



NTFB VOICE

# Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS

## Modernize the SNAP Vehicle Asset Test - Advocacy Day Today!



Texans should not go without food because of higher car prices or owning a reliable car. Unfortunately, Texas has a rule (that 40 states and 3 US Territories have eliminated) which prevents Texans from being eligible for SNAP if their cars are worth too much money.

When applying or renewing for SNAP benefits, applicants must record the current blue-book value of their vehicles. If the values of the vehicles are too high, they will be denied eligibility for the program. The current car asset limits are \$15,000 for the first car (set in 2001) and \$4,650 (set in 1973) for the second car. Texans need reliable cars to get to work. It's time to modernize the value limit to reflect practical and reliable cars in Texas, rather than relying on 22- & 50-year-old car value limits.

In the NTFB service area, families are being denied SNAP because of this car rule more than ever. In 2019, 1,599 North Texas households were denied due to the Vehicle Asset Test, but in 2022, 7,850 North Texas households were denied by the same rule. Inflation has caused used car values to rise! Across Texas, 54,740 families were denied SNAP in 2022 because of this car rule. That's five times more than in 2019!

By no fault of their owners, the value of used cars has gone up significantly, leaving many Texans now ineligible for SNAP.

North Texas Food Bank is asking lawmakers to modernize the Vehicle Asset Test for SNAP. The proposed bills ask for a modest update so that families who own reliable cars can still access SNAP benefits. We thank Senator Blanco and Representative Guillen for authoring [SB 273](#) & [HB 1287](#) to ensure we modernize the current SNAP application.

**ACTION:** [Please go here, today, to support SB 273/HB 1287](#)



Thank you Pam Swendig of Good Sam Garland & Martha Doleshal of Pleasant Grove Food Pantry, for being some of our strongest Partner Agency Advocates and responding to the *Surplus Agricultural Products Grant Advocacy Action* last month!

Having a reliable car and accessing food assistance is not as straight forward as many people would think.

For example:

*\*all names have been changed to protect their identity*

Sarah - a wife & mother of four children in DeSoto was approved for SNAP in August of 2021. Then, in January of 2022, her family was denied SNAP due to the Vehicle Asset Test, after purchasing a reliable second car valued over \$4,650 for her daughter to go to and from college with to earn her degree.

Sarah shared, "Even though the car is in our name, we bought it for our daughter so that she could go to college. Also, we bought that car when I was still working but I've since stopped working. I left my job because we had my [younger] daughter and I had to stay at home to care for her."

Carrie - a young Plano mother was receiving SNAP and purchased a \$17,000 car with her boyfriend after driving an unreliable 1993 Ford Taurus that wasn't safe for her baby and had no working A/C. After reporting the changes to HHSC, she was then consequently denied and ineligible for SNAP.

Carrie says, "Doing everything by the book, working hard, and still coming up short is a feeling of defeat. Unfortunately, that is the feeling of many Texans right now, especially during this inflation. If we could get better paying jobs, we would. If we could work a night job without sacrificing our home life, we would. To take away something that could help us all because the price tag of one of our proudest items (car) that we own that we worked hard for yet, but we meet the financial criteria is just insane. People go through hardships that we can't even fathom, like losing their job, amongst other things, and those people are being turned down because of this outdated stipulation."

Taylor - lives in Sherman with his 18-year-old daughter in a house that he paid off himself. When the company of his former spouse awarded her a vehicle for being named the Corporate Employee of the Year, he was consequently denied for SNAP in March 2023. "If they can disregard it [Vehicle Asset Test] for the Medicare premium, why can't they do the same for SNAP?"



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We at NTFB thank you for taking a moment and reaching out to our decision makers using the form above. Our neighbors thank you as well for using your voice to make sure our leaders in Austin know how important this issue is for them.

Are you curious which are the only states left using a Vehicle Asset test?

Alaska, Arkansas, Kansas, Mississippi, Missouri, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, & Wyoming

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Questions or Comments? Email us!

[EpiPens don't work in space.](#)

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