

Nutrition Note



TENNESSEE JUSTICE CENTER

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Hi {{FirstName or 'friends'}},



In this issue we look at a lawsuit that could block the SNAP rule that would take food away from nearly 700,000 people, updates on public charge, and USDA's rule that would roll back school nutrition standards for meals served to children. Check out opportunities to advocate with us. Join us for our next anti-hunger meeting and sign-up for our webinars that will cover topics about the importance of SNAP to children's health, WIC, and Summer Meals.

CHILD NUTRITION

Tennessee Ranks in Top 10 States Serving Breakfast to Children According to FRAC School Breakfast Report



Last week, FRAC issued its annual School Breakfast Score Card which ranks states on the rate of participation of low-income children in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) compared to NSLP. [Read the full report here.](#) In Tennessee the school breakfast program reaches 64.9 low-income children for every 100 who participate in school lunch and ranks in the top 10 of states participating in SBP. School breakfast is one of the best ways to boost student achievement, reduce absenteeism, and improve student nutrition.

Proposed Rule to Roll Back School Nutrition Standard

Last month USDA announced that they would roll back school nutrition standards that were established in 2012. This move would allow schools to serve fewer fruits and grains, a smaller variety of vegetables, and less healthy entrees. It is an unnecessary and counterproductive move that does nothing to improve the nutritional health of our children. Healthy school meals help combat childhood obesity and improve

overall health, particularly for low-income children.

This rule is not final and opened to public comment January 23. We encourage advocates, schools, concerned parents, and individuals to comment in opposition to the proposed rule. The 60-day comment period starts today and closes on March 23, 2020. You can [read the proposed rule here](#).

[Read TJC's blog to learn more about the government's efforts to roll back nutrition standards.](#)

There are two things you can do if you oppose USDA's move to weaken school meals:

[Submit your comments here](#)

[Sign our petition in opposition here](#)

Summer Meal Service Program

USDA issued a [proposed Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) rule](#) that would simplify and clarify SFSP program requirements. Several of the proposed changes would formally codify many of the rescinded policies previously available as [nationwide waivers](#), as well as allow for a number of flexibilities currently available through policy guidance.

Program providers and advocates should submit comments on the proposed rule. Our national partner, FRAC, will share sample comments and provide a platform to make it easier to develop and submit the comments to USDA, which are due by March 23, 2020.

It is important to note that the proposed rule will not be finalized in time for this summer, so state agencies and sponsors still must submit waiver requests in order to utilize any of the rescinded policy waivers this summer.

Apply to Serve Summer Meals for Children in Your Community

Do you run a summer program for children under 18 year of age in your community? If your program operates in a low-income area you might eligible to participate in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). This is an opportunity to serve free meals to kids in the summertime when food insecurity can spike for families. [Learn more about the program and how to apply through the TN-DHS website](#)

Applications are due on May 1.

Middle Tennessee Anti-Hunger Meeting 2020



[Register HERE](#)

Join the Tennessee Justice Center and the Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee for a summit about ending hunger in Middle Tennessee on March 25, 2020. We will explore how hunger impacts the region, hear from partners that are currently working to address the issue and find ways that we can collectively work together to end food insecurity in our communities.

The agenda will include sessions on SNAP, WIC and the Child Nutrition programs. Stay tuned for a more detailed agenda in early March. Please direct questions to [Sarah Henson](#), TJC's Nutrition Advocate. For more information about Tennessee Justice Center's nutrition advocacy, [visit our website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

Where: Second Harvest Food Bank, 331 Great Circle Road, Nashville TN 37228

Time: 9:30am-4:00pm

SPRING 2020: WEBINAR SERIES

SCHEDULE

February 27, 2020 at

2:00pm CDT/3:00pm EDT

[Children's Health and SNAP Benefits](#)

This webinar will discuss the importance of SNAP to children's wellbeing and explore how child advocates can support this important nutrition program. [Register today!](#)

March 5, 2020 at 2:00pm

CDT/3:00PM EDT

[Successful Reentry Requires Food Security \(& How SNAP and WIC Can Help\)](#)

Over 10,000 people are released from prison in Tennessee each year. These individuals reenter their communities with complex needs and challenges including food security.

