

## FOOD RESEARCH & ACTION CENTER'S REVIEW OF PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED FY 2019 BUDGET

**WASHINGTON, February 15, 2018** — On Monday, February 12, President Trump released his fiscal year (FY) 2019 budget proposal. One key component: devastating proposed cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that reflect a total disregard of the critical role SNAP plays as a first line of defense against hunger and poverty for tens of millions of Americans. See a [statement by FRAC's president on the cuts](#).

Below is a summary of the proposed reductions to SNAP and an overview of how other critical nutrition and social safety net programs fare in the president's budget.

### **Proposed Cuts to SNAP amount to \$213 billion over 10 years**

- **\$129.2 billion** would come from shifting a portion of SNAP recipients' benefits to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodity foods — dubbed “America's Harvest Box” — affecting households receiving more than \$90 per month in benefits (81 percent of SNAP households). The commodity box would be made up of government-purchased, non-perishable (shelf stable) food items. This would undercut one central SNAP strength: its ability to connect clients to the regular channels of commerce — via food retail outlets, farmers' markets, and electronic benefit transfer (EBT) delivery systems. Shifting to the food box would result in a highly inefficient method of food delivery and would be detrimental to both SNAP recipients and local economies. (Note: this figure for the size of the cut assumes \$2.5 billion in new administrative funding for states for this program.)
- **\$57.5 billion** would come from eliminating SNAP eligibility for many working families with children and jobless adults who are willing to work, but are unable to find sufficient hours. Regarding working families with children, the budget proposes a \$30.6 billion cut to greatly restrict the state option to apply Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) asset rules and higher gross income levels to households under the “categorical eligibility” option. The latter change also will put at risk the connection to free school meals for the children in those households. Regarding the jobless, the budget proposes three harmful changes:
  1. Restrict the current waivers of the time-limit rule restricting benefits to three months out of 36 months for certain adults who lack sufficient hours of work. Waivers would be limited to geographic areas of 10 percent or higher unemployment rates, not areas that have other indices demonstrating economic weakness. (\$17.8 billion cut);
  2. Eliminate the 15 percent exemptions available to states to protect SNAP benefits for struggling adults subject to the time limit.(\$3.2 billion cut); and
  3. Increase from 60 to 62 the threshold age to be considered “elderly” for SNAP eligibility and benefit-computation purposes and extend the three-month time limits from those aged 18 to 49 to those aged 18 to 62. (\$5.9 billion cut).
- **\$23.3 billion** in SNAP cuts would make it harder for people struggling to afford to “heat and eat,” by eliminating the state option of connecting the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the SNAP Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) in computing SNAP benefits, and by standardizing the SUA methodology.

- **\$9.8 billion** would come from capping the federal match of state SNAP administrative costs.
- **\$4.7 billion** would come from eliminating SNAP Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed), which is a nutrition education and obesity prevention program for low-income Americans.
- **\$2.7 billion** would come from eliminating the minimum monthly SNAP benefit (currently \$15), which would particularly exacerbate hunger among seniors.
- **\$1.7 billion** would come from benefits for larger households, typically those with children, by capping the SNAP benefit at the maximum allotment for a six-person household.
- **\$1.1 billion** would come from mandating the use of the National Accuracy Clearinghouse, which would expand a pilot to check for duplicate SNAP participation across states.
- **\$480 million** would come from eliminating SNAP performance bonuses for states.

### **Child Nutrition Programs (over one year)**

The president's budget does not propose to cut the core child nutrition entitlement programs. It assumes almost 5.25 billion lunches and snacks (FY 2019) through the National School Lunch Program; almost 2.61 billion breakfasts through the School Breakfast Program; and over 2.21 billion meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program served in childcare centers, family day care homes, and adult care centers. The budget proposes funding that recognizes how participation and costs may grow:

- \$11.7 billion for the National School Lunch Program (a decrease of \$1.4 billion from FY 2018, due to the use of carryover funding from FY 2017.);
- \$5.1 billion for the School Breakfast Program (an increase of \$274 million from FY 2018); and
- \$3.9 billion for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (an increase of \$100.6 million from FY 2018).

