



GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

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With Federal SNAP Benefits Halted, Governor Shapiro Steps In to Support Pennsylvanians on SNAP and Strengthen Pennsylvania's Charitable Food Network, Mobilizing Over \$7 Million in State and Private Funds for Food Banks

As the Trump Administration withholds November SNAP payments during the federal government shutdown for nearly two million Pennsylvanians, Governor Shapiro is mobilizing state resources and private sector support to protect families, children, and seniors and maintain food security across the Commonwealth.

Governor Shapiro [signed](#) a declaration of disaster emergency and is making \$5 million in Commonwealth funding immediately available to Pennsylvania food banks – nearly \$300,000 is going to Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank.

Governor Shapiro is also leading a private sector donation campaign that has now secured over \$2 million in private donations for food banks through the new SNAP Emergency Relief Fund.



Pittston, PA – Today, Governor Josh Shapiro joined volunteers at the **Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank** in Luzerne County to pack groceries and provide an update on **state-led efforts** by his Administration to support Pennsylvania’s charitable food network and the nearly two million Pennsylvanians who rely on the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**.

Last week, Governor Shapiro [signed](#) a declaration of disaster emergency to quickly drive out **\$5 million in state funding** to [Feeding Pennsylvania](#) to distribute across its network of food banks, including \$288,992 to the Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank. The Governor has also led a private fundraising campaign — and today, he announced that a total of **\$2 million has been raised from private donors** through the new **SNAP Emergency Relief Fund**. The state funds will help offset the impact of the federal government’s failure to deliver SNAP benefits for November, while private contributions — from Pennsylvania leaders including Peggy Grove, Richard Green, Tom Hagen, Thomas Tull, Connie Williams, Mark Cuban, and David and Hallee Adelman — will further strengthen support for food banks across the Commonwealth.

“Nearly two million Pennsylvanians rely on SNAP every month — and they shouldn’t have to wonder where their next meal will come from because of dysfunction in Washington,” said **Governor Shapiro**. “There’s no substitute for the federal government’s decision not to release SNAP benefits, but my Administration is stepping up to use every tool we have — state resources, private sector support, and the compassion of our communities — to keep our food banks stocked and our families fed. The federal government has the money to keep people fed — they’re just refusing to use it. In Pennsylvania, I won’t let our families or food banks shoulder that burden alone.”

Last week, Governor Shapiro [joined](#) 24 other states and Washington, D.C. in suing the Trump Administration for unlawfully suspending SNAP payments and failing to use billions in Congressionally approved contingency funds available to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). On Friday, a federal judge ruled that the federal government must use billions in contingency funds to partially cover November SNAP benefits.

This week, the Trump Administration submitted a plan to the court committing to partial funding, but said it could take weeks or months to distribute. The federal government is also requiring states to use the most complex and labor-intensive process possible — a system overhaul that **Pennsylvania Department of Human Services Secretary Val Arkoosh** [warned would take at least 10,000 hours and delay benefits by several weeks](#). In a letter to the USDA on Tuesday, Secretary Arkoosh urged the Trump Administration to approve a simpler one-time payment approach to get food assistance out faster and avoid further hardship for families. The Shapiro Administration continues to call on USDA to expedite the process and release full benefits immediately.

Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank received **\$288,992.18** in funding from Feeding Pennsylvania to serve families in Lackawanna, Luzerne, Susquehanna, and Wyoming Counties — equivalent to roughly 404,000 pounds of food and 337,000 meals.

“The pressure on food banks is mounting, with increased need against a backdrop of dwindling supplies,” said **Jennifer Warabak, CEO, Weinberg NE Regional Food Bank**. “That’s why financial support, like the Commonwealth’s emergency funding, and community donations are absolutely vital right now. They help local food programs meet urgent needs while families wait for their benefits to be restored. Even if you are not personally experiencing these delays, the issue deserves both your attention and your compassion. Our community’s strength lies in our collective welfare.”

The \$5 million in state funding is flowing through Feeding Pennsylvania using the model of the **Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS)** — a **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture** initiative that connects food banks with Pennsylvania farmers to provide fresh, local food to families in need. Since 2015-16, PDA has distributed \$35.5 million through PASS to 13 food banks serving all 67 counties. Under the Shapiro Administration, \$11 million in PASS funding has been delivered in the past two years to strengthen the state’s charitable food network.

“It’s our honor to ensure food from Weinberg reaches the hands of our neighbors who need it most — many working multiple jobs yet still unable to make ends meet,” said **Crystal Kotlowski, COO, Volunteers of America of PA**. “We serve on the front lines and hear the pain people are living through every day. Without a strong SNAP safety net, it feels like a dam breaking. Volunteers of America doesn’t just hear about hunger in food bank lines — we see it in our shelters, in encampments, when transporting seniors, and at the tables of new mothers receiving support. People need food to live — and when incomes can’t keep up with the cost of living, they turn to us.”

Feeding Pennsylvania and Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank

Feeding Pennsylvania is the statewide association of nine Feeding America partner food banks, serving 1.5 million people annually through a network of more than 2,700 agencies in all 67 counties.

