



CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES

Preserve SNAP for People with Disabilities

In the U.S., all too often food insecurity and disability go together. Families that include people with disabilities are [two to three times more likely](#) to experience food insecurity than families that have no members with disabilities. Similarly, people experiencing food insecurity have increased likelihood of chronic illness and disability.

SNAP is vitally important for people with disabilities and their families. By increasing access to adequate, nutritious food, the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#) plays a key role in reducing hunger and helping people with disabilities to maximize their health and participate in their communities.

- Approximately [11 million children, adults, and seniors with disabilities](#) received SNAP in 2015, or roughly one in four SNAP participants, using an inclusive definition of “disability.”
- Roughly [4.4 million households](#) with non-elderly adults with disabilities received SNAP in 2016, using SNAP’s narrow administrative definition of “disability.”
- Non-elderly adults with disabilities who receive SNAP have very low incomes, averaging [only about \\$12,000 per year](#) in 2016.
- SNAP benefits are extremely modest, averaging [\\$187 per month](#) for non-elderly adults with disabilities in 2016 – or just \$6 per day.

Congress should reject cuts to SNAP, including proposals to cut off or reduce SNAP benefits, narrow eligibility, or force more people to navigate harsh and unnecessary program rules. Cutting SNAP benefits would only make it harder for people with disabilities and their families to access adequate, nutritious food, to participate in their communities, or to work and increase their economic self-sufficiency.

Cuts to SNAP in the Agriculture and Nutrition Act (H.R. 2) would hurt people with disabilities and their families. As reported by the House Committee on Agriculture on April 18, 2018, H.R. 2 would cut off or reduce SNAP benefits for an estimated 2 million people living in 1 million households over the next 10 years. Many people with disabilities and their families would be hurt by these cuts. Small increases in the proposed bill would be insufficient to make up for significant benefit cuts.

- **New, highly punitive “work requirements” in H.R. 2 would cut off SNAP benefits for many people – including in families with children, adults, and seniors with disabilities.** Federal law currently limits SNAP eligibility for adults age 18 to 49 without dependents to just 3 months out of every 3 years – unless they can engage in work or job training activities at least half time or qualify for an exemption. This cuts off food assistance at a time when people need it most

and does not result in increased employment and earnings. At least 500,000 low-income people nationwide [lost SNAP in 2016](#) due to this time limit.

Many people with disabilities are already hurt by the current SNAP time limits, despite existing exemptions for people who meet SNAP's disability exception definition (e.g., receive governmental or private benefits on the basis of a disability or are able to document that they are "physically or mentally unfit for employment" ([7 C.F.R. § 273.24\(c\)\(2\)](#)). For example, in a [study of SNAP participants](#) subject to time limits referred to participate in work activities in Franklin County, Ohio, one-third reported a "physical or mental limitation".

H.R. 2 would require SNAP participants age 18 to 60 to prove each month that they worked or engaged in job training for at least 20 hours a week, or qualified for an exemption. A person would lose SNAP for 12 months the first time she fails to meet this requirement and for an extremely harsh 36 months every time after that. H.R. 2 would exempt people who meet SNAP's disability exception definition. However, many people with disabilities need or receive SNAP but do not meet this definition or have not been so identified. Under SNAP, states have no obligation to help people prove they are exempt, even if they have difficulty obtaining the necessary records or verification from a doctor. States also have no obligation to ensure that people with disabilities have access to the full array of services they might need to work – such as accessible transportation, supported employment, and personal care services. People with disabilities often want to work but need additional supports and services to obtain and keep jobs, in addition to facing discrimination and misconceptions about their ability to work.

- **Underfunded work programs would be woefully inadequate to meet training needs.** Proposed new investments in SNAP employment and training programs – funded in large part by benefit cuts – amount to [only about \\$30 per person per month](#). This amount would be grossly insufficient to provide adequate employment services for people subject to proposed new work requirements, including jobseekers with disabilities.
- **New reporting requirements would create major hurdles to benefits.** Proposed new reporting requirements related to eligibility, employment and training, and time limits would be extremely difficult for many people with disabilities to comply with and navigate. For example, ending a decades-old simplification measure and instead requiring people to share utility bills with the SNAP office – or else, see their benefits reduced – is harsh, unnecessary, and burdensome both for SNAP participants and states.

Congress should reject cuts to SNAP under H.R. 2, and instead work on a bipartisan basis to strengthen and protect SNAP as part of the Farm Bill.

Prepared May 7, 2018 by the CCD Poverty Ad Hoc Task Force. For more information, contact Co-Chairs Lisa Ekman, lisa.ekman@nosscr.org, Chris Rodriguez, crodriguez@ndi-inc.org, and T.J. Sutcliffe, sutcliffe@thearc.org.