

**NCSL STANDING COMMITTEE on CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND HUMAN
SERVICES**

POLICY DIRECTIVES AND RESOLUTIONS

LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT

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1 **COMMITTEE:** **CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND HUMAN SERVICES**
2 **POLICY:** **NCSL RECOGNIZES THE IMPACT OF “BENEFIT**
3 **CLIFFS”**
4 **TYPE:** **DIRECTIVE**

5 NCSL supports efforts to minimize “benefits cliffs” or “the cliff effect,” which refers to the
6 sudden decrease in or elimination of public benefits that can occur with a small increase
7 in personal earnings. When income increases families sometimes lose some or all
8 economic supports, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF),
9 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid and health care, child
10 care assistance, housing [subsidies](#) and school breakfast and lunch programs.

11
12 NCSL strongly encourages federal partners to work with states [and territories](#) to find a
13 timely solution that would remove barriers for individuals to enter or remain in the
14 workforce and increase their household income. NCSL supports federal efforts, in
15 conjunction with states [and territories](#), that would explore how to better align TANF,
16 SNAP, Child Care and Medicaid as work supports, from eligibility and enrollment to
17 recertification, training and employment – and how to better align these work supports
18 to mitigate benefit cliffs and increase family financial security.

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COMMITTEE: CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND HUMAN SERVICES

POLICY: NUTRITIONAL PROGRAMS AND ASSISTANCE

TYPE: DIRECTIVE

The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) supports the state-federal partnership to provide nutrition assistance to those in need. State legislators are concerned about the vast numbers of hungry individuals, and particularly the severity of hunger among childhood and aging populations. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and Child Nutrition programs alleviate and prevent hunger and enable families to improve their health and be more productive at school and at work.

SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program/Food Stamps

NCSL urges continued federal funding of the SNAP program at levels sufficient to provide assistance to all ~~who~~that are eligible or in need due to the rising cost of food. NCSL also urges the administration and Congress ~~to~~-continue to making~~e~~ SNAP and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grants more compatible through the broad-based categorical eligibility option. This is a policy option for states by which households may become categorically eligible for SNAP because they qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or state maintenance of effort-funded benefits. In times of economic hardship, SNAP, along with other nutrition assistance programs, offers a vital safety net for low-income Americans.

NCSL opposes proposals that would impose costly administrative burdens and unfunded mandates on state governments or remove state flexibility that is critical to cost-effective and accurate administration of SNAP.

NCSL supports U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) initiatives to provide administrative flexibility through the waiver process by allowing states to implement

administrative efficiencies such as telephone interviews, ~~utilize~~ Combined Application Projects, simplified application forms, ~~a SNAP mobile~~~~the creation of mobile-friendly software for SNAP recipients~~, and ~~develop~~ partnerships with community stakeholder organizations to improve quality, efficiencies, and overall ~~access to~~ nutritious food~~n access~~. NCSL supports additional waivers that increase administrative flexibility during a public health emergency.

SNAP Funding During a Government Shutdown

- NCSL urges Congress to ensure full funding for all who are eligible for SNAP through mandatory appropriations, thereby providing consistent support and stability for both states and program recipients in the event of a government shutdown or premature exhaustion of annual appropriations.
- NCSL urges Congress and the administration to provide automatic authority for SNAP benefits to continue during a federal shutdown using advance appropriations or clearly authorized contingency funding sufficient to cover full monthly benefits.

SNAP Benefits and Program Design

NCSL recommends that the administration and Congress incorporate the following issues regarding SNAP benefits and program access into future legislative and regulatory action:

- Elimination of the annually indexed caps on excess shelter deductions to allow families to deduct high shelter costs;
- Exclusion of the first \$150 a month by a non-custodial parent paid as child support from consideration as income in determining the SNAP allotment;
- Elimination of the rules concerning the value of a vehicle that a recipient may own and still receive SNAP benefits;
- Federal support and technical assistance for state outreach;
- Enhancement and simplification of application and eligibility determination procedures ~~by through~~ supporting online ~~Web-based~~ screening tools, permitting

seniors and ~~the~~ disabled people to apply at Social Security offices, reducing theed length of application forms, and allowing use of joint applications;

- Continuation of state options regarding child support cooperation as a condition of eligibility for SNAP. NCSL supports the elimination of the fee for SNAP recipients' child support collection efforts as a further incentive toward meeting child support -obligationsenforcementparticipation.
- Continuation of state options to disqualify ~~for~~ SNAP -eligible individuals who fail to cooperate with child support enforcement authorities or who are in arrears on child support obligation. NCSL supports this option and opposes changes that would mandate these actions;
- Permit the promotion and acceptance of SNAP at farmers' markets and other non-grocery store, produce-oriented venues, for example: from a small farmer; and
- Continue to support current state options regarding categorical eligibility and "heat and eat."
- Continue funding the permanent Summer EBT program.

