

The End of SNAP Emergency Allotments: *A Looming Hunger Cliff in Pennsylvania*

WHAT ARE SNAP EMERGENCY ALLOTMENTS

Since the beginning of the pandemic, SNAP recipients have been temporarily receiving an “extra SNAP” payment in the second half of the month to help them get the food they needed amid the challenges caused by the pandemic. These extra SNAP payments - known as SNAP Emergency Allotments (EAs) - have been a lifeline to struggling Pennsylvanians, particularly as historic inflation has increased the cost of food and other basic necessities. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has approved Pennsylvania’s requests to issue this extra SNAP each month for nearly three years. SNAP benefits are 100% federally-funded.

SNAP EAs provided a total of

\$2 BILLION

to PA households in 2022 alone

Over 1.8 million individuals in over

1 MILLION

PA households receive SNAP each month

EMERGENCY ALLOTMENTS ARE ENDING

The loss of SNAP EAs represents a

36% REDUCTION

in purchasing power for our neighbors who rely on SNAP to help put food on the table

The availability of SNAP EAs was originally tied to the federal Public Health Emergency; however, Congress changed this and put an end to EAs in its 2022 end-of-year spending package. Pennsylvania is one of 32 states where SNAP recipients will get their final extra SNAP payment in February. Starting in March, SNAP recipients will only receive their regular benefit amount in the first half of the month - which can be as low as \$23 per month. This will make it extremely difficult for many SNAP households to afford food to get them through the month.

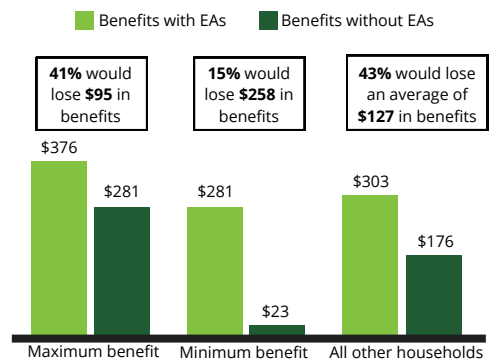
A DEVASTATING LOSS FOR LOW-INCOME PENNSYLVANIANS

SNAP Emergency Allotments have played a key role in reducing hardship for vulnerable Pennsylvanians. The loss of EAs is sure to exacerbate food insecurity across the Commonwealth, especially as households face the painful effects of high food inflation. On average, PA households’ SNAP benefit will be reduced by **\$92 per person per month** when EAs end. Benefits vary by household size, income, and other factors:

- At minimum, households will lose \$95 in SNAP benefits per month (those who normally qualify for maximum benefit for their household size currently get \$95 per month in EAs).

- Many households will lose much more. For instance, many seniors and those with disabilities who live alone qualify for the minimum benefit. They will see a steep, \$258 drop in their monthly benefit (from the \$281 maximum for a household of one to the \$23 minimum).
- There is no phase-out period — the benefit reductions will hit all at once, creating a looming **hunger cliff**.

Loss for Households of One (US Average)



IMPACT ON THE CHARITABLE FOOD NETWORK & THE ECONOMY

The end of EAs is expected to create **extremely high demand** on the charitable food network (food banks, pantries, and congregate meal sites) at a time when we have far less government support, are facing higher food costs, and are already having difficulty meeting existing demand. The charitable food network has been able to keep up with demand for food assistance in the past few challenging years with the help of federal pandemic aid; strong partnerships with government, farmers, producers, retailers, and distributors; and generous support of donors and dedicated volunteers. However, we have already been challenged by rising demand in recent months due to inflation and know we will not be able to fill the gaping hole the loss of EAs will tear in the safety net.

Given SNAP's economic multiplier effect of **\$1.50-\$1.80 for every SNAP dollar spent**, the ripple effect will be felt across our entire economy, with deep impact upon food producers and food retailers. It will particularly hurt grocery stores in economically challenged rural and urban areas where SNAP purchases represent a significant share of their business.

THE BOTTOM LINE: Those who struggle to afford food will be facing a hunger cliff. We need to maximize all other nutrition supports to try to lessen the devastating impact. The charitable food network cannot alone make up for a benefits loss of this magnitude. Pennsylvania must step up to fill the gap and help meet the need by improving access to and increasing participation in federal nutrition programs, as well as increasing state investments in charitable food so that all Pennsylvanians can thrive.

RESOURCES FOR SNAP RECIPIENTS

- Please share [this flyer](#) widely, which explains the coming change, encourages households to report changes that may help to increase their regular SNAP benefit amount, and provides resources.
- For more information and resources, visit the [PA Department of Human Services website](#).

