

# Advocacy Alert: Proposed changes to SNAP Eligibility

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## **USDA Press Release: USDA Proposes to Close SNAP Automatic Eligibility Loophole**

- Full press release available here: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/pressrelease/usda-011319>

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## **Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon** Statement on proposed changes:

<https://oregonhunger.org/fight-snap-cuts-cat-el/>

Fight SNAP cuts that will affect every Oregon community

JULY 30, 2019

by Etta O'Donnell-King

A new proposal from the Trump administration would take food away from 3.1 million people across the U.S., including many families, seniors, and people with disabilities. This change would immediately cut an estimated 66,000 Oregonians off food assistance from SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as “food stamps”), while also making it harder for kids to get school meals and add red tape and inefficiency to a program that is working well. Every community in Oregon would be hurt by this.

This proposal would restrict states’ ability to streamline how people apply for assistance, called “categorical eligibility”. The proposal would also lower the income level at which someone is eligible for SNAP and block people with very modest assets, like a used car, from qualifying. This will also hurt Oregon’s economy, bringing in \$3 million less each month in federal benefits, which would impact Oregon farmers, producers, and grocery stores.

“This plan would cost the government far more in health-related expenses than it would save. That’s from a practical view; also, what about compassion? What about hungry children, and seniors who have contributed throughout their lives, who are now depending upon food stamps to maintain a modicum of good health. Poor idea all around.” – Samm McCrary, Oregon SNAP Client Advisory Board Member

When a third of kids facing hunger are in families earning too much to qualify under the current rules, this cut is obviously going in the wrong direction. Nationwide about 500,000 students could lose access to eligibility for free school meals. That’s because currently families who participate in SNAP are directly certified without needing a second application, and whole schools could lose the ability to serve meals to all kids for free. The proposed SNAP changes could also increase the cost of the new Hunger-Free School provisions in the Student Success Act to the state, which could limit their long-term feasibility.

Please note: This is a proposed rule and nothing has changed as of now. People should still apply for and utilize SNAP benefits as they have been.

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**Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon** requests that Oregonian organizations submit a public comment in opposition to the proposed changes.

The 60-day comment window is now open through September 23.

Link to Model Comment Template: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eEnS49W8OJpvPdaVSeFftjWvCaRckVMW/view>