



Congress Passes 2018 Farm Bill, Reauthorizing SNAP

Early this week, the Farm Bill Conference Committee released its [agreement report](#). The bill subsequently passed in the Senate on Tuesday and in the House of Representatives on Wednesday. The Farm Bill extends the major federal farm, nutrition assistance, and rural development programs for five years including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) which was an area of major disagreement between the bills that passed in the Senate and the House over the summer. Highlights of the Nutrition Title in the conference agreement include:

-
- Modifications to employment and training, and work requirements including the following:
 - Starting in FY 2020, reduces the percentage of SNAP-eligible populations that states may exempt from work requirements from 15% to 12%
 - Requires states to consult with their state workforce development boards when designing their SNAP Employment & Training (SNAP E&T) programs
 - Expands the definition of an E&T program and requires that states provide case management to SNAP participants
 - Increases funding for SNAP E&T from \$90 million to \$104 million for each fiscal year
 - Establishes workforce partnerships as a non-government option for SNAP participants to fulfill their work requirements
 - Improvements to the electronic benefit transfer (EBT) system, including requiring the Department of Agriculture to review and modify EBT regulations as technology evolves, and prohibiting states and contractors from imposing fees for switching or routing EBT transactions
 - Expands the current National Accuracy Clearinghouse in order to create a nationwide Duplicative Enrollment Database which would be used by all states when making eligibility determinations to prevent SNAP participants from receiving duplicative benefits in multiple states

- Requires states to provide the Department of Agriculture with access to state information systems on SNAP-related records for audit and inspection
- Eliminates performance improvement bonuses

The conference agreement does not include the House bill's expansion of work requirements to include SNAP participants age 18 to 59 without young children, or the requirement that the head of household review program rights and responsibilities after two or more lost EBT cards in a 12-month period. The conference agreement does not include the Senate bill's provision allowing states to extend the SNAP certification period for elderly and disabled households who have no earned income up to 36 months. Finally, the conference agreement does not include an APHSA recommended House passed amendment that would have given states the option to contract out certification and eligibility determinations in SNAP much as they can in TANF, CHIP, and other programs.

The full conference report can be found [here](#). The committee's Joint Explanatory Statement, which outlines the differences between the House bill, the Senate bill, and the conference's final agreement can be found [here](#).