



Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services



Pennsylvania
Department of Agriculture

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 17, 2025

MEDIA CONTACT: Brandon Cwalina, ra-pwdhspressoffice@pa.gov

Shapiro Administration Highlights Vital Role SNAP Plays in Supporting Our Economy, Fighting Hunger as Congressional Republicans Propose Cuts to Food Assistance for 140,000 Pennsylvanians



Harrisburg, PA – Today, **Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Dr. Val Arkoosh** and **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding** joined leadership from Feeding Pennsylvania and the Central PA Food Bank to discuss the importance of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) amid federal proposals that would take food assistance away from at least 140,000 Pennsylvanians and significantly alter the program, costing the state over \$1 billion more annually and jeopardizing the program's sustainability. **Governor Josh Shapiro** has made clear that Pennsylvania cannot backfill these costs.

While SNAP helps nearly two million people in all communities of our Commonwealth purchase food for themselves and their families, SNAP participation rates are higher in rural areas than in urban or suburban areas. Children and older adults represent more than half of Pennsylvanians helped by the SNAP program, and the program also allows lower income, working families and people with disabilities to keep food on their tables.

"SNAP helps people meet one of our most essential needs – allowing them to participate fully in work and school and live healthier. Should these proposals to change SNAP become law, vulnerable children, people with disabilities, older Pennsylvanians, and many others would see their access to food at risk and will further destabilize our agricultural economy and workforce during a tumultuous time," said **Secretary Arkoosh**. "Congress' proposed changes would fundamentally destabilize this program that helps both our communities and our economy. These changes are not fiscally responsible – they will only disrupt our Commonwealth's economy, workforce, and charitable food network and cause thousands of Pennsylvanians to go hungry."

The USDA Economic Research Service found that every \$1 billion in federal SNAP benefits increases GDP by \$1.54 billion and specifically supports job creation and income for food retailers and farmers. Every month, SNAP brings more than \$365 million in cash benefits that can only be used on food – supporting local businesses, food producers, and Pennsylvania’s agricultural economy.

“Farmers receive nearly a quarter of every dollar Pennsylvania families spend on groceries, whether those dollars are from SNAP or any other source,” **Secretary Redding** said. “Most of Pennsylvania’s 48,800 farms are family-run. Losing SNAP dollars would hit Pennsylvania’s farm families as well as the families of the 12,000 people working in the grocery industry whose jobs are directly supported by monthly SNAP spending.”

“SNAP is an incredibly effective program. For every one meal the charitable food network provides, SNAP provides nine,” said **Shila Ulrich, Central Pennsylvania Food Bank president**. “We are in the midst of a hunger crisis and a major change to SNAP will only lead to higher rates of food insecurity. Our network will not be able to adequately serve Pennsylvanians experiencing hunger with a loss like this.”

“The proposed cuts to SNAP and Medicaid leave behind our Commonwealth’s most vulnerable including children, seniors, and veterans,” said **Julie Bancroft, Feeding PA CEO**. “If enacted, the changes will slash the availability of millions of meals for Pennsylvanians, forcing them to turn to a food bank network that is already under resourced.”

Feeding Pennsylvania is the state association of Pennsylvania’s nine Feeding America partner food banks. Collective efforts support member food banks in securing food and other resources to alleviate hunger and food insecurity in communities across Pennsylvania and provide a unified voice on the issues of anti-hunger policy. Feeding Pennsylvania member food banks serve over 1.5 million people annually by distributing more than 237 million pounds of food through a network of more than 2,700 agencies.

SNAP works with our charitable food network to offset demand on food pantries and local feeding programs to keep people healthy and able to care for themselves and their loved ones. SNAP provides nine times more meals than Pennsylvania food banks – any reduction to SNAP funding and benefits will shift demand to food banks that already experienced a \$13 million cut earlier this year.

Congressional Proposal

Congress is currently in the midst of a budget reconciliation process that is seeking to make major cuts to federal programs – primarily Medicaid and SNAP. Changes proposed to SNAP would fundamentally alter how this program has been structured for over 60 years and will threaten food assistance for nearly two million Pennsylvanians.

As it currently stands, at least 140,000 Pennsylvanians would lose access to food assistance due to stricter work reporting requirements. SNAP already has a work

requirement, and DHS works with employment and training programs across Pennsylvania to help SNAP participants get the skills and supports they need to achieve sustainable employment.

Since its inception, SNAP benefits have been 100 percent federally funded. But the current version of the bill would shift as much as 25 percent of benefits costs to states and add new administrative requirements to the program. These changes would put Pennsylvania on the hook for more than \$1 billion annually to maintain these life-sustaining benefits. Pennsylvania cannot backfill these costs.

These changes will impact economic activity for food retailers, producers, and farmers, affect our workforce, and increase demand on our charitable food network. SNAP generates nearly \$474 million in grocery wages and supports more than 12,000 grocery industry jobs in Pennsylvania. Spending from SNAP represents a crucial source of revenue in retail grocery stores, especially for smaller, locally owned businesses and grocers who serve lower income communities and represent the majority of SNAP authorized retailers.

Food Assistance

As of today, the bill still needs to pass the U.S. Senate and be signed into law, so there are currently **no changes to SNAP**. DHS encourages Pennsylvanians who need food assistance to apply for SNAP and other programs at any time at www.dhs.pa.gov/COMPASS.

On-site County Assistance Office (CAO) services are also available if recipients cannot access online services or need assistance that cannot be accessed through the COMPASS website, the myCOMPASS PA mobile app, or by calling the Customer Service Centers at 1-877-395-8930 or 215-560-7226 for people in Philadelphia.

SNAP benefits are issued onto EBT cards monthly. For immediate food needs, Pennsylvanians can call 211 or visit www.pa211.org to connect with various local food resources and can also visit www.feedingpa.org to find local food banks and other food assistance programs. Individuals in need can also visit pa-navigate.org/ for help finding food and other resources and assistance.

###