



NTFB VOICE

Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS

Federal Update on Farm Bill

The Farm Bill, which contains many anti-hunger programs including SNAP, will require strong bipartisan support to move through Congress. Now that there is a new Speaker of the House, we hope to see forward progress in the revisiting and renewal of this massive bill. Bipartisanship will prevent members of Congress from making major cuts to food assistance or other major reforms, as has been proposed and attempted in the past. Congressman Thompson, the House Ag Chair, will be tasked with navigating any political considerations as he begins Farm Bill talks in the coming months. Thompson and other Ag Committee members have expressed the need to set an aggressive timeline for getting the Farm Bill completed. Stay tuned as we follow and address this much needed piece of federal legislation.

The End of SNAP Emergency Allotments – BIG IMPACT

SNAP emergency allotments (EAs) are temporary benefits provided to SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) participants during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are intended to help people who are facing economic challenges due to the pandemic and to ensure that SNAP participants have access to adequate food. The temporary SNAP emergency allotments (EAs) provided during the pandemic will end after February benefits are provided. Starting in March, Texans will only receive their regular SNAP payment on their EBT cards. ALL households enrolled in SNAP will see a minimum \$95 decrease in their monthly SNAP benefits.

This will reduce SNAP benefits by approximately \$3 billion per month across the country, that's \$300 million in Texas, and \$80 per SNAP participant on average in the 36 states that are still providing EAs. Some states have already ended the EAs, but Texas has still been supporting the maximum benefit for SNAP participants. Once linked to the Federal Public Health Emergency declaration, the most recent omnibus that passed through Congress, severed the tie between the declaration and the EAs. Anti-hunger advocates have opposed the early sunset of the EAs, which was included in the omnibus spending bill to fund permanent new child nutrition provisions.

We will be working with partner agencies and anti-hunger organizations on plans to communicate and manage the loss of EAs with people receiving SNAP benefits. The USDA and partners are working to prepare for this change in benefits as more information becomes available. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) will send individualized notices to each SNAP household, which will inform clients on how to check their regular benefit amount. Please encourage SNAP households to log into their

accounts on YourTexasBenefits.com, use their mobile app, or call 2-1-1 option 2 to find out their new benefit amounts.

Here is a helpful flyer to share in [English](#) and [Spanish](#)

[The Texas Legislature Begins TODAY!](#)

Pre-Enrollment in SNAP for Those Exiting the Criminal Justice System – A Story

Pre-Enrolling Texans who are exiting the criminal justice system is a Texas legislative priority for the 88th session. Ensuring access to food upon release means that people leaving the criminal justice system can focus on securing housing, finding a job, and reuniting with family. This supports the reentry process, reducing recidivism and lowering state incarceration costs. This is not an expansion of benefits. Texas exiting the criminal justice system are already eligible for SNAP.

Donald* was released from the criminal justice system in November 2021, works in the auto-care industry and volunteers at his local food pantry. He applied for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits in November 2021 but was denied after missing an appointment with HHSC (Health and Human Services Commission) and subsequently penalized for six months. Donald appealed the decision but was denied again. As a result, he has relied on food pantries for most of his food and has had to make tough decisions to save money for food.

He has a heart condition and health insurance through BCBS but has struggled to find providers who accept his insurance. Many days he relies on water to drive away his hunger when he can't afford to eat more than once a day. He has debt, including \$5,600 in rent, but his financial situation is improving. Donald, who has experienced enrollment difficulty firsthand, believes that SNAP pre-enrollment for those exiting the criminal justice system would have been very helpful. It's important to him that others understand the challenges facing people who are released from prison and the hoops they must go through to access resources like SNAP, or even where to go to enroll for them.

Not only would pre-enrollment allow Donald to access food immediately after re-entering his community, but it would also provide him with some form of identification. Donald recently obtained a new job and is improving his financial situation and sees himself in a future place where he no longer needs assistance.

**Recorded by permission during interview December 2022 in 75215 by Dan Adriansen, name changed*

As we advocate for bills in the 88th Texas Legislative session, we will bring more real-life stories of how smart policy change can fight hunger in Texas.



Questions or Comments? Email us!

[Save the world's smallest mammal! The Bumblebee Bat!](#)

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