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House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

COMMITTEES

HUMAN SERVICES, CHAIR

CAUCUSES

PENNSYLVANIA BLACK LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS
PENNSYLVANIA BLACK MATERNAL HEALTH CAUCUS
SOUTHEAST DELEGATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the House Human Services Committee
FROM: Representative Dan Williams, Majority Chair, House Human Services Committee
DATE: April 13th, 2026
RE: House Human Services Committee Informational Meeting

The House Human Services Committee will hold an Informational Meeting on Monday, April 13th, at 9:00 am in Room 205 Ryan Office Building. The topic is impacts on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) resulting from HR 1 (Pub. L. No. 119-2).

Please contact Amanda Stockton (Astockton@pahouse.net) with any questions. If you are unable to attend this meeting, please submit a Leave Request Form to the appropriate Chair's office prior to the start of the meeting. Thank you.

DW/as



House Human Services Committee Informational Meeting

Monday, April 13th, 2026

9:00AM

Room 205 Ryan Office

Harrisburg, PA 17120

1. Call to Order

2. Attendance

3. Panel 1

Valerie Arkoosh, MD, MPH

Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services

Panel 2

Ryan Prater

Director of Public Policy, Feeding Pa

Panel 3

Aaron Riggleman

Manager of Government Affairs, Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry

4. Adjournment



Advocating for a diverse membership of grocers, convenience stores, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, and service providers across the food and beverage industry.

Testimony submitted by the Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association

House Human Services Committee

Federal SNAP Changes

April 13, 2026

The Pennsylvania Food Merchants Association has advocated for the food and beverage industry across the Commonwealth since 1952. Today the association represents almost 500 member companies from across the globe that operate thousands of retail food stores, production facilities and distribution centers, and collectively employ more than 350,000 Pennsylvanians. Many of our members are proud SNAP participating retailers, and have been for decades.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective on this important issue.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program helps families in need afford healthy, nutritious food. While funded by the federal government, states administer the actual program on the ground, distributing funds to families which they can spend at authorized food retailers.

In our view, SNAP stands as one of the most important and successful public-private partnerships in the country. By temporarily alleviating the burden of food insecurity, SNAP allows families of all shapes and sizes to focus on other essential needs, such as housing, education, and healthcare. For children, SNAP is especially vital, helping ensure they have access to the nutrition they need for healthy growth and development, reducing the risk of developmental delays and other health issues. For seniors, SNAP provides critical support that enables them to maintain their independence and well-being, reducing their reliance on costly healthcare services.

Food assistance benefits are primarily redeemed at local grocery and convenience stores, generating economic activity and supporting jobs in the food industry. This influx of spending creates a virtuous cycle along the entire food supply chain. We estimate that the jobs required to administer SNAP at the grocery store level in Pennsylvania generated more than \$473.9 million in grocery industry wages over the past year. Paychecks earned by workers in supporting industries push the total to more than \$958 million. Overall, SNAP drove total output of \$1.2 billion across grocery and other retailing industries in Pennsylvania. The output generated by supplier and induced impacts represents another \$1.4 billion.¹

¹ [Data and Methodology](#)

In short, SNAP is a fabled win-win proposition. In addition to those families who use SNAP dollars to buy food, businesses along Pennsylvania's food supply chain, from local groceries and convenience stores to wholesale and distribution companies, food producers, and farmers, all benefit from this partnership.

Recent events and some back-of-the-napkin math bear it out. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the federal government introduced SNAP Emergency Allotments (EAs) to help address rising food insecurity. These were temporary, additional payments to households receiving SNAP benefits. EAs provided SNAP households an additional \$95 in benefits per month, at minimum. When EAs ended in March 2023, the state Department of Human Services reported an average loss of \$181 per SNAP household across Pennsylvania.²

Beyond what that loss meant for families themselves – and we know it meant increased food insecurity, greater reliance on food pantries, and heightened financial stress – for businesses in the food sector it meant, quite literally, less food being purchased, and therefore ordered, and therefore produced. With more than a million SNAP households in Pennsylvania each losing an average of \$181, we can estimate a direct contraction of almost \$189 million per month in the state's food economy when Emergency Allotments ended. And of course the true economic impact was larger than that, because we know that for every dollar invested in SNAP, there is an impact worth more than \$1.50 that goes into local economies supporting those businesses getting food to store shelves, and the people they employ.³

PAYMENT CONTINUITY UNDER THREAT

Aside from the funding itself, perhaps the single most important aspect of an effective food benefit program is its predictability. The federal shutdown and unprecedented pause in SNAP payments late last year sowed confusion among SNAP recipients and the businesses that serve them. It made stocking and staffing a challenging ordeal for participating retailers, and recipients were left bewildered and upset, not knowing when they may next be able to afford food.

Between October 10 and November 12, 2025, no fewer than six contradictory or conflicting statements were issued by either the federal government, Pennsylvania, or the courts regarding when and how much SNAP funding recipients could expect to receive that month.⁴ As of Wednesday, November 12, Pennsylvania recipients scheduled to receive benefits on days 1-3 of the month received their full monthly payment by late in the evening on November 8, totaling around \$70 million, while those on days 4-10 of the cycle had received nothing.

When, at one stage in the shutdown, we were told November benefits were set to come in at 65 percent of the normal amount as a result of the situation, stores at least had a rough idea of what they could anticipate and plan around; effectively 35 percent less revenue flowing through the system.⁵ In September, Pennsylvania distributed more than \$354 million dollars in SNAP benefits, so for November they could have expected

² [Food banks to serve more people after pandemic SNAP benefits end](#)

³ [The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier - Summary](#)

⁴ <https://www.newsfromthestates.com/article/shutdown-tug-war-over-snap-benefits-timeline>

⁵ [REVISED Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) Benefit and Administrative Expense Update for November 2025 | Food and Nutrition Service](#)

roughly \$120 million less to move through Pennsylvania's food economy. But the back and forth of the court rulings and appeals and simultaneous developments regarding the federal shutdown made it that much more difficult for state administrators and, ultimately, stores and recipients, to be able to plan around anything.

Fundamentally, a delayed and uncertain benefit issuance schedule presents a variety of immediate challenges to food retailers.

An unpredictable release of benefits makes accurate demand forecasting virtually impossible. Pennsylvania, already with a complex SNAP distribution schedule, is not well situated to handle further ad hoc changes to how benefits are distributed. Stores count on a predictable routine of SNAP disbursement and spending to schedule staff and order perishable inventory. An abrupt, unscheduled flood of shoppers and demand at random dates can make it difficult or impossible for retailers to stock sufficient fresh produce, dairy, and meat, leaving shelves bare and essential nutritious foods unavailable.

Our retailers face intense operational strain in this scenario. Without a predictable purchasing cycle, smaller stores, or those with a significant proportion of SNAP sales, may struggle with cash flow management. Furthermore, staff are caught in the crossfire, forced to manage a chaotic environment and frustrated customers navigating the uncertainty of the EBT system.