March 12, 2020 at 2:00pm

CDT/3:00pm EDT

[Gearing up for SFSP in TN](#)

This webinar will discuss best practices for sponsors, the process to become a sponsor, and if you are not a sponsor there are opportunities in advocacy to improve the programs and outreach to support local sponsors.

WIC

Join the WIC Champions Group

WIC Champions is a statewide group of engaged Tennesseans dedicated to disseminating information and taking advocacy actions on The WIC Program. Members receive emails with news related to WIC policy and practices in Tennessee and the nation. We will also send you opportunities to engage with your elected representatives when critical decisions are being made in Washington D.C. and Nashville. Together, we leverage our voices for women and children experiencing hunger. If you are interested in

joining this exciting WIC advocacy group, [please complete this short interest form](#).

Mark your calendars! Our first WIC Champions Group call will convene on March 5, 2020 at 10am CDT. We will send more information to those registered for the WIC Champions Group.

Participate in our WIC Survey

TJC is conducting research on the WIC experience in Tennessee for participants in the program. If you work with individuals who might be eligible for WIC and might be interested in sharing information about their experience, please contact Kelli at kklein@tnjustice.org. The survey takes less than 5 minutes to complete and all answers are confidential.

SNAP

Public Charge

On January 31, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed the public charge rule to take effect on February 24, 2020. The final rule will only apply to applications submitted on or after February 24, 2020. Medicaid, SNAP, HUD public housing and Section 8 housing benefits received before February 24 will not be considered in the public charge determination. The rule is not retroactive and will not affect anyone who is on the programs or were previously enrolled.

These changes do NOT apply to all immigrants. The regulations do not apply to refugees, asylees, and survivors of trafficking and domestic violence. Children's use of public benefit programs like SNAP and TennCare will NOT be considered when the government is deciding whether to give a parent or child a green card.

If you work with a population who may be affected by this rule and have questions, please contact us at shenson@tnjustice.org.

More information on public charge can be found at the [Protecting Immigrant Families Campaign](#) (PIF).

Update on SNAP Time Limit Waiver Rule

Lawsuit Filed to Protect SNAP for over 700,000 Americans

Last month a group of 15 states, New York City, and the District of Columbia filed a lawsuit to prevent the Trump administration from implementing a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) rule change that would take food off the tables of nearly 700,000 people, many of whom struggle to find sufficient hours of work in areas with too few jobs. The lawsuit, filed in D.C.,

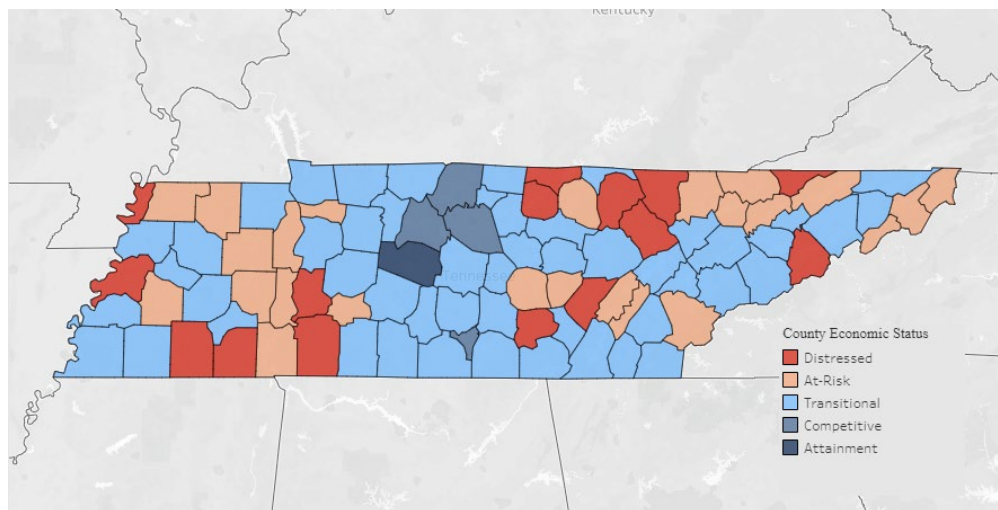
challenges a USDA rule that would limit states' ability to provide SNAP benefits beyond a three-month period for certain adults. Should the rule take effect on April 1, 2020, Tennesseans who struggle to find work would have an even harder time getting food assistance.

