HUNGER in TENNESSEE

SIGN the Petition: SNAP Pandemic Overpayments -- State Inflexibility Causes Greater Hardship for TN Families

Tennesseans who experience food and economic insecurity are facing another assault on their ability to thrive and survive. Bill Lee is demanding that some Tennesseans who received SNAP benefits (benefits that help families pay for food) during the pandemic to pay that money back!

If it sounds crazy to demand that families pay back thousands of dollars for food aid that they received during the pandemic, that’s because it is. The federal government knows it is. That’s why the feds are allowing states to take the option to waive pandemic overpayments. But Tennessee is not taking this option. Instead, Lee and his administration are attempting to claw these benefits back. Read more about it and sign the petition.

DHS Ends Document Submissions Via Email
Does this impact you?
On March 1, DHS stopped accepting SNAP documents that are submitted by email. The option to submit information via fax machine will end soon. More about this change is on the DHS website. This complicates the SNAP application and recertification process for individuals who are not able to access the portal or do not have an email address, computer or smart phone. The only option left for those who cannot access the portal are to mail or submit documents in person. If this impacts you or your clients please contact Signe Anderson at sanderson@tnjustice.org.

Farm Bill

The Farm Bill is a package of legislation that happens every 5 years and covers everything from crop insurance to healthy food access for low-income families through SNAP. This impacts Tennessee families who receive and are eligible for SNAP. Some of the proposed changes are to increase SNAP funding for senior and individuals with disabilities, improve access for college students, allow SNAP benefits to be used on prepared food, and eliminate time limits to SNAP for individuals who struggle to find work. Read more about Farm Bill priorities at FRAC and MAZON. Comment on the upcoming Farm Bill here. Submit Comments in support of a Farm Bill that protects and strengthens SNAP.

Stolen SNAP Benefits - Skimming

In early 2022, SNAP and Families First (TANF) benefits were stolen from many participating households across the country due to skimming, cloning and similar theft. As of February, over 1,300 Tennessee SNAP and Families First households had over $883,500 million in total benefits stolen. Families First households in Tennessee are reimbursed for money stolen from their EBT cards. SNAP families are not reimbursed but may see relief in 2023, if the skimming incident happened after October 1, 2022.

What to do if you or someone you know has had their benefits stolen:
1. Call EBT customer service 1-888-997-9444 to report stolen benefits
2. Call the TDHS Office of Inspector General fraud hotline 1-800-241-2629
3. Visit the TDHS website for more information

SNAP and Families First households can take these steps to reduce the risk of skimming:
1. Keep your PIN secret.
2. Check your EBT account regularly for unauthorized charges.
3. Check for anything suspicious attached to card reading machines.

WIC

2023 State of WIC Report: Building The Bridge to a Healthier Future

The National WIC Association released a report highlighting the program advances and goals to improve the program into the future. In Tennessee 39% of infants born in the state participate in WIC. However, overall participation needs a boost. Only 37% of eligible individuals participate in WIC in Tennessee. Read the WIC report and check-out the Tennessee State WIC profile.

CHILD NUTRITION

Report on School Breakfast & Lunch Participation!
Last week, the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) released the **Reach of School Breakfast and Lunch during 2021-22 school year report**. Participation in school meals grew dramatically during the 2021-2022 school year, surpassing participation prior to the pandemic. Tennessee saw an increase in the school breakfast and lunch program participation with 356,819 children receiving breakfast and 654,500 children receiving school lunch. TN could reach more children. If the state achieved the goal of reaching 7 out of 10 children, TN schools would serve over 101,00 more children and would bring an additional $40.6 billion into Tennessee schools.

### IMPORTANT UPDATES

**Summer EBT 2023**

States have the option to continue Summer P-EBT in 2023 and future summers. There are a few changes to know about. Children in child care will no longer be eligible for Summer P-EBT and states no longer have to participate in school year P-EBT to be eligible for Summer EBT. Read more about USDA changes for Summer EBT 2023. [USDA P-EBT During Summer Period Q&A](#).

**P-EBT 2022-23 School Year**
P-EBT for this school year has not yet been approved. P-EBT for Summer 2023 may be available for families if Tennessee is approved by USDA for this school year. 

Sign-up for our P-EBT alerts to get the latest information about P-EBT here.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY AND ACTION CENTER

As the 113th General Assembly continues with legislators moving to make restriction to SNAP, the free school meals bill has stalled. Please contact the elected officials and weigh in to protect SNAP and show your support for free school meals! Contact sanderson@tnjustice.org if you want help reaching out to legislators.

Oppose! SNAP **SB778/HB 709** – Sen. Stevens/Rep. Littleton - Requires DHS to obtain specific authorization from the general assembly before seeking, applying for, accepting, or renewing a waiver of work requirements established by the SNAP program; prohibits DHS from exercising the state's option to provide an exemption from the work requirements; requires the department to assign individuals who are subject to participation conditions to an appropriate employment and training program.

Support! NSLP/School Meals **SB 0208/HB 0255** – Sen. Lowe/Rep. Raper - Local Education Agencies (LEA) - Requires local school boards to establish a school lunch and breakfast program that provides a free breakfast and lunch to each student enrolled in a school under the board's jurisdiction; requires the state to reimburse each LEA the cost of providing free meals to each student enrolled in the LEA after all available federal funds have been applied.

Help us end hunger! Here are some actions you can take today!

**Contact Your Legislators!** Share your experience with hunger or the work you are doing to address its impact on Tennesseans. Set-up a visit with your elected official and talk about changes you would like to see. Contact Signe Anderson sanderson@tnjustice.org if you need help reaching out to your legislator.

UPCOMING WEBINARS AND EVENTS
Farm Bill and SNAP Webinar

Thursday, March 30
1:00pm CT

Register Now!

Congress will pass a new Farm Bill in 2023 and the SNAP Program is a major focus. Passed every 5 years, the Farm Bill is an important piece of legislation addressing food and agriculture policy changes. For SNAP, the Farm Bill sets foundational policy for the program and can make significant change on the federal level. TJC is closely monitoring the 2023 Farm Bill and will collaborate with partners across the state to advocate for positive changes to expand access; and oppose any changes that harm SNAP. Join our March webinar to learn more about the 2023 Farm Bill and its impact on SNAP or other nutrition programs!

End Hunger in Tennessee! Join Us for a Day of Learning, Planning, and Advocacy.

Thursday, March 24
9:00am - 4:00pm CT

Mid-South Food Bank (3865 S Perkins Rd, Memphis, TN 38118)

Register Here!

Tennessee Justice Center and Mid-South Food Bank are co-hosting an anti-hunger meeting to address hunger in West Tennessee on March 24, 2023. We will explore how hunger impacts the region, hear from partners who are currently working to address food insecurity and find ways that we can collectively work together to end hunger in our communities. View Agenda here.

SNAP Access Call: Thursday, March 16, 2023, at 10:00am CT – Join us to discuss SNAP advocacy, casework best practices, and nutrition program updates. E-mail aluttrell@tnjustice.org for more information and for the link to register.

{{Disclaimer}}

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