SNAP and Legal Immigrants

~~NCSL supports SNAP eligibility for legal immigrant children and families. NCSL commends USDA's outreach efforts to assist eligible legal immigrants, including their work to translate materials into more than 34 languages. NCSL continues to support restoring eligibility to the small number of legal immigrants who were not covered under previous restoration. NCSL urges the administration and Congress to include state lawmakers in making decisions that would alter the eligibility status for any category of immigrants legally present in the United States.~~

NCSL supports access to SNAP for eligible legal immigrant children and families and recognizes the critical role nutrition assistance plays in supporting household stability.

NCSL notes that federal legislation in 2025 significantly narrowed SNAP eligibility for lawfully present non-citizens, limiting eligibility primarily to lawful permanent residents

and a small number of additional categories and eliminating eligibility for certain populations previously able to participate.

These changes have created administrative complexity for states, particularly in mixed-status families during application and recertification processes.

NCSL urges the administration and Congress to:

- Ensure clear, consistent and timely federal guidance on eligibility determinations;
- Provide sufficient administrative funding and flexibility to support implementation;
- Engage state lawmakers in decisions affecting eligibility; and
- Consider the impact of eligibility restrictions on states and households in future policy deliberations.

SNAP Employment and Training Program (SNAP E&T)

NCSL supports the objectives of self-sufficiency promoted by the SNAP Employment and Training program (SNAP E&T), and will work with the federal government toward that goal. NCSL urges the administration and Congress to provide funding to support states in implementing work requirements and allow states flexibility to create, fund, and integrate SNAP E&T programs with similar state programs, particularly TANF, ~~and~~ the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Medicaid. NCSL also supports program simplification and coordination between TANF, Medicaid and SNAP.

In addition, NCSL appreciates the USDA's previous willingness to grant states waivers of the three-month time limit for non-working able-bodied adults without dependents in areas impacted by an insufficient number of jobs and high unemployment and USDA's technical assistance to states. NCSL urges Congress and the administration to provide states with maximum flexibility to respond to local employment conditions.

SNAP Program Quality Control ~~(QC)~~/Judicial Waiver

NCSL supports the original intent of quality control, which is to provide states with a management tool to identify problems in public assistance administration and to facilitate corrective actions. However, many problems in the current system have been documented, including statistical flaws and the levying of excessive financial penalties on states. NCSL strongly supports the moving away from a system based on error rates to one that awards bonuses for accuracy. NCSL urges the federal government to improve process systems related to waiver appeals of waiver decisions and reinvestment of claims, including outcome measures of program goals.

State legislators NCSL also supports efforts to:

- Focus on program measurement and evaluation through positive incentives and urges Congress to reexamine funding levels.
- State legislators urge the USDA to continue to settle Quality Control claims through state reinvestment in program improvement.
- Distinguish administrative errors from fraud.
- Pair accountability with technology modernization funding.

Electronic Benefit Transfer and Automated Systems (EBT)

NCSL supports the current implementation of EBT systems and supports allowing cards to be used for multiple programs.

NCSL believes that states should be allowed to negotiate the terms of EBT with food marketers, farmers' markets, and financial institutions. NCSL opposes preemption of state laws that govern financial institutions pertaining to a nationwide EBT system. As additional income support programs are added to EBT systems that are state-only or state-federally governed, the federal government must not preempt state benefits law.

NCSL urges Congress and the administration to provide federal funding to support state efforts to transition EBT to chip security technology.

~~NCSL also encourages the administration and Congress to continue initiatives around summer feeding and EBT to secure a permanent summer EBT program, including adding monthly funding to family's EBT cards and including funding for state startup costs.~~

SNAP Program Flexibility and Waivers

NCSL believes that the federal waiver process should recognize state participation rates and need. States need flexibility for further innovation, and state legislators prefer to have options rather than waivers for policy changes that are not in need of further evaluation. State legislators need to be included in the waiver process prior to a waiver being granted. Plan approval and the results of demonstration grants should be shared with state legislators.

