



Categorical Eligibility 101

Q: What is Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (“Cat El”)?

A: Cat El is the current federal policy that allows states to eliminate SNAP asset tests and serve more low-income households working their way up the economic ladder, but still struggling with high costs for other basics, such as shelter and child care. See USDA’s [resource](#) for details.

Q: What is SNAP?

A: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the first line of defense against hunger for low-income people, and therefore plays a critical role in addressing hunger and food insecurity in communities across the nation.

Q: Why is Cat El important?

A: Cat El can help food-insecure people receive much-needed nutrition by streamlining processes for participating in the federal nutrition programs.

Q: What is the status of Cat El?

A: On July 23, the Trump administration issued a **proposed rule that would eliminate SNAP food benefits for 3.1 million people**. Cat El policies have been in place for more than 20 years. Although Congress rejected efforts to gut Cat El as recently as the 2018 Farm Bill, the Trump administration is at it. Again. This USDA rulemaking is an attempt to side step Congress and is outside USDA’s authority.

Q: Who would be hurt most by this harmful, proposed rule?

A: The proposed rule would fuel rates of hunger, food insecurity, and poverty by taking food off the table for **3.1 million people** — including working individuals and families, children, seniors, and people with disabilities — by making them ineligible to participate in SNAP.

The proposed rule also would take away automatic free school meals from **500,000 children**, and punish people with even meager savings; SNAP benefits would be slashed by more than **\$10.5 billion** over the next five years; and SNAP administrative costs would soar by more than **\$2.3 billion**.

SNAP helps millions of Americans make ends meet. The Trump administration should be building on the successes of this proven program, not dismantling it. Weakening SNAP only weakens our country.

Q: What can you do?

A: [Submit a comment](#) today that opposes the proposal to amend the SNAP Cat El rule, and encourage everyone you know to do the same. The deadline for submitting a comment is September 23. Learn more at [FRAC.org/catelcomments](https://www.frac.org/catelcomments).