In 2017, Tennessee responded to the economic downturn by applying the time limit waivers to 86 out of 95 counties in the state to ensure that individuals struggling to find employment would not go hungry. The waivers allowed the state to lift the three-month limit to SNAP for unemployed and underemployed Tennesseans between the ages of 18-50.

The litigation, filed in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia, alleges that the rule undermines Congressional intent, violates the federal rulemaking process, would impose significant regulatory burdens on states, and would harm states' residents and economies.

Only 7 counties received the waiver in 2019 : Lake, Lauderdale, Bledsoe, Hancock, Jackson, McNairy, and Scott. If the pending litigation does not move forward these counties will lose their waiver on April 1, 2020.

15 Distressed Counties



Governor Bill Lee ordered all state departments to issue a statement of rural impact and provide recommendations for better serving these populations. 15 counties were identified as distressed and are as follows: *Lake, Lauderdale, Bledsoe, Hancock, Jackson, McNairy, Scott, Hardeman, Perry, Clay, Grundy, Van Buren, Fentress, Morgan, and Cocke*. The 15 counties rank among the 10% most economically distressed in the entire country. 7 of the 15 counties the Governor identified as distressed will lose the SNAP time limit waiver that protects individuals between the ages of 18 and 49 from losing SNAP in times when they cannot find enough work to meet SNAP requirements. While much of Tennessee's economy is improving, certain communities are being left behind and yet still expected to meet expectations of thriving counties.

If you serve these counties, please contact Sarah at shenson@tnjustice.org so we can support you and those in your community who are at risk of losing (or may have already lost) SNAP.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Have you followed our social media yet? You can find us on Instagram at @tnjustice and Twitter at @TNJusticeCenter and on Facebook at Tennessee Justice Center.

Thanks for liking, retweeting, and commenting on our media this past month!

Here are our top tweets of the month. Feel free to copy and paste these or retweet them directly by clicking on the link.

["SNAP recipients often work, but their employment can be unsteady...The way these work requirements are imposed could pull support out from under people even when they're working." Dr. Seth A. Berkowitz, Univ. of North Carolina School of Medicine. @UNC_SOM nytimes.com/2019/12/31/ups...](#)

["Overall, the effects of the new regulation will fall hardest on people of color, people without higher education, and people living in rural areas." #HandsOffSNAP #ProtectSNAP #EndHungerTN citylab.com/equity/2019/12...](#)

["New SNAP requirements will harm hundreds of thousands, including social services workers who depend on food stamps, too. These are people who do vital work in our society, yet they are often compensated very little and face food insecurity as a result." vox.com/first-person/2...](#)

[BREAKING: litigation filed that protects SNAP by blocking the administration's move to take SNAP away from 700,000 Americans. The rule change would limit states' ability to provide SNAP benefits beyond a three-month period for certain adults. #HandsOffSNAP](#)

[We care about hunger and we care about healthcare. Increasing hunger hurts overall health and increases healthcare costs for everyone. Hunger is always a healthcare issue. #ProtectSNAP #HandsOffSNAP statnews.com/2019/12/06/cut...](#)

[Sign on today to oppose new USDA rule that would weaken nutrition standards for school meals: bit.ly/37y66z2](#)
[tnjustice.org/usda-proposed-...](#)

[Public charge is effective Feb 24. It does NOT apply to all immigrants. Benefit use of kids 18 and under does not affect the immigration status of adults in the household. School & summer meals programs, WIC and CHIP don't affect status. #KnowYourRights: protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/know-your-righ...](#)

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