NCSL supports the authority for states to use, at their option, contractors to support administrative and eligibility functions in SNAP. NCSL asks the federal government to remove barriers to this option so that states can meet surges in demand, address workforce shortages, align SNAP flexibility with other programs, and ensure the right benefits go to the right people at the right time.

Emergency Food Assistance and Commodity Distribution

NCSL urges Congress to fully fund The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) at its authorized level. NCSL believes that Congress should provide adequate administrative funds to facilitate the efficient distribution of food and should include sufficient safeguards to prevent program abuse. NCSL urges the USDA to make additional surplus commodities available to states, upon request, when additional surplus food becomes available. We also urge the USDA to provide administrative funding support for sorting, packaging, processing, and transporting donated food. NCSL supports federal programs that deliver commodities through farmers' markets and the child nutrition commodity programs.

Child Nutrition

NCSL urges Congress to reauthorize legislation to continue and fully fund child nutrition programs. NCSL urges the USDA to emphasize the importance of nutritionally appropriate foods and avoiding those high in sugar, fat and sodium. NCSL also urges Congress to protect, strengthen and improve the child nutrition programs by building on the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 to ensure that children continue to have access to nutritious meals throughout the year.

NCSL urges Congress to invest in the ability and resources of states to provide access to healthy and affordable meals before, during and after school for all children, all year long and to ensure low-income children's access to and participation in child nutrition programs. NCSL supports accurate eligibility determination in federal programs, but urges Congress to ensure efforts to serve only eligible children do not deter program participation.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

NCSL supports the WIC program and its objectives. NCSL encourages the administration and Congress to ensure flexibility for the time it takes to process and approve applications for WIC applicants and ensure continued financial support to maximize WIC coverage for women, infants and children in need.

NCSL supports congressional efforts to improve program administration by authorizing limited borrowing between fiscal years for the WIC program, and by requiring the timely apportionment of WIC funds to the states.

NCSL supports funding to allow technological improvements to WIC and to allow the implementation of WIC Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT). NCSL also urges Congress to increase the flexibility of WIC appointments through increased access to remote appointments and extended certification periods as well as to support equitable access

to the WIC food package through modernization efforts that increase access to online ordering, online purchasing, and delivery.

School Breakfast and Lunch Programs

NCSL strongly supports the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program as critically important to the well-being and education of young children. NCSL supports USDA reimbursements to schools for free, reduced-price, and paid meals under the provisions of the school lunch and school breakfast programs.

NCSL supports current flexibility in the Community Eligibility Provision, which helps reduce paperwork for parents and schools with a high percentage of eligible students. NCSL urges Congress to expand the well-documented benefits of the Community Eligibility Provision, which allows schools to serve meals at no charge to all students if enough are identified as qualifying for other assistance programs, by lowering the minimum identified student percentage (ISP), increasing the ISP multiplier, expanding direct certification with Medicaid data nationwide, and supporting the improvement of direct certification systems.

NCSL urges the USDA to emphasize nutritionally appropriate foods. NCSL supports the USDA's proposal to create a pilot program for school districts to provide more nutritious alternatives that would allow experimentation without risk of financial loss to those schools.

NCSL supports permanent authorization of the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children program. NCSL also supports making funding for the program mandatory, and expanding the reach of the program to kids eligible for free or reduced-price school meals in all states, tribal nations and localities in order to close the summer meals gap. NCSL urges Congress to permanently authorize the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer system, allowing authorities to quickly deliver increased nutritional aid during times of crisis.

Summer Food Service Program for Children

NCSL supports the federal Summer Food Service Program for Children and restoration of meal reimbursement rates that allow low-income children to receive a nutritious lunch in the summer. NCSL supports policies that will make it easier for non-profit community groups and public entities to sponsor the program and will allow the program to be available in more neighborhoods and rural areas. NCSL urges Congress to allow for more flexibility around where children are able to access and eat summer meals by allowing for non-congregate models in communities where summer meals sites are not available and by lowering the threshold required to operate sites open to all children.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

NCSL supports flexibility to allow seniors to transport uneaten food they receive while participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program. NCSL opposes the elimination or reduction of the Child and Adult Care Food Program.

NCSL strongly supports efforts to expand Child and Adult Care Food Program to older children in after-school programs, and to ensure that the program is available in more neighborhoods and rural areas. Additionally, NCSL supports state options to expand this program to evening meals in after-school programs.

