAP participant will lose **\$82 a month**. As a result, average SNAP benefits will fall to a meager **\$6 a person a day**.

 **OVER 11,083**
households will be affected
by SNAP cuts.

 **\$6** The new average
SNAP benefit will fall to
\$6 per person per day.



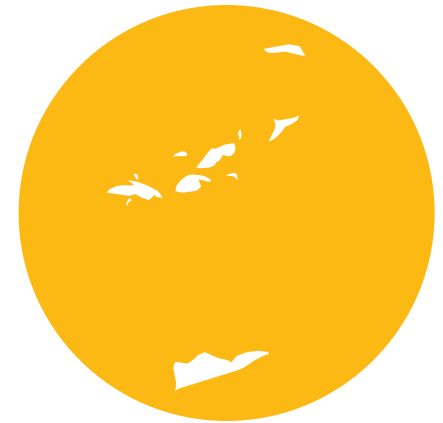
- ▶ The “hunger cliff” will hit all age groups and all parts of the Virgin Islands. The steepest cliff will be for many **older adults** who only qualify for the minimum SNAP benefit — dropping from **\$281 a month to \$23**.

The SNAP cuts are due to congressional action in December 2022 to prematurely end SNAP Emergency Allotments (EAs), benefit boosts that had been aimed at mitigating food insecurity and stimulating the economy for the duration of the pandemic Public Health Emergency.

- ▶ The “hunger cliff” will exacerbate food insecurity and hardship in the Virgin Islands. **The territory will lose \$2 million of federal funds per month** once the EAs end. Emergency food providers can’t fill this gap. Even before the cuts, food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens have reported high demand for assistance. **SNAP provides nine times the number of meals the food bank network does**, according to estimates from Feeding America.
- ▶ It is important to get clear information about this change to all Virgin Islands SNAP households, including through mass media, hunger hotlines, and the SNAP Electronic Benefit Transfer call center. The communication

plan must take into account language access and cultural preferences.

- ▶ State governments can assist in mitigating the “hunger cliff” by supplementing federal SNAP benefit amounts. For example, New Jersey will be implementing legislation that sets a \$95 minimum for New Jersey SNAP households. Massachusetts is allocating \$130 million for three months of partial extra SNAP benefits after the federal extra SNAP pandemic benefits end.
- ▶ State and local governments can streamline the process for SNAP households to claim deductions for certain out-of-pocket expenses and connect households with additional resources.
- ▶ Mitigating the “hunger cliff” has important health and economic impacts. Research shows SNAP improves food security, health, and well-being. Moreover, **each \$1 in SNAP benefits during a downturn generates between \$1.50 and \$1.80 in economic activity**, benefiting all parts of the food chain — from farmers, ranchers, and food manufacturers, to truckers, retailers, and store employees.



THE VIRGIN ISLANDS WILL LOSE
\$2 million
of federal funds per month.