For other child nutrition programs, the budget proposes the following:

- **\$519.5 million** for the Summer Food Service Program (a decrease of \$44 million from FY 2018, due to the use of carryover funding from FY 2017);
- **\$22.8 million** to continue the Summer EBT Demonstration Projects (an increase of \$113,000 from FY 2018);
- **\$297 million** for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (proposes delaying \$125 million of the July 1, 2019, transfer until October 1, 2019);
- **\$8.5 million** for Farm to School, with \$5 million for grants (mandatory funding) and \$3.5 million for USDA's Farm to School Team (a decrease of \$2.5 million from FY 2018 for USDA's Farm to School Team);
- **\$15.4 million** for Team Nutrition, which is essentially unchanged;
- **Elimination of funding** for the Healthier USDA School Challenge (a decrease of \$1.5 million from FY 2018);
- **Elimination of funding** for school meal equipment grants, which were funded at \$24.8 million in FY 2018; and
- **\$5.8 billion** for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), to support the administration's projection of a smaller caseload of 6.9 million women, infants, and children; **\$60 million** for WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling; **\$5 million\*** for WIC program initiatives and evaluation (a decrease of \$10 million from FY 2018); and **\$14 million** for WIC infrastructure and technical assistance. As in the president's FY 2018 budget, funding for the WIC Farmers Market

Nutrition Program is eliminated (Congress provided \$18.5 million in FY 2018). (\*Note: within the budget documents released, there is a discrepancy in the funding level reported for this program.)

*In other programs:*

**Senior Hunger (over one year)**

- **\$21 million** for the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (same as FY 2018).
- **\$838 million** for Nutrition Services under the Administration for Community Living (ACL), \$6 million above the anticipated funding for FY 2018. ACL's nutrition programs provide healthy meals and other related services to approximately 2.4 million older adults every year.

**Commodity Programs (over one year)**

- **Elimination** of the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which was funded at \$238 million in FY 2018. This will harm hundreds of thousands of low-income older adults.
- **\$294 million** for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) commodities (an increase of \$4.5 million from FY 2018); and \$54 million for TEFAP Storage and Transportation Grants (a \$5 million decrease from FY 2018).

**USDA Economic Research Services (ERS) (over one year)**

- **\$45 million** for ERS funding, which is a cut of \$32 million (\$77 million was provided in FY 2018).

As in last year's budget, the president's FY 2019 budget eliminates funding for the **Congressional Hunger Center (CHC)** fellowship program. The CHC fellowship program has historically been funded at \$2 million.

Outside of the domestic nutrition programs, the president's budget eliminates funding for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. The program provides U.S. agricultural commodities and associated technical and financial assistance to carry out preschool and school nutrition programs in developing countries. The Food for Peace program (P.L.480) was also eliminated. The president's FY 2018 budget also eliminated these programs.

The president's budget also includes brutal cuts in other elements of the nation's safety net — cuts that would put the food security, economic security, health, learning, and productivity of low-income people in peril:

- Hundreds of billions of dollars in cuts to **Medicaid** through eliminating the expansion of Medicaid and subsidies to low- and moderate-income households by repealing the **Affordable Care Act**, and replacing this funding with a block grant at less-than-needed levels. It would also include other harmful provisions, such as a per capita cap on Medicaid funding.
- \$21 billion in cuts over the next 10 years to **TANF** and its contingency funding.
- **Elimination of the Social Services Block Grant** (a \$1.7 billion cut), which provides funding to states for childcare, day programs for seniors and persons with disabilities, services for individuals experiencing homelessness, and other services.
- Cuts of billions of dollars from **low-income housing programs** through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

- **Elimination of funding** (a \$1.2 billion cut from FY 2018) for the 21st Century Community Learning Centers, which provides afterschool and summer learning programs to nearly 2 million students across the U.S. and are crucial access points to the Summer and Afterschool Nutrition programs.
- **Elimination of LIHEAP**, which provides heating and cooling assistance for low-income households.
- \$10 billion reduction to the **Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit** by requiring taxpayers, spouses, and all qualifying children have a Social Security Number that is valid for work in order to qualify for the tax credits.
- **Elimination of funding for the Legal Services Corporation** (funded at \$385 million in FY 2018, with an additional \$15 million to fund legal services for victims of natural disasters).

These proposed cuts to SNAP and other safety net programs are unacceptable. They will have a negative, domino effect on the health and well-being of low-income people in rural, suburban, and urban areas alike.

FRAC will be working with national, state, and local groups concerned about U.S. hunger and poverty to urge Congress to reject these proposed cuts. Congress must return to its historic bipartisan commitment to protect nutrition assistance programs and reject any budget proposal that abdicates the federal responsibility to combat hunger and deprives struggling and hungry Americans access to nutritious food.

Source for USDA nutrition programs - <https://www.obpa.usda.gov/32fns2019notes.pdf>