



Coronavirus and Anti-Hunger Programs

What changes do the two coronavirus relief packages make to SNAP and other anti-hunger efforts?

The first legislative package, *The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201)* established a modified version of SNAP called COVID19 Response SNAP, or CR-SNAP, which ensures benefits are adequate and available amid the ongoing pandemic response, including:

- Suspending the ABAWD work requirements for access to SNAP until one month after the national emergency ends -- this suspension means that the ABAWD waiver rule previously set to take effect on 4/1/20 will not have an impact during this period
- Allowing states to request special waivers from the Secretary of Agriculture to provide temporary, emergency CR-SNAP benefits up to the maximum monthly allotment
- Giving broad discretion to the Secretary to provide much more flexibility for States in managing SNAP caseloads, including more time between periodic reports; allowing more methods of issuance; and a simplified interview process
- Requiring the Secretary to make State requests for waivers and the USDA response as well as any USDA guidance on State flexibilities publicly available online
- Instructing the Secretary to provide a report 18 months after the emergency documenting the decisions made in the operation of this authority

The second legislative package, the *Coronavirus Aid, Recovery, and Economic Security Act, or CARES (H.R. 748)* does not make changes to SNAP, or to the administration of a program like CR-SNAP, but ensures that there will be SNAP funding for the large number of newly unemployed by providing \$15.5 billion in a contingency fund.

In addition, the legislation includes \$100 million for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) to support income-eligible households living on reservations and American Indians residing in approved areas. Some U.S. territories do not operate traditional SNAP. Both packages provided additional funding to Puerto Rico, Northern Marianas Islands, and American Samoa. There is a total of \$300 million available for nutrition assistance for these territories.

Alongside SNAP, both packages allotted additional funding to The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which provides USDA-purchased agricultural products to low-income households through emergency food providers like food banks, food pantries, and soup kitchens. There is a total of \$850 million available for TEFAP.

- H.R. 6201 included a \$400 million increase in emergency funding for TEFAP, including \$100 million for storage and distribution costs and \$300 million for food purchases
- H.R. 748 contains an additional \$450 million for TEFAP, including \$300 million in food assistance and \$150 million for storage and transportation.

Frequently Asked Questions About Anti-Hunger Programs

How do I apply for SNAP?

You must apply for SNAP in the state where you currently live. You should contact your state agency online, by phone, or in person for more information on how to apply for SNAP benefits. Additional information on how to contact the state agencies in each state is available at:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory>.

Do I qualify for SNAP if I am getting unemployment insurance?

Your household must meet certain requirements to be eligible for SNAP and receive benefits, even if you are getting unemployment insurance. If your state agency determines that you are eligible to receive SNAP benefits, you will receive benefits back to the date you submitted your application.

How long will I be able to get SNAP?

If you are determined to be eligible for SNAP, you will receive a notice from the state agency that tells you how long you will receive SNAP. H.R. 6201 gives USDA the authority to allow states to extend the period for households to continue receiving SNAP without re-enrolling. Additional information on states with this option is available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19>.

How much will I receive?

States calculate monthly SNAP benefit amounts for each household, based on the household's net income, up to the maximum monthly allotment amount for the household's size. Current maximum monthly allotment amounts are available at: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/media/file/FY20-Maximum-Allotments-Deductions.pdf>. H.R. 6201 gives USDA the authority to allow states to provide temporary emergency CR-SNAP benefits so all participating households receive up to the maximum monthly allotment for the household's size. Additional information on states with this option is available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/programs/fns-disaster-assistance/fns-response-covid-19/snap-emergency-allotments-current-snap>.

What can I buy with SNAP benefits?

You can use SNAP benefits to buy most food items, except hot foods; prepared foods for immediate consumption; alcohol; tobacco; vitamins, medicines, and supplements; and any nonfood items.

Do I qualify to get emergency food at a food bank?

Qualifying income limits vary but are, in general, not as rigid as SNAP limits.

Where are food banks in my state?

Start here: <https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank>