

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT SNAP SO FAR

Benefit Access Partnership

Communications Toolkit

We've created a communications toolkit to help organizations support their communities during the SNAP situation. It offers clear, practical communication resources to inform SNAP recipients and prepare them for upcoming changes, help ensure continued access to benefits or provide direction to find additional resources.

Currently this toolkit is focused on addressing lapses in SNAP due to the federal government shutdown and changes to SNAP that begin November 1. The toolkit will continue to be updated, including with more details on Medicaid work requirements, as we learn more.

SNAP changes are a result of the federal reconciliation bill, signed in July 2025. H.R. 1 introduces significant changes to Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). These changes may cause additional paperwork, confusion and could lead to loss of benefits for some individuals due to changes in eligibility, missed deadlines, or incorrectly filed documentation.

The shutdown has complicated a complex situation, as we were already preparing for new work requirements and eligibility changes. We will update and adjust this toolkit as more information arises.

Updated October 30, 2025

This document is being updated regularly. To ensure you have the latest version, visit commsols.com/HungerRescue



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Federal Shutdown

While this toolkit is focused on changes to SNAP and Medicaid stemming from the passage of H.R.1 last July, it is being released in the midst of a federal government shutdown with a profound impact on SNAP and food access. Here are important points to know:

- SNAP benefits **will not** be issued beginning November 1 and are **delayed** until funding is restored and the federal government shutdown ends.
- **Cuyahoga Job and Family Services offices remain open** and processing applications and documentation to support residents so they receive benefits when funding is restored.
- Even if funding becomes available from a federal, state, or local source, **there may be delays** in benefit processing that cause a lapse in access to SNAP for families.
- **Benefits available on EBT cards on October 31 can be used in November.**
- Once funding is restored, November SNAP benefits should be issued retroactively.
- Other programs, WIC food benefits and local operations, TANF, childcare assistance, and Medicaid should not be impacted in early November.
- **Help is available.** Our community is ramping up to meet the increased urgent need for food assistance at least through the first weeks of November.

Local Resources for Help

Call 2-1-1 or Chat at 211oh.org: County government, Greater Cleveland Foodbank, and others are partnering with 2-1-1 to ensure information is updated including how to connect with Cuyahoga Job and Family Services and where to go for help during the SNAP lapse.

Community Resource Center offers a one-stop shop with a free healthy-choice market and 15+ onsite agency partners who can assist with healthcare, employment, housing and more. Learn more at <https://www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/get-help/community-resource-center>

Pantry Locator Tool allows you to enter your ZIP code to generate a list of partners that serve your area with food pantries, hot meals, and mobile distributions.

<https://www.greaterclevelandfoodbank.org/get-help/find-food>

GCFB Help Center is dedicated to connecting food-insecure individuals with the assistance they need, including over-the-phone applications for SNAP, Medicaid, and other public benefits. Calls are free and confidential at 216-738-2067.

Key Messages

Support the community with clear messages and actions

To best support our community members, it's important to focus on what's changing now and what actions people can take right away. This section highlights key messages you can use across different communication channels, all of which are reflected in the templates throughout this toolkit.

General messages

- **Don't panic.** Our organization can help you understand the changes and stay covered.
- Changes are coming to SNAP. New federal rules will affect who qualifies, what's required, and how benefits are managed.
- These changes may impact your eligibility, benefit amount, or renewal process. **We'll help you navigate what's new. Or connect you to people who can.**

Establish the changes

- Congress passed a federal law that changes how Medicaid and SNAP work. These changes began to take effect November 1, 2025.
- If you receive Medicaid or SNAP, you may need to meet new work requirements or submit additional paperwork.
- Some current enrollees may no longer qualify for Medicaid or SNAP. We will work to connect you with available resources in our community.

Where to get help

- 2-1-1 is a resource available 24/7. Connect by dialing 2-1-1 or chat online at www.211oh.org
- You can also sign up for text alerts to be notified of changes in your benefits as they happen. To receive text alerts you can sign up online using the [Ohio Benefits Self-Service Portal](#) or by calling 1-844-640-6446. Be ready to provide your zip code, social security number, and date of birth.

Explain the changes

SNAP - New Snap Work Requirements

- SNAP's three-month time limit, which limits recipients to receiving SNAP for only 3 months out of every 3 years **NOW APPLIES TO ALL ADULTS** aged 18-64, unless they are living with a child under age 14, participating in work activities for 20 hours a week, or are otherwise exempt.
- Previously **VETERANS, INDIVIDUALS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS**, and former **FOSTER YOUTH** (those aged 24 or younger and in foster care on their 18th birthday) were exempt from work requirements. If one of these categories applies to you, you may need to meet new eligibility requirements and submit new documentation.
- The only **NON-CITIZENS** still eligible for SNAP are U.S. non-citizen nationals, lawful permanent residents after 5 years, Cuban and Haitian entrants, and migrants from the Compact of Free Association. All other legal immigrants, including refugees and asylum recipients, are no longer eligible for SNAP benefits.
 - If you believe you may have been incorrectly discontinued, please reach out to the Cuyahoga County Welcome Center.
- **WORK** can include paid employment, volunteer hours, treatment programs, or education programs
- Individuals may meet an **EXEMPTION** from work requirements that requires them to submit documentation if they are:
 - Physically or mentally unable to work
 - Caring for a child under 14 or incapacitated person
 - Participating in an alcohol or drug treatment program
 - In school or training program but may need to submit documentation.

Background for Medicaid, on the horizon

- For the first time, there will be federally mandated work requirements in the Medicaid program.
- The Medicaid expansion population, those who are ages 19-64, without a disability and with adjusted gross income less than 138% Federal Poverty Level (FPL) will need to meet new work requirements and renew Medicaid benefits every 6 months.
- **We do not know if work requirements will begin in 2026 or 2027 in Ohio.**
- Changes to Medicaid based on citizenship will be effective October 1, 2026.
- Currently all Medicaid recipients have a potential for 3 months of retroactive coverage, or for their past medical bills to be paid by Medicaid. In November 2027, the Expansion population will have retroactive eligibility for up to one month, and all other Medicaid categories have potential for eligibility up to two months prior.

Encourage action

- Update your contact information and sign up for text alerts to avoid missing important notices.
- If you receive a notice asking for documents, respond quickly to avoid losing coverage.
- If you think you qualify for an exemption, submit proof to CJFS right away.
- You may be asked to verify your work, education, or caregiving status. Keep records and respond to requests promptly.

Email strategy and templates

Nonprofits and community partners can support clients through a phased email campaign that delivers timely, relevant, and actionable information. The email templates in this toolkit are designed to guide communication efforts across three stages: preparing for change, taking action, and staying on track. Each message should be adapted to reflect your organization's voice, timing, and formatting preferences.

Prepare recipients for changes

Email

Subject lines:

- Important: New SNAP requirements – take action now
- SNAP requirements are changing – stay informed
- Changes to SNAP are coming. Here's what to do.

Email Body:

A new federal law will change how SNAP benefits work for many people. These changes may affect:

- Who qualifies
- What's required to stay enrolled
- How benefits are renewed or managed

Here's what you need to know:

- Adults aged 55–64 are now subject to SNAP work requirements.
- Parents of children aged 14 and older, without younger children, must meet work requirements.
- Veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, and former foster youth may no longer be exempt from work requirements.
- Legal immigrants, including refugees and asylum recipients, may lose access to SNAP.
- You may not need to meet work requirements if you have a medical condition, disability, are enrolled in treatment, or caregiving. If you meet these criteria, submit documentation to CJFS right away.

What to do now:

- Make sure your contact info is up to date with CJFS.
- Watch for notices from CJFS and respond quickly.
- If you think you qualify for an exemption, submit proof to CJFS.

Sign up for alerts to avoid missing deadlines.

- Make sure you are notified of changes as they happen. To receive text alerts you can sign up online using the [Ohio Benefits Self-Service Portal](#).
- You can also sign up for text alerts by calling 1-844-640-6446.
 - Select your preferred language
 - Select option 2 for help with Medical, food, cash or childcare.
 - Enter your zip code, social security number, and date of birth.
 - The system will read you a status of your benefits.
 - In the self-service menu, press 2 for text alerts.

Text strategy and templates

Text messaging is an effective way to reach participants with timely updates and clear calls to action. SMS can reinforce key messages, guide recipients to helpful resources, and encourage early engagement with new requirements. To maximize impact, SMS campaigns should work alongside other outreach methods like email, flyers, and direct mail. As you plan your messaging strategy, keep these best practices in mind:

- Keep messages under 160 characters to ensure compatibility across all devices.
- Use shortened URLs to link users to detailed information or tools. All of the content in this kit and links to other resources can be found at commsols.com/HungerRescue
- Schedule messages thoughtfully; mid-morning or early evening tends to yield better engagement.

Text templates

What's going on with SNAP right now? Stay connected: [SHORT URL]

Big changes are coming to SNAP. Learn what's new and how to stay covered: [SHORT URL]

New rules may affect your benefits. Learn what's changing: [SHORT URL]

SNAP rules are changing. Update your info and sign up for alerts: [SHORT URL]

Social media posts and templates

Social media is a vital tool for reaching a wide audience with fast, accessible updates. The sample posts and graphics below are designed to help organizations share key updates in a clear and engaging way. These posts should help clients understand what actions they need to take and where to find support.

Social media graphics and captions can be found in our [Dropbox](#)

Social media captions can be used interchangeably with the social media graphics found in our [Dropbox](#). Please use the assets that best serve your audiences or create captions of your own.

You can tag Cuyahoga County in your posts. Their handles are:

Facebook: @CuyahogaCounty

Instagram: @cuyahogacounty

LinkedIn: @cuyahoga-county

X/Twitter: @CuyahogaCounty

Examples of graphics



Interested in additional graphics that are not available in the Dropbox? Please send requests to Madison at mvanepps@communitysolutions.com

More resources

- [Cleveland Area Food Bank Resources](#)
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service [FAQ about SNAP Eligibility](#)
- [Cuyahoga County Shutdown and SNAP FAQ](#)
- [2-1-1](#) available 24/7
- [Ohio Association of Food Bank FAQs](#)
- [Cuyahoga County Welcome Center email](#) or call 216-635-2931

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