Combating Childhood and Adult Obesity

NCSL supports federal efforts to find solutions for childhood and adult obesity without imposing mandates. NCSL urges Congress to fully fund these programs and supports a proposal to fund a pilot program for the states with the greatest incidence of childhood and adult obesity to develop policies and procedures to reduce obesity.

Nutritional Quality Measures for Older Adults

NCSL supports the quality measures used by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to quantify health care processes, outcomes, patient perceptions, and

268 systems that are associated with the ability to provide quality health care and/or that
269 relate to “quality goals” for health care. CMS introduced four electronic clinical quality
270 measures that would cover screening for malnutrition, assessment of those screened as
271 at-risk for malnutrition, diagnosis of malnutrition, and creation of a nutrition care plan.
272 NCSL urges CMS to adopt quality measures on malnutrition to heighten the importance
273 of identification, evaluation, and treatment of malnutrition in the elderly.

274

275 NCSL also supports establishing malnutrition care as a measure of quality health care.
276 NCSL urges the administration and Congress to support state efforts to reduce
277 malnutrition in the elderly and heighten awareness of nutrition in elderly communities.

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COMMITTEE: CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND HUMAN SERVICES

**POLICY: ADDRESSING IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES
OF THE FAMILY FIRST PREVENTION SERVICES
ACT**

TYPE: RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, statistics show that growing up in a safe and supportive home provides children with essential resources and emotional stability, which significantly improves their cognitive, emotional, and long-term success.

WHEREAS, children who experience family separation or enter the foster care system are at a higher risk of behavioral issues, instability, and emotional trauma.

WHEREAS, supporting safe and healthy families and preventing children from entering foster care must be a priority for improving child welfare outcomes and reducing the negative effects on children.

WHEREAS, the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 (FFPSA) was intended to provide more federal funding to support state efforts to keep children safely with their families and prevent placement in foster care.

WHEREAS, FFPSA requires states that seek to use Title IV-E prevention services to submit a prevention services plan that explains how the state will assess children and their families for prevention services and which evidence-based services from the federal Prevention Services Clearinghouse they will use.

WHEREAS, FFPSA requires half of state spending on prevention services to be used for programs rated as “well-supported” – the highest tier of evidence – by the Prevention Services Clearinghouse.

WHEREAS, as of December 2025, there were 95 programs in the Prevention Services Clearinghouse that were eligible for inclusion in state plans. Of these, only 20 were rated as “well-supported,” the highest tier of evidence.

WHEREAS, as of FY2023, 42 states, DC, Puerto Rico, and four Tribes have approved prevention services plans, but 60 percent of those jurisdictions had never submitted prevention services reimbursement claims.

WHEREAS, according to data from the [Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation](#), as of FY2023, Title IV-E reimbursement claims for prevention services accounted for less than two percent of overall Title IV-E program reimbursement claims and Title IV-E prevention services only serve about two percent of the total number of children served by Title IV-E programs.

WHEREAS, a [recent report](#) by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation notes that states have faced widespread implementation challenges with FFPSA due to factors including administrative burden, evaluation requirements, and mismatches between community needs and programs with well-supported evidence included in the Prevention Services Clearinghouse.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the National Conference of State Legislatures urges the federal government to work with states to better understand and address challenges to FFPSA implementation.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the National Conference of State Legislatures urges Congress and the administration to include the perspectives of state legislators in any regulatory or legislative efforts to update FFPSA.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that NCSL urges Congress and the Administration to provide states with greater flexibility in meeting FFPSA evidence-

60 based service requirements, including expanding the availability and approval of
61 promising and supported practices that address the diverse needs of children and
62 families.

63
64 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL urges Congress and
65 the Administration to recognize workforce shortages, provider capacity limitations, and
66 rural service delivery barriers that affect states' ability to implement FFPSA prevention
67 programs.

68
69 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL urges Congress and
70 the Administration to simplify federal claiming, reporting, and evaluation requirements
71 associated with Title IV-E prevention services in order to improve state participation and
72 maximize services to children and families.

73
74 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL urges Congress and
75 the Administration to ensure states may utilize culturally responsive, community-based,
76 and locally effective prevention services while those programs pursue additional
77 evidence review through the Prevention Services Clearinghouse.

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79 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL urges Congress and
80 the Administration to improve the timeliness and transparency of the Prevention
81 Services Clearinghouse review process so states can more rapidly access
82 reimbursement for effective prevention programs.

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84 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that NCSL urges Congress and
85 the Administration to partner with states in evaluating prevention outcomes and sharing
86 best practices.