

## Advocacy Update 07.19.2021



NTFB VOICE

# Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS

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### In Brief -

- Child Tax Credit, Do you Know?
- As the Pandemic Safety Net disappears, what's next for SNAP?

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### NTFB Policy Flipboard available to help capture current food policy news

*If you do not currently have the Flipboard app, download it for your phone's mobile app store*

Keeping up with the world of anti-hunger policy and trends in food insecurity can be difficult with so much information out there. To help keep you up to date, [we invite you to visit and follow the NTFB Food Policy FlipBoard](#) to help aggregate all the trending news. Make sure to click "**Follow**"! You can use the phone app or bookmark the site it on your computer.

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### Child Tax Credit, what is it, who gets it, did you get it ([check here](#))?

The IRS will start sending cash payments to almost 65 million children in the United States living in low to middle income households, cutting the child poverty rate in half. But most people either do not know about this payment or do not understand it. The IRS estimates that almost 88% of the eligible families will get the money in the mail with little to no complications. However up to 8 million children will not receive the payments due to a number of reasons, but there's no plan in place to reach them. Here's where you can help.

The federal government is not providing outreach to the almost 8 million children who should be receiving checks but is turning to the charitable and non-profit sector to tell families they may be eligible to receive monthly checks, no-strings

attached. That means no paperwork, no work requirements, no drug testing, no asset tests, no restrictions on what can or cannot be purchased, unlike welfare programs issued by other federal agencies.

American parents and guardians will get \$300 a month for each child they have ages 5 and younger, and \$250 a month for children ages 6 through 17. (Single parents making \$75,000 a year or less and married parents making \$150,000 a year or less will get the full amount; families earning up to \$400,000 a year will get smaller amounts.) The monthly disbursements begin this week and continue through the end of the year, with families getting another lump-sum check next tax-filing season.

#### *Where did this come from?*

Back during the Clinton Administration, the Child Tax Credit gave eligible families up to \$2000 credit per year on their taxes if they earned enough. However, many of the poorest families missed on the full credit because the policy was poorly structured. Within the American Rescue Plan, the latest stimulus package, the Child Tax Credit was expanded to reach all families under the income cap and will be given in monthly installments instead of a once-a-year credit on taxes.

#### *Complications for those missing out*

Families, that are eligible, may not be receiving the payments because they are temporarily experiencing homelessness, have moved recently, do not have a bank account, throw away the checks out of skepticism or fear, have a parent who is undocumented with citizen children, or struggle with English literacy. If a family is eligible to receive the checks but is not, they must go to an English only online portal that is not compatible on mobile devices to register to receive their cash payments into their bank accounts. Even typing all of that out made me shake my head, there are so many barriers for struggling families.

#### *What two things need to be done?*

Outreach - Talk about the Child Tax Credit. Did you receive it, are you or others eligible for it, do you know what it is, have you told a neighbor about it. The IRS has no money for outreach efforts (unlike other agencies that get marketing dollars or navigators to help with the distribution of information), it's up to us.

Permanency - This is a temporary program under the American Rescue Plan. Anti-poverty advocates will be working hard to make this monthly payment permanent in the tax code. Poverty researchers and advocates all agree that this is the single most important policy in 50 years and do not want this to be a single year program.

## **Food Safety Net Will Wane**

One of the largest changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program during the pandemic was a broad stroke increase of 15% to all SNAP benefits. However, that is set to end September 30, 2021, unless Congress issues an extension.

Another change has allowed families to receive "emergency allotments" (also called maximum benefits) while a national public health emergency declaration is in place and if states also continued with their own declarations. To date, six states have ended or are ending their declarations, also ending their SNAP emergency allotments.

Additionally, access to the program became easier as many states dropped their work requirements and allowed college students to become eligible for SNAP. Many of these changes were not put into policy, but rather temporary allowances, set to return to "normal" when the state administrators decide.

#### *What can anti-hunger advocates do?*

Ask members of Congress for an extension of the 15% increase to SNAP benefits through any avenue possible. Stay tuned, we'll have an easy way for you to do that next month.

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Questions or Comments?

[Happy 173rd Seneca Falls Convention!](#)

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