

Federal Changes Threaten Food Assistance for North Carolina Families and Children

Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust



SNAP Food Assistance in North Carolina

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides more than **1.4 million** North Carolina residents with food assistance, including 600,000 children, 159,000 older adults, and 46,000 veterans.
- **Eighty percent** of households assisted by SNAP include someone who is working.
- **Research** shows that SNAP improves health outcomes, reduces childhood poverty, and decreases health care costs.
- SNAP has a multiplier effect: every **\$1 invested in SNAP benefits generates between \$1.50 and \$1.80 in economic growth**. SNAP cuts mean people have less to spend at **thousands of SNAP retailers** in NC, hurting farmers, food distribution pipelines, and local economies.

The Federal Budget Bill is Bad for North Carolina

The federal budget bill that passed in July 2025 **undermines SNAP** in several ways. The bill shifts costs to the state (potentially forcing North Carolina to end the program), expands work requirements to parents and older adults, and ends eligibility for many lawfully present immigrants and refugees. Approximately **1.4 million seniors, children, and working residents** could lose access to affordable food.

SNAP provides nine meals for every one meal a food bank can offer. With grocery prices still high and the recent loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding for food banks, pantries and nonprofits cannot fill the gap. Children and families will go hungry.

In rural communities, local grocery stores will be severely impacted without people's access to SNAP, and farm stands may disappear, hurting not only families but entire small-town economies.

Where We Go From Here

The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust is sharing information about the federal budget bill and other federal cuts with partners, grantees, and foundations because near-term policy changes impacting food access will require quick adjustments, additional fundraising, and broader collaboration to face these challenges.

Looking ahead to cuts in 2026 and beyond, there are opportunities for advocacy, especially administrative advocacy, to influence how these federal policies are implemented in North Carolina. We **encourage organizations** to advocate, organize, and share stories of people who will be impacted to make sure the harshest cuts are reversed.

Helping families with low incomes meet their basic needs isn't a handout. It's sound public health policy. It's investing in the next generation. It's economic stability. It's seeing everyone's humanity.



Timeline of SNAP cuts 2025-2027

Immediate Impacts



Work requirements expanded, causing people to lose SNAP benefits if they cannot meet a 20-hour-per-week paid work requirement. SNAP already has work requirements. The bill [adds work requirements](#) for parents of kids over age 14, older adults ages 55 to 64, veterans, people experiencing homelessness, and former foster youth. [Research shows](#) that SNAP work requirements do not increase employment and have exacerbated racial inequities.

- North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 90,000 adults may lose SNAP benefits because of the additional red tape.



Thrifty Food Plan—the formula used to calculate SNAP benefits—is permanently frozen at current levels. Historically, SNAP benefits have struggled to keep up with rising food costs. In 2024, North Carolina SNAP benefits did not cover the cost of a moderately-priced meal in all 100 counties.



SNAP eligibility ends for thousands of lawfully present immigrants, including refugees. The timing of this change depends on further federal guidance.



October 2026

Increases in state administrative cost sharing begin.

- Instead of a 50/50 split with the federal government, North Carolina will be responsible for 75 percent of administrative costs for SNAP, which is an additional [\\$65 million](#) per year at the state level and [\\$14 million](#) at the county level.



October 2027

Federal funding decreases for SNAP food benefits.

- The federal bill increases the state responsibility for SNAP. North Carolina's projected cost share would be [\\$420 million](#) per year.
- If NC can't pay additional costs under these policy changes, the state will be forced to either take SNAP assistance away from large numbers of people or end the SNAP program entirely.

**Data can quickly become out-of-date. While we strive to keep information current and use creditable sources, we recommend reviewing the linked sources for the most recent information.*