

SUPPORTING FOOD ACCESS & NUTRITION IN THE 2023 FARM BILL

More than **40 million U.S. residents**, including **5.5 million children**, face food insecurity each day. Title IV of the Farm Bill houses nutrition programs that provide children and low-income people with access to nutritious food, job training, emergency food assistance (food banks), and healthy-living education. As Congress begins drafting and negotiating the 2023 Farm Bill, it is of the utmost importance that federal nutrition programs are protected, strengthened, and improved.



ISSUE



SOLUTION

SNAP EXPANSION AND PROTECTION

Goal: Increase the amount of people and households SNAP supports to improve national food security.

- Time limits on SNAP eligibility for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) harshly punish Americans who are willing to work but unable to find a job or do not have access to work or training programs. Time limits do not make an appreciable difference on the work status of SNAP recipients, most of whom already work.
- Time-restrictions on SNAP eligibility for immigrants contribute to the deficit in participation due to fear of deportation and the public charge rule.
- 91% of people re-entering society after incarceration experience food insecurity and many struggle to find employment. Social safety net benefits like SNAP reduce recidivism.

Congress should legislatively expand program eligibility by:

- Eliminating time limits for ABAWDs.
- Eliminating the five-year waiting period for most immigrants to become eligible for SNAP.
- Eliminating the federal ban on SNAP access for those with prior drug felony convictions.
- Exempting the Basic Allowance for Housing from income for the purpose of determining SNAP eligibility for military families.
- Eliminating the SNAP asset limit, which dissuades low-income households from accumulating savings and achieving economic mobility. Congress should also offer a standard deduction for medical expenses and expand the shelter expense deduction.
- Supporting self-governance and self-determination by allowing U.S. Tribes to govern their own SNAP administration and allow members access to SNAP and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations simultaneously.
- Expanding SNAP to U.S. territories.
- Increasing SNAP access to students by eliminating the SNAP work requirement for college students and by directing that guidance be issued on student eligibility and enrollment.
- Increasing SNAP benefits to adequate levels and base benefit amounts on the Moderate- or Low-Cost Food Plans, and expand benefits to purchase hot and prepared foods and to pay for delivery fees.

SNAP ADMINISTRATIVE CHALLENGES

Goal: Improve the overall SNAP ecosystem and program administration to increase access for both vendors and recipients.

- Only about 100 of the over 250,000 retailers who accept SNAP across the country currently participate in SNAP Online.
- SNAP administrative challenges frustrate eligible households from accessing or using their benefits.

Congress should:

- Add resources to improve SNAP Online purchasing and payment technologies and provide technical assistance, particularly for small and mid-size retailers.
- Direct USDA to further modernize EBT payment methods so that SNAP users have access to food and retail options comparable to non-SNAP consumers.
- Re-instate COVID-era relaxations of administrative application and recertification requirements.
- Fund and scale innovative programs to facilitate SNAP outreach and enrollment, such as through additional funding for Process and Technology Improvement Grants.



For full recommendations and supporting background information, please visit FarmBillLaw.org/2023FarmBill/ or [click here](#) for the full-length **Food Access & Nutrition** report.



ISSUE



SOLUTION

PROGRAMS TO INCREASE ACCESS TO NUTRITIOUS FOOD

Goal: Improve public health and increase financial accessibility to healthy foods to combat the epidemic of diet-related disease in the U.S., especially for marginalized populations.

- Nutrition incentives make additional dollars available to SNAP participants to purchase produce. Grant applicants must match federal dollars 1:1, disadvantaging organizations without connections or large donors.
- The Seniors Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) helps low-income seniors who are vulnerable to poor nutrition purchase fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Produce prescriptions support low-income individuals either suffering from or at risk for diet-related health conditions.
- Community-level approaches help increase the availability of healthy food options.

Congress should:

- Expand the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP) by reducing or eliminating the match requirement, increasing overall funding, and expanding the reach of nutrition incentive grants.
- Increase SFMNP funding to improve the nutritional status of more low-income seniors.
- Retain and expand the GusNIP Produce Prescription program by directing USDA to increase the grant award amount and eliminating the 10% cap on GusNIP funds that can go to Produce Prescription grants.
- Require the USDA to address retail environments to support access to healthy foods for SNAP recipients.
- Increase support to identify, research, and scale successful SNAP-Ed programs that take a population approach to health and food systems and employ culturally competent interventions.
- Provide mandatory funding for the Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI), which increases geographic access to healthy foods in underserved communities.

EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Goal: Strengthen federal disaster response related to food access and build on innovative pandemic relief programs

- Section 2302(a) of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provides a model for providing immediate relief upon a presidential declaration of a major disaster.

Congress should:

- Establish a permanent disaster response mechanism to provide immediate supplemental and replacement benefits to SNAP recipients in an emergency.
- Create permanent procedures for disaster allotments through stabilizers that automatically boost benefits in a crisis.
- Ensure there is remote access to SNAP in disasters.
- Institute a blanket hot food waiver during disasters.