



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

February 25, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
Majority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives

Dear Majority Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader Jeffries,

As a coalition of bipartisan membership organizations representing states, cities and counties, we are writing to respond to widely reported proposals to change the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) financing and requirements. These programs operate as a partnership between federal, state, and local governments, jointly financed to provide critical services to millions of our country’s most vulnerable Americans, including children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and low-income adults.

As the largest federal nutrition program reaching nearly 41 million households, SNAP is a foundational part of the social safety net and has a significant impact on combating hunger and poverty in low-income households, particularly in rural communities. Beyond helping struggling families put food on the table, SNAP stimulates local economies during downturns, feeds people during natural disasters, offers nutrition education and provides certain participants with Employment and Training (E&T) services. We strongly oppose any reduction in **benefits for participants that will increase the demand on state and locally funded service providers. Additionally, we urge Congress to protect funding for other complementary nutrition programs, such as school and summer meals, that provide vital support to low-income children so that they can learn, grow and thrive.**

States and localities rely on SNAP’s Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) to reduce the administrative burden on SNAP programs and to reduce churn for eligible participants who can’t meet rigid, paperwork-laden work requirements. Work requirement exemptions provide states with important flexibility to determine eligibility for people living in areas with insufficient jobs or irregular work hours. **Restricting a state’s ability to grant work exemptions and ending BBCE would take away food assistance from participants and limit important state flexibility to tailor SNAP to meet the needs of their individual populations. We also urge our federal partners to support SNAP payment accuracy without jeopardizing existing administrative resources available to state and local agencies.**

TANF represents an important source of flexible funding for a variety of anti-poverty activities benefiting vulnerable residents, including cash assistance, child care, education, job training and work support programs. States and localities rely on the critical flexibility of the TANF program, including the ability to waive work participation requirements for certain individuals, in order to efficiently combat poverty in their communities. Additionally, studies have shown that policies that eliminate assistance for stricter work requirements have been linked to higher risks of families becoming involved in the child welfare system¹. **Eliminating work participation waivers and reducing federal funding for TANF would eliminate important state and local flexibilities as well as increase the administrative and fiscal burden on state and local programs.**

SSBG funds support 29 different types of services that reduce dependency and promote self-sufficiency; protect children and adults from neglect, abuse and exploitation; and help individuals who are unable to take care of themselves to stay in their homes or to find the best institutional arrangements. In FY 2022, the last year for which data is available, 20 million individuals (46 percent of whom were children) received services supported in whole or in part by SSBG. The highest share of SSBG spending goes toward child welfare and child protective services, counseling and support services, and adult protective services which prevent and remedy abuse, neglect and exploitation of the elderly and disabled adults. **The elimination of this program would shift the costs of providing these services to states and localities who are already operating under tight budget constraints, ultimately leading to a reduction of services for our most vulnerable residents.**

Ensuring the strength of SNAP, TANF, and SSBG is essential for states and localities to provide vital support to individuals and families facing economic hardship. These programs form the foundation of the social safety net, helping communities address food insecurity, income stability, workforce participation, and essential social services. Protecting and strengthening these programs is critical to maintaining the well-being and resilience of those in need and ensuring that our nation remains committed to economic mobility and opportunity for all.

As intergovernmental partners in the administration of these vital programs, we are committed to working with you to strengthen the SSBG, SNAP, and TANF programs in a manner that allows us to effectively meet the needs of our residents.

Sincerely,



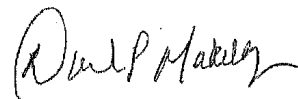
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¹ <https://www.cbpp.org/research/income-security/research-reinforces-providing-cash-to-families-in-poverty-reduces-risk-of>



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