



2018 Farm Bill Policy Recommendations

Make no changes to the current structure SNAP, including making no attempts to block grant, give states discretion over benefit levels, or altering eligibility

- The current program structure allows SNAP to expand and contract to respond to varying levels of poverty and unemployment. Block granting SNAP would lock in funding based on a certain year's expenditures and eliminate the basic protection against hunger that we value as a society. Block grants, or proposals to cost-share with states, would set SNAP up to fail, leaving it without enough money in times of greatest need (such as a major economic shock or natural disaster). These proposals also end the ability for interoperability of SNAP, which would have a serious impact on many participants across the country.

Increase the SNAP benefit amount by moving from the Thrifty Food Plan to the Low Cost Food Plan

- Third-party evaluations of temporary ARRA SNAP benefit increase and of pilot programs across the country show that increasing the value of the SNAP benefit reduces hunger and poverty among SNAP households. Households are forced to make difficult trade-offs between food, shelter, and health care. The use of the outdated Thrifty Food Plan presents unrealistic expectations of the cost of food and the amount of time SNAP households can spend preparing meals. Moving to the Low Cost Food Plan or other more generous food plan that accounts for the variations in food expenditures in different geographies would ensure benefit levels are more closely aligned with current day food costs and would ensure families have resources to purchase meals throughout the month – both addressing food insecurity and lowering spending on healthcare in the long term.

Ensure SNAP recipients have adequate and accessible job training and work support systems.

- The SNAP Employment and Training program should be more adequately funded to address caseload and need to ensure slots or programs are available to any SNAP recipient who requests one. ABWADs should be exempted from time limits and work requirements if no job or Employment and Training slot is available. This would ensure SNAP recipients who are currently unemployed have the tools and resources to find gainful employment.
- Maintaining the option for broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE) allows households to remain eligible for SNAP if their gross income exceeds 130 percent of poverty, and allows them to accrue modest savings that help lift them out of poverty. BBCE incentivizes SNAP participants to find and hold jobs without the fear that their benefits will steeply decline as a result, leaving them worse off than their current status in some cases.
- SNAP Employment and Training programs should be tailored to meet the needs of individuals and offer support to meet the wide range of skills of SNAP participants through more comprehensive case management and services. More should also be done to incentivize SNAP

employment and training programs to work with growth sectors in their states and regions so that the employment and skill needs of local companies, city governments, and private sector employers can be matched with training programs for SNAP recipients, thereby creating a successful employment pipeline.

Strengthen nutrition education by protecting SNAP-Ed funding

- Despite the evidence demonstrating the value of nutrition education, the funding available for SNAP-Ed is less than one half of one percent of the total SNAP budget, keeping the program from serving the vast majority of SNAP households. Nutrition education results in reducing obesity and improving the nutritional habits of low-income Americans, leading to reduced healthcare costs in the long term. The Farm Bill should protect all existing SNAP-Ed funding.

Streamline applications between SNAP and WIC for eligible individuals.

- SNAP and WIC are the two largest programs serving low-income pregnant women, infants, and children below age five. Despite being eligible for both programs, many of these individuals are enrolled in SNAP but not WIC. WIC serves a unique nutritional base, ensuring pregnant women and their young children have access to healthy foods, nutrition education, and other counseling services. Language should be included in the Farm Bill directing USDA to work with Governors and State Agencies to cross-enroll children participating in SNAP in WIC to ensure low-income young children have access to the nutrition they need to grow up healthy and to streamline application processes at the state level.