Weinberg Northeast Regional Food Bank, operated by the Commission on Economic Opportunity (CEO), serves Lackawanna, Luzerne, Susquehanna, and Wyoming Counties. In 2024, Weinberg provided 17.6 million pounds of food to 1.1 million people, equivalent to 14.6 million meals. The food bank serves 22,500 people weekly through more than 300 community partners and recently completed a 15,000-square-foot expansion with Commonwealth support through a \$1 million Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) grant. The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) also provided a \$500,000 COVID-19 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Pandemic Response grant to Weinberg.

“Governor Shapiro made the right decision by providing \$5 million in state assistance to strengthen Pennsylvania’s food banks during this critical time,” said **Senator Marty Flynn**. “When federal support is withheld, it is important that we act swiftly to ensure families can continue putting food on the table. This emergency funding will help our charitable food network meet rising demand and keep communities across the Commonwealth fed. That is what responsible leadership looks like, stepping up to protect Pennsylvanians when they need it most.”

“We’re here today because we’re stepping up to protect families in need and ensure no one goes without food due to the Trump administration’s refusal to fund November SNAP benefits,” said **Representative Eddie Day Pashinski, Chair of the House Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee**. Thanks to Governor Shapiro’s leadership, his emergency declaration brought in \$5 million to support the charitable Food Network Feeding Pennsylvania, which will distribute resources to 13 food banks, including Weinberg. This funding allows us to move resources faster and get food where it’s needed most, ensuring Pennsylvanians can make it through until the federal government acts.”

“We’re here today because the Governor understands that, beyond economic development, job creation, and grants, food insecurity is a real challenge in Pennsylvania,” said **Representative Jim Haddock**. With this emergency proclamation, he’s provided \$5 million to food banks like this — support that’s urgently needed. We

thank the Governor for his leadership in Luzerne County, which ranks fourth in the state for SNAP recipients, with 69,603 people relying on benefits. In Lackawanna County, 41,572 residents receive SNAP — that's over 111,000 friends, neighbors, and co-workers counting on this critical support.”

Federal Government Shutdown Threatens SNAP Benefits for Nearly Two Million Pennsylvanians

Since its creation in 1964, SNAP has been fully funded by the federal government, with benefits administered by the states. Each month, SNAP provides more than **\$366 million in benefits** to help **nearly two million Pennsylvanians** feed themselves and their families — including more than **713,000 children** and **697,000 older adults**. More than \$4.3 billion in SNAP benefits were issued over the course of state FY2024-25. In total, roughly **42 million people in the U.S. receive SNAP benefits** each month.

Beyond helping families put food on the table, the USDA estimates that **every \$1 billion in SNAP benefits generates \$1.54 billion in economic activity** through job retention and creation, income for farmers, and sales for food retailers.

Because Republicans in Washington — who control both chambers of Congress and the White House — have failed to pass a federal budget, the government has shut down, and the Trump Administration has stated it will not issue SNAP benefits for November. This marks the first time in history that the federal government has stopped SNAP payments.

Protecting Pennsylvania's Families, Farmers, and Food System

Governor Shapiro and his Administration continue to stand up for Pennsylvania's food security and agricultural economy:

- Earlier this year, the USDA abruptly canceled Pennsylvania's **Local Food Purchasing Assistance (LFPA) agreement, cutting \$13 million in federal funding** over three years for programs that provide fresh, locally grown food to food banks. The Governor [filed a lawsuit](#) over that decision, and that case is pending.
- The Governor has expanded access to school meals by securing **universal free breakfast for 1.7 million students** and free lunch for 22,000 eligible students. During the 2024–25 school year, Pennsylvania schools served nearly **93 million breakfasts**— a 13.8 percent increase over two years — including more than 70 million meals for students at risk of hunger or from low-income families.
- To increase access to fresh food in communities across the Commonwealth, the Governor relaunched the **Fresh Food Financing Initiative** with \$4 million from his first two budgets. In May 2025, \$3.4 million in grants were awarded to

businesses in 23 counties, connecting low-income communities with locally produced, healthy food.

- The **Shapiro Administration** also participated in the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer (Summer-EBT) program in 2024, providing \$120 per child to ensure access to nutritious meals during June through August. The program, which is federally funded, continued in Summer 2025.
- Additionally, the Governor increased funding for the **State Food Purchase Program (SFPP)** by \$2 million in FY2023–24 & FY2024-25, bringing total funding to \$26.6 million. These funds support emergency food assistance, connect surplus food through PASS to food banks and pantries statewide, and provide Senior Food Boxes with nutritious staples.

How Pennsylvanians Can Help or Get Help

Governor Shapiro encouraged Pennsylvanians to support their local food banks and pantries — by donating money, canned goods, or time to help feed neighbors in need this holiday season. Visit feedingpa.org to learn how to donate or volunteer.

For immediate needs during the shutdown, Pennsylvanians can use PA Navigate pa-navigate.org to help find resources. Local help is also available by calling 211 or visiting pa211.org.

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