

## AS NEED PERSISTS: HOUSE VOTES TO SHRINK THE FOOD SAFETY NET FOR FAMILIES

September 2013

Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program (SNAP) is an important lifeline to many low-income families and individuals living at or below the federal poverty line. As such, cuts will have a devastating and detrimental effect on families, states and local economies.



Recently, the House voted to cut billions of dollars from the Supplemental Nutrition Program (SNAP), a program that provides food and nutrition support to more than 47 million individuals, many of whom are children, across the country. The impending cuts, a result of the expiration of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 supplemental funds for the program at the height of the most recent recession, are set to expire this November. Without action from Congress to restore funds, states will lose \$5 billion in fiscal year 2014.

### Rise in SNAP rolls parallels the swelling number of individuals living in poverty in the United States.

In the U.S. more than 47 million individual live at or below the federal poverty line, a number that has increased by more than 14 million since 2009 and has continued to stagnate. During the same period, the SNAP program grew by more than 60 percent. And according to the USDA, more than 3 in 10 individuals who are eligible for SNAP benefits do not receive them.

### Low-income families and households headed by single mothers will be most impacted by cuts to the program

Eighty-three percent of SNAP households live in poverty and 43 percent report incomes 200 percent below the federal poverty line. In 2011, twenty percent of recipients had zero income. It is estimated that cuts to the SNAP program will impact 23 million low-income households, who will experience a monthly cut in benefits of about \$10 per person in the household per month or close to \$400 per year for a family of four.

#### SNAP Cut by Household Size Beginning November 2013

Household Size	ARRA Maximum Benefits Through Oct. 2013	Maximum Benefits Beginning Nov. 2013	Monthly Cut	Total Cut FY 2014
Household of 1	\$200	\$189	-\$11	-\$121
Household of 2	\$367	\$347	-\$20	-\$220
Household of 3	\$526	\$497	-\$29	-\$319
Household of 4	\$668	\$632	-\$36	-\$396

Source: Center for Budget and Policy Priorities. U.S. Department of Agriculture. August 1, 2013

More than three-quarters of families receiving SNAP benefits report having children, an elderly or disabled persons and 56 percent are headed by a single-adult with no spouse.

### **SNAP is an important bridge for the unemployed and underemployed**

SNAP is important support bridge for unemployed and underemployed workers. USDA data show about one in seven people in the U.S. received SNAP and/or were unemployed or underemployed in May of 2013. In fact, between 2007-2011, when unemployment rate rose by 94 percent, the number of individuals receiving SNAP rose by 71 percent. And while the national unemployment rate has begun to inch downward in recent months, the rate among Black and Latinos remain disproportionately high, at 13.4 percent and 9.5 percent respectively.

### **Cuts will have direct impact on state budgets**

States will be left to deal with the fallout from federal cuts to the SNAP Program. In 2011, 45 states and the District of Columbia experienced an increase in SNAP caseloads. Cuts in funding will not only impact current recipients in states, but individuals and families who may need support in the near future. It is estimated that more than \$5 Billion in state funding will be cut from November 2013 to September 2014.

### **CONCLUSION**

Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program (SNAP) is an important lifeline to many low-income families and individuals living at or below the federal poverty line. As such, cuts will have a devastating and detrimental effect on families, states and local economies. They will also increase the economic vulnerability of more than 47 million American and the many more attempting to recover from the most recent economic downturn.