It's important to emphasize that the great nemesis of food retailers is shrink; in essence food waste in all its forms, whether through theft, spoilage, fraud, or other causes. With the net margins for food retail so small – on average less than two percent – the incentive is high for grocers to be hyper-efficient in their staffing, stocking and ordering practices. Every item on a store shelf that isn't sold eats into that razor-thin margin. So when we know that demand is going to decline, like when benefit payments are being delayed, stores reduce their ordering and staff hours. That ripples through the economy in all directions. Wholesalers, distributors and producers similarly pull back, and employees earn less wages to themselves spend on essentials and other goods.

As challenging as this may be, of course it is preferable to a complete loss of funds for a protracted period. But it was far from easy, and it should have been avoided.

PROTECTING & ENHANCING THE PROGRAM

In the years since they were first introduced, food stamps have suffered from a lingering stigma associating the program with poverty, shame, and dependency. This negative connotation has cast a long shadow on program usage, and discouraged many eligible people from seeking or using the assistance they are entitled to.

As vested partners in the success of SNAP, food retailers have long waged a campaign to mitigate these stigmas. Food retailers championed the transition from paper coupons to electronic benefit transfer cards in the 1980s and 90s. Using an EBT card rather than a coupon was more discrete for customers, easier for staff and stores to transact, and more difficult for bad actors to abuse. In fact the first EBT pilot was conducted here in PA, in Reading in 1984.

That work continues in 2026, as we engage on efforts to transition SNAP to chip-enabled EBT cards. By supporting an orderly shift to these higher-security cards, we can reduce the amount of fraud taking place in the

program through card skimming and identity theft. We supported the bipartisan legislation sponsored by the chairs of this committee – the provisions of which were included in the 2025-26 state budget - to require DHS to study what is necessary to embark on this transition, and develop a plan to do it right.

Protecting the ability of SNAP participants to make the same choices as their non-SNAP counterparts has been another way the food retail industry has fought this battle. Despite lingering stereotypes about the things SNAP recipients buy, the data shows that when it comes to food items purchased by SNAP and non-SNAP households, the top ten categories and top seven specific commodities are the same, though ordered differently. The reason is simple. SNAP families are regular families who happen to need some temporary assistance putting food on the table.

When the USDA studied this issue, they found that about 40 cents of every dollar of food expenditures by SNAP households is spent on basic items such as meat, fruits, vegetables, milk, eggs, and bread. Another 40 cents are spent on a variety of items such as cereal, prepared foods, dairy products, rice, and beans. The last 20 cents out of every dollar typically goes on sweetened beverages, desserts, salty snacks, candy and sugar. And for non-SNAP households, these spending patterns are pretty much identical.⁶

Just as important, the economic activity that SNAP purchases support is exactly the same as from a non-SNAP household. Grocers don't order SNAP ground beef and non-SNAP ground beef. Beef is beef. Milk is milk. Bananas are bananas.

This is one of the reasons we value choice and oppose restricting the options available to SNAP shoppers. Philosophically we think families can and should be able to decide for themselves what food best meets their needs. And as a practical matter, limiting what SNAP participants can buy is a challenge for retailers. Under a SNAP waiver, stores would need to review more than 600,000 food products, plus the thousands of new ones that hit shelves every year. The administrative cost to this would be enormous, as would the regulatory burden for small businesses. Stores would need to continually update their systems, with increased costs passed down to all shoppers through higher food prices.⁷

We also don't believe that store associates should be forced to act as the food police, telling customers what they may or may not buy. It's not fair to the employee and is self-defeating for the program. It is another of the many unintended consequences associated with efforts to restrict what kinds of products are available to SNAP shoppers through USDA waivers.

Of course there are always opportunities and ways to improve the way government programs work, and we should be clear-eyed about taking on that challenge when it comes to SNAP. Fraud and overly high error rates remain a real challenge and to repeat, we are actively looking for ways to improve the system through innovations like chip-enabled EBT cards, tamper-proof point-of-sale devices, and ever-improving training methods for staff.

⁶ [Foods Typically Purchased by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) Households | Food and Nutrition Service](#)

⁷ [SNAP Restrictions Impact Analysis](#)

STOCKING REQUIREMENTS

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) recently published a proposed rule⁸ to update and redefine the staple food stocking requirements for retailers participating in SNAP. While our larger grocery and supermarket members are well-positioned to comply with this proposal, as written it would be extremely difficult for small format stores to meet the new requirements in the grains and dairy categories, potentially exacerbating the access gap that exists if they are no longer able to remain in the program.

In the grains category, for example, it would be challenging for smaller stores to meet the requirement to stock seven distinct varieties as proposed. Many convenience stores in particular do not sell raw grains or grain-based flours, and customers are not coming to those stores to purchase these items. The situation is the same for the dairy category, where limited cooler space makes it difficult to comply with broadened stocking rules.

In the context of SNAP, convenience stores play an essential role, especially in rural areas, as a place for families to go in between larger supermarket trips. For something like a gallon of milk or eggs, a c-store serves an important purpose when a grocery may be an hour's drive or several bus trips away. But because of their small footprint these kinds of stores may simply not be able to meet the new requirements.

To that end PFMA submitted comments to USDA recommending FNS revise its proposed rule to offer more flexibility in both the grains and dairy categories and help smaller format retailers stock a wider breadth of nutritious staple foods and continue serving the SNAP families who depend on them.

ERROR RATE AND COST SHARING

Following the passage of H.R. 1 by Congress, federal law will shift administrative and benefit costs associated with SNAP to the states. Historically, the federal government has shared administrative costs with states, splitting the burden 50-50, while covering the entirety of benefit costs. Starting in 2027, the federal government's share of SNAP administrative costs will be reduced to 25 percent. Then, beginning in 2028, states will be required to pay a portion of the actual SNAP food benefits if their Payment Error Rate exceeds six percent, along a sliding scale. With a recent error rate hovering around 11 percent, Pennsylvania stands to be responsible for 15 percent of the cost of SNAP benefits, creating a massive cost burden for the state.

The Independent Fiscal Office estimates it would cost Pennsylvania an additional \$130 million annually to take on the additional administrative costs that the federal government is ceding, and if the error rate remains above 10 percent the state could be on the hook for \$645 million in benefits costs.⁹ In the context of the state budget that is a massive gap to fill and would force extremely difficult choices to be made by legislators. Quite frankly it is hard to envision a scenario where food benefits are not negatively impacted unless PA can get its error rate below the six percent threshold. Food retailers stand ready to assist the state as it works to do so.

⁸ [Proposed Rule - Updated Staple Food Stocking Standards for Retailers in SNAP | Food and Nutrition Service](#)

⁹ [Pa to bear more SNAP costs under Trump's new policy - State Affairs Pro](#)

A BETTER WAY TO IMPROVE SNAP

Needless to say, SNAP is being stressed in ways that are unprecedented throughout its 60-plus year history. And it is not simply the changes themselves, but the rate and complexity of them that are taxing the retail community, not to mention state administrators and of course those actually using the program.

With that said, while we advocate with our national partners on the federal level, there are things we can do at the state level to improve how food assistance works for everyone. PFMA believes strongly in a system that is effective, secure, and free of fraud. We are championing a variety of proposals we believe would make SNAP work better, and make it easier for the private sector to help ensure food security for all Pennsylvanians.

PFMA supports incentive-based efforts to educate and encourage nutritious choices rather than costly and challenging restrictions. **HB 1096**, the Pennsylvania Food Bucks Program, would promote this kind of healthy decision-making. By targeting healthy food items like fruits and vegetables, and providing a benefit worth a minimum of forty cents for every dollar of SNAP benefits redeemed at eligible food retailers on these items, this approach invites participants to choose fresh produce, rather than forcing them. It promises better results through a better process, with less red tape, less government overreach, and more respect for Pennsylvanians using the program. We were pleased to see a healthy food bucks concept included in the 2025-26 state budget and look forward to its rollout. We would also still like to see such a program permanently enshrined in law.

Pennsylvania's disparate county-by-county SNAP distribution schedule is overcomplicated and challenging for retailers. PFMA has long advocated for streamlining how benefits are distributed across the state. We believe that a uniform, and more spread out, distribution schedule would benefit everyone involved in the program, both retailers and recipients. Language requiring DHS to study the feasibility of changes to PA's SNAP distribution schedule, introduced as **HB 749** by Rep. Dave Madsen (D-Dauphin), was included in the 2025-26 state budget and is due by year's end. **SB 85** by Sen. Dave Argall (R-Schuylkill) would require DHS to adopt a uniform statewide distribution schedule.

As mentioned, PFMA backs a measured, supported approach to transitioning to EBT chip cards, which will help reduce cases of SNAP balances being stolen through the use of skimming devices. We applaud the bipartisan efforts of the chairs of this committee to include in the enacted state budget language from **HB 1429** requiring DHS to determine what it would take to complete such a transition.

Finally, making permanent the Fresh Food Financing Initiative. **HB 764** would enshrine this important program in law, providing grants for the construction, rehabilitation, and expansion of grocery stores and other healthy food retail establishments in low- to moderate-income areas. By supporting their growth, the FFFI concept epitomizes what it means to help businesses combat food insecurity, and better support the communities that depend on them.

MOVING AHEAD

In many ways the country's food assistance system is in uncharted territory, and the stakes for the food industry and the people it serves could not be higher. We appreciate the interest of this committee in how we and others in this space are navigating ahead. Please consider PFMA and our member businesses a resource as you continue to assess this situation and again thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective.



SNAP Work Requirements



Contents

Introduction

SNAP Work Rules Overview

H.R. 1 Changes to SNAP Work Requirements

What Can SNAP Recipients Do to Avoid Effects

What to Expect

What is SNAP?

- **S**upplemental **N**utrition **A**ssistance **P**rogram
- Provides monthly food assistance to almost 2M Pennsylvanians
- Benefits are deposited on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card
- Can be used at authorized retailers like grocery stores, corner stores, or farmers' markets

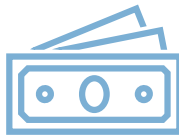


SNAP Eligibility

Households must meet several financial and non-financial criteria to receive SNAP



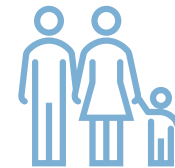
U.S. Citizen or
Qualifying
Non-Citizen



Income Limit



PA Residency



Household
Composition



**Work
Requirements**

SNAP Work Requirements Overview



SNAP Work Requirements

- SNAP recipients who must meeting work and reporting requirements to keep benefits are now known as **PEERs (Pennsylvanians with Employment or Engagement Requirements)**.
 - Includes working-age individuals who do not meet an exemption and expansion of work requirements from HR1.
 - Previously referred to as ABAWDs.
- To maintain SNAP eligibility, PEERs must:
 - Meet the work requirement;
 - Have an exemption; or
 - Live in a waived area (if waivers are available)
- If a PEER does not meet an exemption or meet the work requirement, they are time limited to just **three months** in a **three-year period**, unless they begin to meet requirement or qualify for an exemption.



Changes to SNAP Work and Reporting Rules in Congressional Republicans' Budget Bill



Congressional Republicans' Budget Bill (H.R. 1)

- On July 4, 2025, the President signed the Congressional Republicans' Budget Bill (H.R. 1) into law.
- This new law makes several changes to the SNAP and work requirements for certain SNAP recipients, including:
 - Changes to geographic waivers;
 - Changes to who must meet work requirement; and,
 - Changes to previous exemptions.



SNAP Changes as of September 1

- The Congressional Republicans' Budget Bill changed the criteria to waive SNAP work requirements based on an area's unemployment rate
 - Zero counties in Pennsylvania now qualify for a waiver
- To keep or become eligible for SNAP benefits, certain people will have to meet SNAP work requirements that include working, volunteering, or participating in an education or training program for at least 20 hours a week (or 80 hours each month). **SNAP recipients must also report to DHS that they are meeting this requirement.**
- As of **September 1**, these rules apply to SNAP recipients who:
 - Are between 18-54 years old;
 - Do not have a dependent child under 18; and
 - Are considered physically and mentally able to work

SNAP Changes as of November 1

- Congressional Republicans' Budget Bill changed the age range of those who can be subject to SNAP work requirements.
- The law also changed several exemptions from the SNAP work rules.
- These changes started **November 1** for new applicants.
 - People currently receiving SNAP within the current eligible age range or under current exemptions will stay exempt until **the date of their next renewal.**



Exemptions that Are Changing

SNAP Recipients Who Are Currently Exempt from Work Requirements



Age

Under 18; or
55 or older



In a Household with a Child

All adults in the household
are exempt if they live with
a child under age 18



Veteran

Veterans of any branch of
the armed services,
regardless of discharge



Former Foster Youth

Individuals who aged out of
foster care at age 18 or
older and are currently
under age 25.

Exemptions that Are Changing

New Exemption Rules



Age

Under 18 or

65 or older;

Work requirements
expanded to include 55-64
year-olds



In a Household with a Child

All adults in the household
are exempt if they live with
a child **underage 14;**

If child is 14+,
parent/guardian must
meet work requirements



Veteran

**Veterans are no longer
exempt**



Former Foster Youth

**Former foster youth age
18-24 are no longer exempt**

Exemptions that Are Not Changing

SNAP recipients can still qualify for an exemption to work requirements if they are:

- Disabled or are receiving disability benefits (including VA benefits);
- Unable to work due to a medical condition;
- Pregnant;
- Receiving TANF or unemployment benefits;
- Serving as a caregiver; or,
- Expecting to return to work within 60 days, among other potential exemptions.

Some exemptions may require additional verification. **SNAP recipients who meet or have questions about exemptions should contact their County Assistance Office.**



Verifying Exemptions

- For most exemptions, a SNAP recipient can simply tell their caseworker that they qualify
- Caseworkers may verify exemptions electronically
- However, proof/documentation must be provided if a person is:
 - Disabled or unable to work
 - Meeting the work requirements

Disabled | Unable to Work Exemption

RESET

| CAO NAME AND ADDRESS | | CASE IDENTIFICATION | | | | |
|----------------------|--|---------------------|---------------|-----|-------|------|
| | | CO | RECORD NUMBER | CAT | CHILD | DIST |
| | | RECORD NAME | | | | |

Department of Human Services

SNAP Medical Exemption Form

Dear Medical Provider or School Official:

For some students and certain other adults, eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits may be restricted or time-limited. Individuals can be exempt from this requirement if they are medically certified as physically or mentally unfit for employment. Please help us determine whether your patient or student meets an exemption due to a physical or mental condition that limits their ability to work.

Patient/Student name: _____ Date of birth: _____

Patient/Student authorization:
I hereby authorize the release of the medical, rehabilitation participation, and/or reasonable accommodation information requested to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Please answer the relevant questions below. Once completed, sign and date this form including your title or position in your agency. Questions 1 and 2 may be completed by a physician, physician's assistant, designated representative of the physician's office, nurse practitioner, osteopath, psychologist, drug and alcohol abuse counselor, mental health counselor, social worker, midwife, podiatrist, audiologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, optometrist, or any other medical personnel whose services may be reimbursed by Medical Assistance.

Question 3 may be completed by any medical provider listed above or by a school official familiar with the services the individual is receiving. Only complete Question 3 if the individual is enrolled in school half-time or more.

1. Does this individual have a mental or physical condition or illness that reduces their ability to work?
(NOTE: The condition may be either temporary or permanent and does not need to meet the Social Security standard to qualify. For students, consider the individual's ability to work while also attending school.)
 Yes No If yes, specify condition: _____
2. Is this individual participating in a drug/alcohol treatment or counseling program, mental health counseling program, or a vocational rehabilitation program?
 Yes No If yes, specify program: _____
If ongoing, specify date program will end: ____/____/____
3. Does this individual currently receive reasonable accommodations or other assistance from a postsecondary institution's disability access or reasonable accommodations office?
 Yes No If yes, specify condition: _____

By signing, I certify that all information provided above is true and accurate.

Name (please print) _____ Title/profession _____
Signature _____ Date form signed _____
Address and phone number _____

PH 101 422

What can SNAP Recipients Do to Avoid Losing Benefits?




Identifying an Exemption

- DHS sent mailers (CM 558) to non-exempt SNAP recipients who live in areas that lost waivers on 9/1.
- In many cases, DHS can use the mailer alone to grant an exemption.
- If needed, DHS will follow up with individuals to request verification.



If a person got this form, DHS does not have an exemption on file. **They should return the completed form immediately.**

RESET

 Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| RECIPIENT NAME: | |
| COUNTY: | CASE NUMBER: |

Adults who are healthy and able to work, and who do not live with children under 14, have a time limit on their SNAP benefits. After receiving benefits for three months, they need to show they are meeting certain work-related rules or qualify for an exemption to keep getting benefits. They can meet these rules by working at least 20 hours a week or taking part in approved training programs, or a mix of both. If this applies to you, you will receive another letter with more information.

To help us determine if you are eligible for an exemption, please complete the survey below and return it to us in the enclosed postage-paid envelope as soon as possible - preferably within 10 days:

Individual and Household Questions - Circle Yes or No:

Yes No Is anyone in your house age 13 or younger?
If yes, do you purchase and prepare your meals with this person? Yes No

Yes No Are you pregnant?

Yes No Is your ability to work at least 20 hours a week limited by your physical or mental health?

Yes No Are you receiving or have you applied for any disability or sick benefits, such as SSI, Workers' Compensation, Veterans Disability Benefits, or vocational rehabilitation services?

Yes No Are you caring for an ill or disabled household member?

Yes No Are you participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program?

Yes No Are you unable to work because of domestic violence? Circle Yes if:
• You or your children will be at risk of being harmed if you work, or
• It will be more difficult for you to recover from abuse if you work.

Yes No Are you homeless or facing homelessness?

Yes No Are you receiving or have you applied for Unemployment Compensation?

Yes No Do you expect to return to work within the next 60 days?

Yes No Are you a migrant or seasonal farmworker returning to work within 30 days?

Employment, Training, and Community Service Questions - Circle Yes or No:

Yes No Are you working?
If yes, where? _____
How many hours a week? _____ What is your hourly rate? _____

Yes No Are you taking classes to learn English or earn a GED?
If no, are you interested in taking free classes? Yes No

Yes No Are you in school or a training program?
If yes, what are you studying? _____ How many hours a week? _____
If no, are you interested in going back to school? Yes No

Yes No Are you doing community service or volunteering with a local agency?
If yes, where? _____ How many hours a week? _____
If no, are you interested in volunteering? Yes No

If you have questions about this survey or need help completing it, please call the Statewide Customer Service Center at 1-877-395-8930. In Philadelphia, please call 215-560-7226.

CM 558 7/04

Meeting the Work Requirement

PEERs can meet the work requirements by:



Working

- Working 20 hours/week (or 80 hours/month)
- Can include work for pay, in-kind, and unpaid work
- Must be verified during application and renewal



Work Program

- Participating in a work program 20 hours/week (or 80 hours/month)
- Can include SNAP E&T, WIOA, and certain other workforce programs
- Verified electronically in most cases



School Enrollment

- Can meet requirement if enrolled in college or technical school
- Must be enrolled at least half time

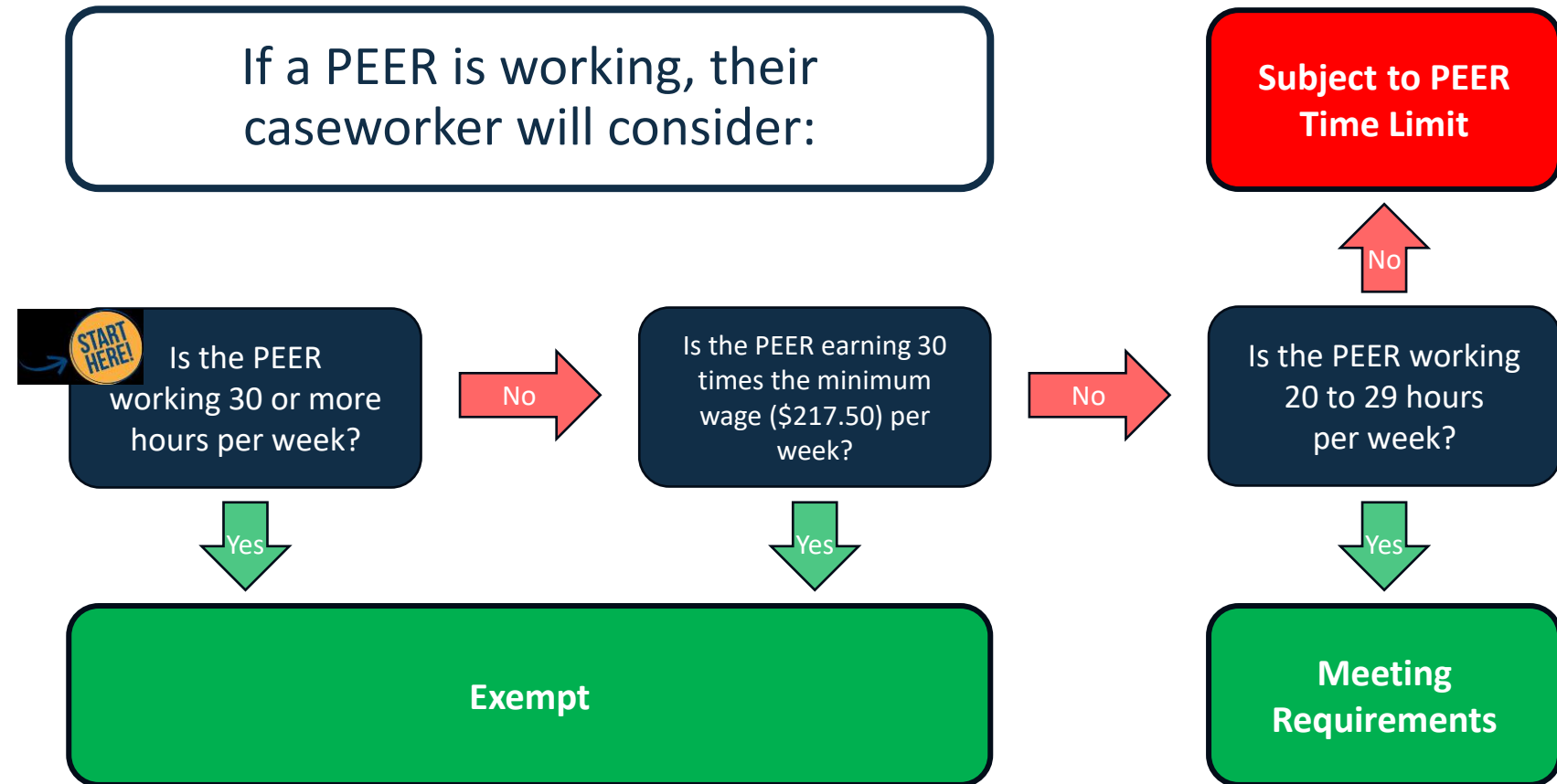


Volunteering

- Can be done alone or in combination with work or work program to overall hours requirement
- Verified by PA 1938 form

Exempt through Wages

- PEERs may also be *exempt* if they earn wages of \$217.50 per week or more before taxes
- This applies even if they don't work 20 hours per week
- Caseworkers will assess exemption during application or renewal



Finding Employment & Training and Volunteer Opportunities

- DHS partners with employment & training programs to help SNAP recipients. Programs include:
 - Keystone Education Yields Success (KEYS)
 - Employment Advancement Retention Network (EARN)
 - SNAP JETS (formerly called SNAP 50/50)
- Visit www.dhs.pa.gov/work to connect to more information on these programs.
- Coming soon:
 - Launching volunteer search on www.pa-navigate.org
 - Looking to certify more employment & training programs as options available to help meet the work requirement.

Verifying Work and Participation

- Verification must be submitted to caseworker by uploading to COMPASS or My COMPASS PA mobile app OR submitting in-person
- Work verification can include pay stubs
- Volunteer verification form must be completed with organization you're volunteering with
- Forms and more information: www.dhs.pa.gov/work
- Questions? Call the Statewide Customer Service Center at 1-877-395-8930 (in Philadelphia, call 215-560-7226)

Employment

Design LLC
(00-0012345)
41, Any Street
Any Town, CA 94578

Earnings Statement
Check Number: 2810

| Employee Information | | Pay Date | Pay Period | Pay Schedule |
|--|--|--------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| George Mathew (XXX-XX-9999) 1839, Echo Lane San Leandro, CA 94578 | | Jan 06, 2023 | Jan 01, 2023 to Jan 07, 2023 | Weekly |

| Earnings | Rate | Hours | Total | YTD | Taxes / Deductions | Current | YTD |
|----------------|---------|-------|----------|----------|--------------------|---------|---------|
| Gross Earnings | \$15.00 | 40 | \$600.00 | \$600.00 | Federal | \$36.81 | \$36.81 |
| | | | | | Medicare | \$8.70 | \$8.70 |
| | | | | | FICA | \$37.20 | \$37.20 |
| | | | | | CA State | \$9.73 | \$9.73 |
| | | | | | CA SDI | \$5.40 | \$5.40 |

| Time Off | Start Balance | Spent Hours | Earned Hours | End Balance |
|--------------|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Earned Leave | 40.00 | 16.00 | 8.00 | 32.00 |

| YTD Gross | YTD Taxes / Deductions | YTD Net Pay | Gross | Taxes / Deductions | Net Pay |
|-----------|------------------------|-------------|----------|--------------------|----------|
| \$600.00 | \$96.84 | \$503.16 | \$600.00 | \$96.84 | \$503.16 |

Design LLC
41, Any Street
Any Town, CA 94578

Check Number: 2810
Pay Date: 01/06/2023

Deposited to: **George Mathew**
the Account of: 1839, Echo Lane, San Leandro, CA 94578

Amount: FIVE HUNDRED THREE DOLLARS AND SIXTEEN CENTS \$503.16

THIS IS NOT A CHECK.
DIRECT DEPOSIT NON-NEGOTIABLE

Volunteering

RESET FIELDS

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

Community Service | Volunteer Verification Form

INSTRUCTIONS: Please mail or FAX the completed form within 10 days of receipt to the office listed above.
See reverse for detailed directions. Questions? Call the Statewide Customer Service Center at 1-877-395-8930.

SECTION I. Volunteer / Agency Information

Name of volunteer: _____ Birthdate: _____ Last 4 digits of SSN: _____
 Address of volunteer: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____
 Name of agency: _____ Agency Phone Number: _____
 Address of agency: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP code: _____

SECTION II. Community Service Activity Information

| Start Date of Service (Expected End Date of Service) Transposition Provided by Agency at No Cost? | YES NO (circle one) | Monthly Schedule of Service | | Description of Tasks Performed: |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | Estimated Weekly Hours | Estimated Monthly Hours | |
| Week 1 | | | 1.1 | |
| Week 2 | | | 2.1 | |
| Week 3 | | | 3.1 | |
| Total Monthly Estimated Hours | | | | |

SECTION III. Agency Certification

COMMUNITY SERVICE AGENCY CERTIFICATION:
I hereby certify that our organization is a nonprofit with 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) status, a federal, state, or local government agency, or a municipality of a township that meets all applicable federal, state, and local laws and the above-stated criteria as required with our agency to properly receive service for the hours and period indicated above. I understand that this form is used to verify up to 60 months of community service participation. I also understand that our agency must report failure by a participant to meet the required monthly hours to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services within 10 days from the date the change occurred.

X _____
Signature of Site Manager Name of Site Manager (please print) Date _____

SECTION IV. Reporting Changes (Complete this section if updating an existing form. Mail or fax within 10 days from date change occurred.)

| Actual End Date | Other Changes (Please explain below) | Signature of Site Manager | Name of Site Manager | Date |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|------|
| | | X | | |

*No more than six months from start date. If community service is expected to continue beyond six months, enter six months from start date. A new form is required every six months.

PH 100 3/22

What Can SNAP Recipients Expect?

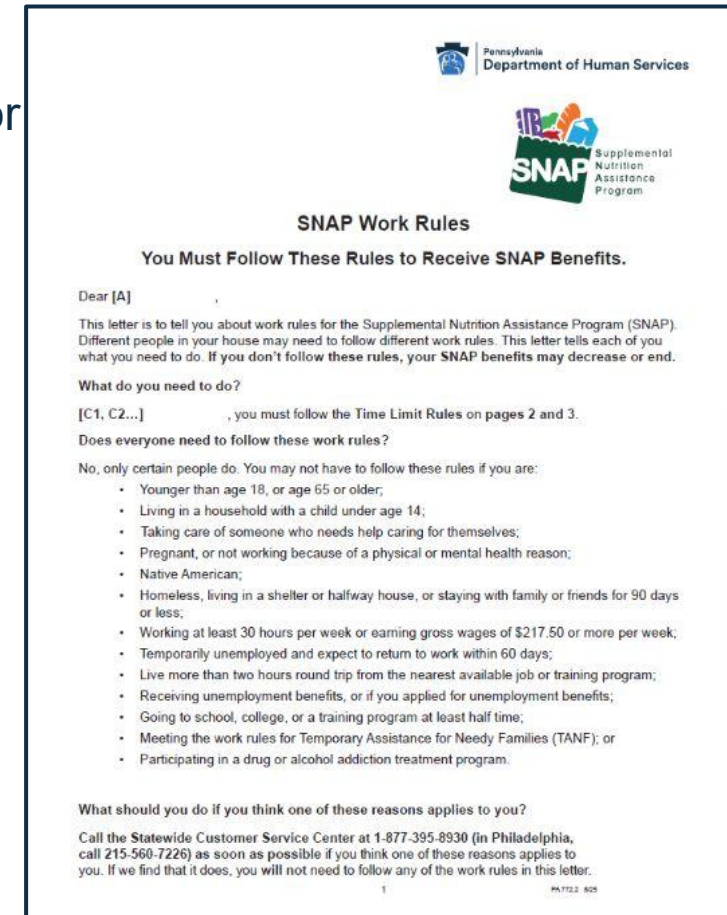


How will SNAP recipients be notified?

- DHS helping screen SNAP PEERS who are now subject to work requirements for exemptions.
- Notices going out to people who must meet requirement about potential exemptions – **please complete and return to County Assistance Office**
- If a person does not meet the work rules or an exemption:
 - A single member household will receive another notice at three months telling them their SNAP will end.
 - A multi-member household, in most cases, may see a reduction in benefits.



SNAP recipients should keep their address up to date with DHS and United States Postal Service so they receive these and other important notices from DHS.



If you need food right away

- Some SNAP applicants receive **expedited SNAP**
 - If eligible, issued within five days of date they apply – talk to your County Assistance Office if you are in an emergency
- If someone applying for SNAP believes they meet an exemption or the work requirement, they should mention that at their SNAP interview.
 - Must then provide verification within the 30-day application period
- Find local help:
 - www.pa-navigate.org
 - Call 211 or visit www.pa211.org
 - www.feedingpa.org

If you're able to help – support your local food banks and pantries!



How to help others

- Communications toolkit available at www.dhs.pa.gov/work, includes:
 - General information to share in newsletters, emails, etc. – however you communicate
 - Social media graphics
 - How-to videos (How to verify you're meeting requirement – more coming soon!)

If something is missing – info on how to contact DHS Communications to add to toolkit

- Human Services Helpers – pennsylvaniaDHS.substack.com – sign up for updates and ways you can help your constituents!

Please use these resources!

November 1 Changes Materials

Print/Newsletter text for November 1 Changes

- Letter: SNAP Work and Reporting Requirements Are Changing – Make Sure You Meet Them
- Letter: How do I Meet New SNAP Work and Reporting Requirements?
- Newsletter: Are You Exempt from Work Requirements?

Social Graphics for November 1 Changes

(Right click, save image to share)



Staying Connected

SNAP Recipients should:

- Report if they start meeting an exemption
- Keep contact information up to date with DHS and United States Postal Service
- Download the myCOMPASS PA app
- Sign up for electronic notices and texts – www.dhs.pa.gov/text

Questions?



Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Ryan Prater, and I am the Director of Public Policy at Feeding Pennsylvania, the state association of Pennsylvania's nine Feeding America-affiliated food banks. Our role is to work behind the scenes to strengthen Pennsylvania's charitable food network. We coordinate state and federal food purchasing programs like the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS) to ensure equitable distribution throughout the Commonwealth. We convene food banks and food pantries to share best practices. And we advocate for public policies that reduce hunger and get Pennsylvanians back on their feet in times of crisis.

Pennsylvania's Charitable Food System

Food insecurity has increased by 44% over the past two years in Pennsylvania. When neighbors don't have the resources to put enough food on the table, they usually turn to their local charitable food partner such as a food pantry, soup kitchen, or other social service provider. Many of these partners are faith-based and volunteer-led organizations.

Feeding Pennsylvania's nine food banks are the backbone of this network, coordinating logistics and serving as distribution hubs for thousands of food distribution organizations across the Commonwealth. Every day, our food banks have a fleet of trucks on the road picking up donations, dropping off deliveries, and ensuring every community, even our most rural, has access to food. Last year, Feeding Pennsylvania food banks shared over 237 million pounds of food with over 2,750 community-based partner agencies, serving an average of 800,000 Pennsylvania households every month.

Our food bank network is efficient, safe, and effective at reducing hunger and food waste in the Commonwealth. Our decentralized model allows us to react quickly to unplanned crises like plant closures, natural disasters, and economic downturns. Further, our statewide scale, food safety standards, and national affiliation with Feeding America allows us to be important partners alongside our agricultural industry, creating new markets for farmers and stepping in when existing markets are in disequilibrium, like we experienced with the surplus of apples a few years ago.

Pennsylvania's charitable food system is resilient, and we are here to ensure no Pennsylvanian goes hungry. But the scope of hunger in Pennsylvania is much larger than what charity and non-profits can address alone. That's where federal food assistance programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the

Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and school meals come in. Used in conjunction with the charitable food network, these programs ensure no child, family, or senior goes to bed hungry.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

SNAP is the nation's largest anti-hunger and nutrition program, enrolling about 1.8 million Pennsylvanians as of January 2026. For every meal provided by the charitable food system, SNAP provides nine. If SNAP disappeared, the charitable food system would not be able to fill that gap, and Pennsylvanians would go hungry.

We saw a glimpse of SNAP's impact in November, when the federal government stopped SNAP payments for millions of families. Demand at food banks surged by more than 10%. With the help of emergency state funding, our food banks worked hard to meet this spike in demand and ensure access to food — food banks are built to support our communities in times of crisis like these. Yet meeting that level of surge is not sustainable in the long term (see appendix 1).

SNAP is a bridge to opportunity for millions of Pennsylvanians every year. When a neighbor loses their job or a working mom can't make ends meet, SNAP helps them afford their groceries, freeing up resources for other necessities like rent or utilities. This restores stability to families facing a temporary setback and offers them a hand as they dig themselves out.

SNAP is supplemental in name and design – the average benefit is only \$6 per day – and applicants must prove their income, certify their employment, and complete an interview before receiving benefits. Benefits must be used at approved EBT retailers and can purchase only eligible food items. Prepared foods like rotisserie chickens and the salad bar are not eligible to be purchased with SNAP due to federal rules.

Not only does SNAP provide the stability families need during times of crisis, it's also a sound investment. Every \$1 of SNAP generates \$1.50¹ in economic activity, supporting everyone along the food supply chain from the farmer to the truck driver to the cashier. Increased SNAP participation is associated with lower rates of diabetes, and SNAP participants had fewer inpatient admissions, leading to \$2,360 lower annual Medicaid spending per person.² Investing in SNAP can be a tool that helps balance the budget and supports local economies.

¹ [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) - Key Statistics and Research | Economic Research Service](#)

² Hinckley, J. (2025, November 5). *Understanding the evidence: SNAP and health*. University of Pennsylvania Leonard Davis Institute of Health Economics. <https://ldi.upenn.edu/our-work/research-updates/understanding-the-evidence-snap-and-health/>

Hunger affects all kinds of people: folks in the cities and in rural communities. Kids. Seniors. Military families. Our own neighbors or friends. SNAP is there for anyone who hits a rough patch and just needs a little bit of help to get back on their feet.

Impacts of H.R. 1

Today, states across the country, including Pennsylvania, are navigating complex changes to SNAP eligibility requirements while also working to avoid financial penalties included in federal H.R. 1. Federal guidance has been chaotic and confusing, leading to challenges in implementation on the state agency and community level. Nonetheless, food banks are committed to following federal guidelines while also ensuring no Pennsylvanian goes hungry.

New work requirements, including the expiration of waivers and expanded age ranges, have created an immediate burden on neighbors and the charitable food network. Last summer, the Department of Human Services (DHS) estimated that approximately 144,000 Pennsylvanians could lose SNAP benefits due to work requirement provisions in H.R. 1. So far, DHS estimates more than 80,000 have lost benefits. Kicking people off SNAP does nothing to address hunger, it only forces more people to rely on the charitable food network. And while well-intentioned, work requirements don't meaningfully set people up for success if they are not paired with investments in employment and training activities. In fact, adding additional paperwork and bureaucratic red tape can even force some people who meet the work requirements off SNAP.

Cost-sharing provisions in H.R. 1 also pose a significant threat to Pennsylvania's ability to operate a SNAP program. Beginning this year, all states must pay 75% of SNAP administrative costs while the federal government pays 25%, an increase from the previous 50/50 split. This is plainly an unfunded mandate from the federal government. This year, DHS has requested \$87 million for SNAP administrative costs while that number will annualize to approximately \$120 million once fully implemented.

Beginning next year, states will also be subject to a benefit cost-share. Using a sliding scale based on a state's Payment Error Rate (PER), states could have to pay up to 15% of the cost of SNAP benefits in their state. In Pennsylvania, this could range from \$600-700 million if we received the maximum penalty. Thankfully, Pennsylvania's PER is declining, and if it is below 6%, we will not be penalized. However, it is something that will need to be monitored, and potentially budgeted for, every year.

Lastly, smaller provisions included in H.R. 1 such as changes to the home utility allowance, immigrant eligibility, and thrifty food plan will further erode SNAP benefits and reduce food security in Pennsylvania.

Role of the General Assembly

First and foremost, SNAP administration must be adequately funded in this year's state budget. Without SNAP, Pennsylvanians will go hungry and food banks will not be able to keep up with demand for food assistance. I urge the General Assembly to fully meet the DHS budget request for SNAP.

If there is an opportunity for investment in addition to administrative costs, I encourage the General Assembly to evaluate two areas: SNAP outreach and employment and training. SNAP outreach is an important part of the equation as it helps connect Pennsylvanians in need with the SNAP program. SNAP outreach funding is used to match private funding from community-based organizations like food banks. Services provided include SNAP hotlines and application assistance, further reducing the burden on DHS's internal system.

SNAP employment and training (E&T) programs are another important tool in the toolbox as we assess opportunities to assist neighbors on the path to self-sufficiency. Pennsylvania's workforce development programs are already oversubscribed and underfunded, and we are worried that the system will not be able to handle the increase in clients due to new SNAP and Medicaid work requirements. We are encouraged by recent steps DHS has taken to address the gap in E&T programs but remain concerned that even those who seek these training opportunities may be turned away.

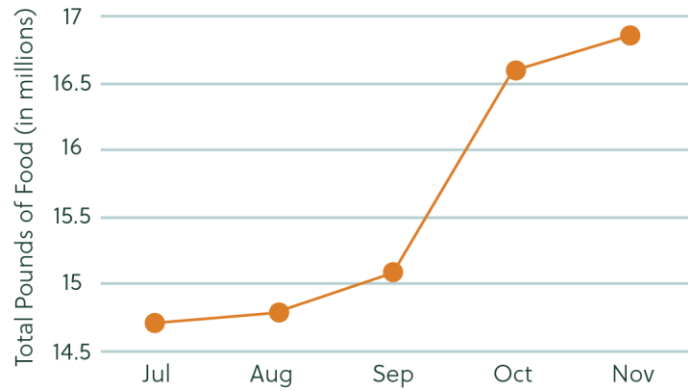
Additionally, last year there were several provisions related to SNAP included in the state budget that we are excited to see move forward. This includes studying the transition to secure, 'chipped' EBT cards, moving towards a uniform payment distribution schedule, and the establishment of a SNAP nutrition incentive program. We are grateful for the support of the General Assembly in securing these provisions and look forward to their implementation.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not elevate our state budget request for the State Food Purchase Program (SFPP) line-item within the Department of Agriculture. SNAP is a critical first line of defense against hunger, but we know many Pennsylvanians still cannot make ends meet. Additionally, many Pennsylvanians earn too much to qualify for SNAP but still cannot put food on the table. This includes seniors whose social security doesn't stretch as far as it once did, and working families who are working multiple jobs but cannot keep up with the cost of housing, utilities, and other necessities. The State Food Purchase Program and PA Agricultural Surplus System help to keep food banks resourced with food to respond to the increased demand from the rising costs of everyday essentials and from those losing access to SNAP.

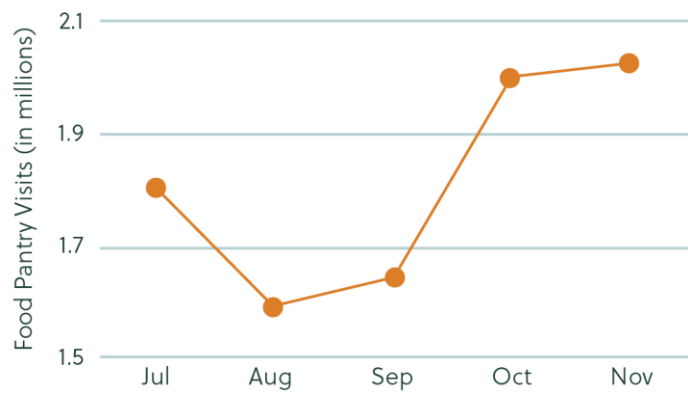
Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I look forward to answering your questions.

Appendix 1

Pounds of Food Distributed by Month (Statewide)



Pantry Visits by Month (Statewide)





Testimony

Submitted on behalf of the
Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry

Before the:
House Human Services Committee

Presented by:
Aaron Riggleman
Manager, Government Affairs

Ryan Office Building
Harrisburg, PA
April 13th, 2026

417 Walnut Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101-1902
717.720.5472 phone
Pachamber.org

Good morning Chairman Williams, Chairman Heffley and members of the committee. On behalf of the Pennsylvania Chamber of Business and Industry, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on SNAP work requirements and their impact on Pennsylvania's workforce.

The PA Chamber represents employers of all sizes and across every industry in every region of the Commonwealth. Many of our members share a common and pressing challenge: they cannot find enough workers to meet demand. While Pennsylvania has made progress since the pandemic, workforce participation remains below pre-2020 levels, and demographic trends including an aging population and declining birth rates make clear that this is a long-term structural issue rather than a temporary disruption.

Across Pennsylvania, employers in manufacturing, construction, healthcare, hospitality, energy, logistics, agriculture, and childcare continue to report persistent job openings. As of December 2025, Pennsylvania had approximately 243,000 open jobs, illustrating the scale of unmet workforce demand across the Commonwealth¹. These are not abstract statistics. They represent delayed infrastructure projects, reduced hospital capacity, closed restaurant hours, constrained housing supply, and slowed economic growth. Rural communities face especially acute shortages, but workforce challenges are evident in urban, suburban, and rural regions alike. Simply put, Pennsylvania needs more people participating in the workforce.

¹ https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/news-release/jobopeningslaborturnover_pennsylvania.htm

Pennsylvania also faces significant demographic headwinds that will make workforce challenges even more pronounced in the years ahead. The growth rate of the Commonwealth's older adult population is more than 20 times higher than the growth rate of its overall population, meaning retirements are expected to increasingly outpace new entrants into the labor force².

Workforce shortages are particularly acute in the skilled trades. Electricians, welders, construction workers, and other skilled professionals are critical to building housing, maintaining infrastructure, and supporting energy and manufacturing projects throughout Pennsylvania. Industry projections indicate that the Commonwealth could face a shortage of nearly 300,000 skilled trade workers by 2030³. Addressing this challenge will require greater participation in the workforce along with stronger pathways into apprenticeship, credentialing, and technical training programs that prepare individuals for these high-demand careers.

Taken together, these challenges point to a broader reality: Pennsylvania's workforce shortage is not entirely driven by a lack of people, but by gaps in workforce participation. Addressing this issue will require encouraging more individuals into the labor force and better connecting them to employment opportunities. One important part of that conversation is how public assistance programs, including SNAP, can support and strengthen workforce participation.

² <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/aging/newsroom/pa-is-a-top-place-to-retire--why-aging-in-the-commonwealth-will-only-get-better->

³ <https://lvb.com/pennsylvania-skilled-trades-workforce/>

In that context, we recognize that many individuals receiving SNAP benefits want to work but face barriers that make employment difficult. These barriers can include skills gaps, transportation challenges, childcare needs, or a lack of information about available training and job opportunities. For that reason, the discussion around SNAP work requirements should be framed as how public assistance programs can serve as effective bridges to stable, long-term employment.

SNAP plays an important and necessary role in supporting food security for low-income households. Administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services with federal support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the program provides stability during periods of hardship and helps families avoid deeper economic crisis. That stability can be essential in allowing individuals to focus on finding work, completing training, or reentering the labor market. Food security and workforce participation are not competing priorities. In many cases, they reinforce each other.

For context, current federal SNAP policy already includes work requirements. Able-bodied adults between the ages of 18 and 64 and without dependents are generally required to work, volunteer, or participate in job training or education programs for at least 20 hours per week, or 80 hours per month, in order to maintain eligibility for benefits. Individuals who do not meet these requirements are typically limited to three months of SNAP benefits within a three-year period.

Within this framework, there is an opportunity to strengthen the connection between assistance and employment. For able-bodied adults without dependents, we

support reasonable and consistently applied work requirements that strengthen the connection between public benefits and workforce engagement. When thoughtfully designed and implemented, work requirements can encourage individuals to connect with job training, education, and employment services. They can help reduce long-term dependency on assistance while expanding Pennsylvania's available labor pool at a time when employers across industries are in need of talent.

The value of this approach is reflected in the well-documented benefits of employment. Stable employment remains one of the strongest predictors of long-term economic mobility. Individuals who are steadily employed are more likely to achieve financial independence and improved health outcomes, and they are more likely to build strong connections to their communities. Research has also shown that stable employment can reduce criminal activity by providing consistent income, structure, and opportunity. Work provides income, but it also provides dignity, purpose, and stability. Public policy should reflect the value of work while ensuring support remains available for those who truly need it.

To fully realize the benefits of work requirements, implementation matters. For this program to be effective, it must be simple to understand, consistent in its application, and efficient to administer. The system should be easy for applicants to navigate and practical for employers and workforce partners to participate in. Participants should have clear expectations about what is required of them, while employers should have a straightforward and predictable way to connect individuals with job opportunities, training programs, and work experience. A streamlined system that emphasizes clarity,

consistency, and accessibility will better serve program participants, employers, and taxpayers alike.

In addition to strong program design, alignment with workforce needs is critical. Reskilling and upskilling must also be central to this conversation. Pennsylvania's economy is evolving, and many of today's in-demand jobs require postsecondary credentials, technical skills, or industry-recognized certifications. Training programs should encourage a focus on high-demand occupations and coordination with workforce development boards, community colleges, career and technical education providers, and apprenticeship programs so participants are training for real jobs that exist in today's economy.

Successfully doing so will require close collaboration between the public and private sectors. The business community stands ready to be a partner in this effort. The PA Chamber and our members are excited to work with policymakers, the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, and workforce system partners to identify priority occupations, support credentialing pathways, expand work-based learning opportunities, and improve communication between employers and program administrators. Aligning workforce development strategies with public assistance programs can produce meaningful results for both individuals and the broader economy.

We appreciate the Committee's attention to this important issue and look forward to working collaboratively to strengthen both our workforce and the individuals SNAP is designed to support.