

SNAP: A Critical Food Assistance Program at Risk

Cuts to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), as proposed by the Republican Congress' [budget reconciliation](#) proposal, would exacerbate hunger and food insecurity among our nation's students, jeopardizing their physical, mental, and academic well-being.

For many school-age kids, SNAP is the difference between having a meal at home or relying solely on school lunch as their only source of nutrition. A hungry child cannot learn, and no child in America should have to sit in a classroom distracted by an empty stomach.

Cutting SNAP isn't about efficiency. SNAP is already one of the most effective federal programs, reaching 42 million Americans each month and providing a significant return on investment. Every [\\$1.00 in SNAP benefits generates \\$1.54 in economic activity](#) — for children, the impact is even higher. Due to the importance of adequate nutrition for children's health and development, [every \\$1 invested in SNAP for children returns \\$62 in value](#).

The United States already has a child poverty rate [higher than most other wealthy countries](#), yet instead of expanding access to food, lawmakers are erecting more barriers, putting [15 million](#) children who rely on SNAP benefits at risk of going hungry. At a time when the cost of living is soaring, food prices remain high, and housing insecurity is mounting; food assistance isn't a luxury — it's a necessity.

Food insecurity is a policy choice. We must demand better. Instead of slashing vital programs, Congress must act to expand access to SNAP, remove unnecessary barriers, and ensure that no child or student in this country has to choose between education and hunger.

- **Cutting SNAP and other benefits will reverse the progress our country has made toward ending childhood hunger and malnutrition.**
 - SNAP supports sustainable nutrition access for participants by reducing food insecurity by as much as 30%, and is even more effective among the most vulnerable populations including children, [leading to](#) improved health outcomes, lower overall healthcare expenses, decreases in chronic absenteeism due to illness, and thus improved academic outcomes.
 - Enrollment in SNAP also provides automatic access to school meals and summer food benefits, meaning proposed cuts to SNAP — along proposed restrictions on this automatic access — would severely [limit student food access](#) in and out of school.
 - SNAP served 88% of all eligible individuals in FY2022, including 7.3 million households with children, which make up [35%](#) of SNAP households, the most in the nearly 50-year history of existing SNAP data.
 - Recent proposals would reverse 2021 inflation adjustments to SNAP benefits, which lifted [2 million](#) people above the poverty line, and would eliminate future adjustments resulting in the largest cuts to benefits in [30 years](#).
- **College students are also in crisis.** Cuts to SNAP would have a devastating impact on college students, particularly our students of color, students from low-income backgrounds, and students experiencing homelessness.
 - In 2020 alone, 3.8 million college students — nearly 1 in 4 — [reported](#) experiencing food insecurity, and over 2.2 million of those students faced very low food security, meaning they frequently had to skip meals or eat less because they couldn't afford food.
 - Despite these disparities, [far too few college students participate](#) in SNAP due to bureaucratic red tape. We should be removing barriers and expanding access to SNAP to address college hunger — not eliminating benefits and restricting access further.