



NTFB VOICE Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS

In Brief

- The fourth new proposed Rule Change to SNAP drops
- Summer Feeding needs help
- Thinking caps are on for helping solve South Dallas's healthy food access
- Want to know some current fun facts?

Nationally

The proposed rule would establish a national standard for utility deductions

First, it was tightening work requirements for SNAP recipients, next it was including SNAP in the immigration process by including it in the definition of public charge, third was the proposal to remove the states option to use broad based categorical eligibility to qualify families for SNAP applications, and now in this fourth installment, the new proposed rule change by the current administration would create a national standard for utility deductions on a SNAP application. Is this a good thing or a bad thing? Tell me how you feel about this...

Because tracking individual household utility costs is complicated and tedious, the SNAP program has allowed for states to have set a flat rate for utility deductions ([you can see them here](#)). The rates are set by the state administrators and are not based on a national calculation. The new Rule Change ([published here](#)) proposes that utility deduction must be re-examined and re-calculated by using a standardized formula. The administration states that for too long some states deductions are too high and some are too low. By standardizing the calculation that states use to determine their deductions it would improve equity for the national program. Current estimates show that 19% of households will see a reduction between \$31-\$75 in their SNAP benefits, while 16% will see an increase of \$13-\$33, and an approximate 8,000 households will lose SNAP benefits completely.

If you'd like to make a public comment on this rule change, [you may do so by going here](#). The comment period is open until December 2, 2019.

In the State

I need you and your Summer Feeding Site expertise!

Less than 10% of Texas' 2.6 million children, who qualify for free/reduced school lunch, participated in Summer Feeding Programs this year. The reasons for the low participation are numerous and often times have complex solutions.

Some reasons include difficulty in reaching summer feeding sites due to poor transportation, heat, parental ability to leave work, and strict program policies (like congregate feeding requirements)

In November, we will be discussing the areas of opportunity to increase summer meal participation here in North Texas with our Members of Congress. States have a fair amount of flexibility in the Summer Meals Program and we'd like to get creative. Stay tuned, I might be calling on a few of you for your thoughts, testimonies, and stories of success/frustration.

Locally

South Dallas hunger fighters start collaborative work on the Caruth Healthy Food Access Initiative this week

It takes more than just a grocery store to solve community access to healthy foods. The Communities Foundation of Texas & the City of Dallas have joined together to work on the Healthy Food Access problem in South Dallas, an area of North Texas that is home to more than 182,000 food insecure people.

Beginning this week representatives from various 'on-the-ground' organizations will all come together to work on five food equity idea challenges:

1. Leveraging non-traditional distribution sites
2. Solving logistical problems
3. Creating new food retail solutions
4. Making healthy food delicious & appealing
5. Advocacy & impact

North Texas Food Bank staff members are proudly serving on all five teams with many of our partner agencies, and will be leading the Advocacy & Impact team alongside Southern Dallas Progress. Get excited, I have high expectations for what will come out of this think-tank.

Cocktail Party One-Liners

Have you ever been stuck at a party or lunch with nothing to talk about? Use these one-liner fun-facts to be the dorkiest agriculture person in the circle:

- California passed a law that requires hens be given at least 1x1x1 ft cages, and is getting sued by the industry who believes this is an "unreasonable request" (Did you use your hands to do a 1x1x1 box?)
- Sales of Nature Valley Granola Bars are plummeting as consumers realize, they're not actually that good for you and are filled with sugar
- Agriculture sales to China are down 42% (\$6.7B) from last year, due to the trade wars
- Now legal from the latest Farm Bill, new Hemp farmers may be accidentally (and illegally) growing marijuana and there is no national THC testing standard to declare the difference
- The USDA Secretary told Wisconsin dairy farmers (of all places) that there's no guarantee small dairy farms can survive, "the big get bigger and the small go out" ...it didn't go over well

- The pork meat packer giant JBS will completely stop using ractopamine, a feed additive that creates more muscular pigs, because it is banned in Europe and China, and 160 other countries, but not in the USA
- First, the Midwest had to plant their crops late due to flooding in the spring, now, it's set to frost early next week...raise your glass to Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois, hang in there friends

Questions or Comments? Want to beat me to my ask and tell me how you'd like to change Summer Feeding? EMAIL ME! 😊

Valerie Stone Hawthorne, PhD
Government Relations Director

North Texas Food Bank

Direct: 832.851.0303

policy@ntfb.org



Don't want these updates any longer? Email policy@ntfb.org and I'll remove you quickly but remorsefully...