



Government Shutdown Coordination
Hunger Leaders in our Region
Last Updated 10/24/25

Background Information

As of October 1, the federal government is shut down, because Congress did not pass funding legislation. As the shutdown continues — now the second longest in history — with no clear end in sight, the harm caused to our communities is reaching new levels. In addition to federal workers going without pay, SNAP (and likely WIC) benefits will become unavailable starting in November until Congress reaches a bipartisan agreement to reopen the government, or the U.S. Department of Agriculture decides to release contingency funding for SNAP (neither of which is likely in time to avoid a November benefits disruption).

If SNAP benefits are not distributed in November, the effects will be felt immediately. Over 800,000 SNAP recipients in our region will be left without access to the food they need. This is an unprecedented situation, as **SNAP benefits have never lapsed before in the history of the program**. This will likely cause a surge in demand for the charitable food network, as we will be among the only remaining resources for food assistance.

We've heard some states are exploring whether or not they can use state funds to temporarily fund SNAP. However, that is looking unlikely for our service area:

- Pennsylvania's state government still has not passed a state budget. Because of PA's state budget impasse, there is no possible way for PA to allocate state funds.
- As of now, New Jersey's state government has made no indication that they'll be using state funds to cover SNAP, and are messaging to residents to prepare for a delay in benefits.
- You can see updates from Pennsylvania's Department of Human Services [HERE](#), and New Jersey's Department of Human Services [HERE](#).

Pennsylvania DHS has indicated that it will take 10 days to process benefits and get them on the EBT cards of SNAP recipients once the funds are made available from the federal government. Therefore it seems that at this point, even if SNAP funding were to become available right now, there would still be some level of disruption to SNAP benefits come November.

That being said, the situation is frequently evolving. We are continuing to monitor the situation, and hope we can all continue to keep each other informed.

Talking Points

Topline SNAP Lapse Messaging:

- SNAP is our nation's #1 defense against hunger. For every meal food banks provide, SNAP provides 9.
- If SNAP benefits are not distributed in November, the effects will be felt immediately. This will leave over 800,000 people in our region without access to the food they need — including mostly families with children, seniors, and people with disabilities.
- Never in history have SNAP benefits lapsed. This could cause a surge in need for food assistance like we've never seen before.
- This crisis comes at a time when hunger has already been on the rise, and our organizations have already lost federal resources. Crisis on top of a crisis.
- The charitable food network is stepping up to meet this moment. We are here as a resource to our communities, but despite our best efforts, the charitable food network will not be able to fill the gap left by SNAP.
- We urge the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) to release available contingency funding to fund SNAP in the month of November, and we urge Congress to come to a bipartisan agreement to re-open the government.

Additional Talking Points:

- **Pennsylvania food banks are facing a dual crisis**
 - Nearly four months without a state budget, combined with a federal government shutdown, is creating an urgent crisis for millions of hardworking Pennsylvanians struggling to put food on the table and the charitable food network that serves them.
- **The impact of the federal shutdown**
 - When the federal government shuts down, uncertainty begins immediately. Many federal employees and contractors began experiencing paycheck disruptions on October 15, and 2 million Pennsylvanian families, seniors, and children now stand to miss November SNAP payments (\$366 million/month).
- **Missed paychecks and SNAP payments could mean missed meals**
 - Missed paychecks and SNAP payments jeopardize people's ability to afford the food their families need to thrive and to cover other household expenses. Hardworking individuals, including federal employees who help deliver programs like SNAP, will be forced to turn to their local food banks for food assistance until stability is restored.
- **PA food banks are under immense strain**

- This all comes at a time when Pennsylvania food banks are facing the compounding challenges of rising demand and reductions in resources.
 - Rising demand
 - Food insecurity in Pennsylvania has increased more than 40% in the past two years, with 1.7 million Pennsylvanians already experiencing food insecurity before the changes to SNAP made by the OBBB in July and the additional spike in need we are seeing from furloughed federal employees and contractors.
 - A halt in SNAP benefits for 2 million Pennsylvanians in November threatens to overwhelm the charitable food network.
 - Reduction in resources
 - Over the past 9 months, the federal government cut \$1 billion in funding for food purchases (\$13 million in PA) and canceled 94 million pounds of TEFAP food shipments.
 - Because of the state budget impasse, PA food banks haven't received state funds to purchase fresh produce, protein, dairy, and other food items since July.
 - **Despite these challenges, the charitable food network continues to step up for neighbors**
 - Our network of food banks, pantries and meal programs are trusted community resources during times of disruption, and we will continue to do all we can to serve our neighbors facing hunger.
 - We're doing everything we can to make sure our neighbors have access to nutritious food, but we need both state and federal leaders to act.
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Resources

Find Food Resources:

- [United Way 211](#)
- [Philabundance Find Food Map](#)

For SNAP Recipients:

- FAQ for SNAP Recipients: [Feeding Pennsylvania's FAQ sheet](#)
- Note: We've been told that PA DHS will be mailing out information on the SNAP lapse to all Pennsylvania SNAP recipients on Monday 10/27

Data: [Data Dashboards & Reports | Department of Human Services | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#)

Opportunities for Advocacy

Even if Congress does not pass the needed legislation to reopen the government, there are other avenues the Trump Administration — and possibly Congress — can take to keep SNAP funded as the shutdown continues. It is within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s power to release available contingency funding for SNAP, which would fund over 2/3rds of November SNAP benefits. The Administration can also choose to bolster this contingency funding by transferring available funds to ensure that SNAP is fully funded for the month of November and possibly beyond (similar to how they did for WIC in October, and are considering doing for WIC again in November).

However, as of now, the USDA and Administration have signaled that they do not plan on releasing funds to temporarily fund SNAP, though we hope that can change with added public pressure. Congress also seems to be exploring alternative options to keep SNAP funding going, though it is unclear how realistic they are.

Advocacy Actions:

- [SEE HERE](#) for the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities' talking points and advocacy asks regarding the steps the USDA can take now to ensure SNAP recipients receive benefits in November. We can urge our elected officials to put pressure on the USDA and Trump Administration to provide SNAP funding while Congress works to reopen the government.
 - Topline: The Administration must act to try to avert any delay or reduction in SNAP benefits that would hurt 40 million low-income children, seniors, families and others. The Administration must:
 1. Release the contingency funds and instruct states on how to proceed with issuing November SNAP benefits to eligible households; and
 2. Transfer funds to SNAP, since the current contingency fund (\$5-\$6 billion) doesn't cover the cost of SNAP benefits for a full month – just as it did for WIC – to ensure there's no delay and no reduction in benefits.
- [Template for individuals to email their federal legislators](#)
 - This messaging is better suited for Republican legislators than Democratic legislators.
- [Template for food providers to email their state legislators](#)
 - Modify to better suit your organization

Find your Elected Officials:

- House of Representatives: Email Representatives [Fitzpatrick](#), [Boyle](#), [Evans](#), [Dean](#), [Scanlon](#), [Houlahan](#), [Norcross](#), [Van Drew](#), or [Conaway](#). Not sure who your Rep is? [Click here](#) to find out. (Unless you already have a personal contact at your Representative's offices, in which case, email them directly!)
- Senators: Email Senator McCormick [here](#), Senator Fetterman [here](#), Senator Booker [here](#), and Senator Kim [here](#) (Unless you already have a personal contact at your Senators offices, in which case, email them directly!)