



Virginia Cares Initiative

Dear Virginians,

Virginians have been hit hard by the government shutdown, and we want to equip you to support our neighbors. Governor Youngkin established the [Virginia Emergency Nutrition Assistance \(VENA\)](#) initiative to ensure those who rely on SNAP will still be able to feed their families, despite the federal government shutdown. But there are still Virginians impacted who need our help.

Governor Youngkin invites you to join the *Virginia Cares Initiative*, a Commonwealth-wide food drive.

Sign up to participate and you will receive an email with the items needed, as well as drop-off locations and times in your region.

Virginians who serve our nation as civil servants are not getting paid due to the federal government shutdown. There are also approximately 12,000 people who are added to SNAP and who exit SNAP each month in Virginia. That means there will be 12,000 Virginians who may suddenly find themselves in need of SNAP assistance who will not be able to access the program due to the federal shutdown.

Virginia is the only state in the country that is providing nutritional assistance to SNAP recipients, through the VENA initiative, to ensure Virginians can continue to feed their families. Governor Youngkin has made clear that he will not allow Virginians to be used as political pawns.

With Thanksgiving approaching as the shutdown continues, the second longest shutdown in history and the longest full shut down in history, it is time to once again demonstrate the Spirit of Virginia is strong and that Virginians take care of each other.

We know Virginians want to help. Join the [Virginia Cares Initiative](#) today to help our neighbors in need across the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Kelly Gee
Secretary of the
Commonwealth

Janet V. Kelly
Secretary of Health and
Human Resources

Matthew Lohr
Secretary of Agriculture
and Forestry