

Nutrition Note



TENNESSEE JUSTICE CENTER

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Hi {{FirstName or 'friends'}},

Last week tornadoes hit several counties in Tennessee, impacting the food security of many in the region. We also face school and work closures as a result of the Coronavirus. Both disasters impact children who rely on school meals to ensure that they have food to eat and parents who must stay home with their children and will not be able to collect a paycheck. It will impact seniors and underemployed individuals who already struggle to find and maintain work hours. The nutrition safety net is available to help people in times of disaster and during economic crisis. Please read on to learn about this and the nutrition programs.

Need to Know Now

Responding to the Coronavirus

Serving Meals to Children during School Closures

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors can organize emergency meal sites for children during school closures as a result of natural disasters or pandemics such as the Coronavirus. DHS has applied to USDA to grant waivers to SFSP sponsors in good standing to serve non-congregate meals to children who might be affected by school closure as a result of the Coronavirus. [If you are an SFSP sponsor, learn more about serving meals to children who might be missing out on school meals.](#)

Please share this information with other sponsors you know. Let TJC know if you are planning to run a site as a result of schools closing in your communities. We will post it on [social media](#).

[Click here to see USDA's guidance about how to respond to the pandemic](#)

[Access the latest updates on the anti-hunger response to the Coronavirus on the FRAC website.](#)

SNAP for Tornado Victims

There are SNAP resources available for families who may have lost their benefits in the storm and families who were not eligible before might be eligible in the aftermath of last week's tornado. Anyone who was impacted by the tornado damage (lost food, power, etc.) can come to these locations or call the Family Assistance Service Center to apply for replacement SNAP benefits up to one month's SNAP allotment. Information on the temporary locations is [here](#).

Currently SNAP recipients have 10 days post-disaster to request replacements. This period ends TODAY March 13, 2020. If you have any issues with this or are unable to meet this deadline, please let us know at shenson@tnjustice.org.

DHS information on how to replace SNAP benefits:

<https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/news/2020/3/3/assistance-available-for-current-snap-recipients-who-lost-food-in-tuesday-s-storms.html>

Metro Nashville disaster assistance: <https://www.nashville.gov/News-Media/News-Article/ID/9406/Mayor-John-Cooper-Announces-Opening-of-Metro-Nashville-Disaster-Assistance-Centers-Saturday-Morning.aspx>

Second Harvest tornado response blog: <https://www.secondharvestmidtn.org/tornado-response-update/>

Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP)

The President issued a state of emergency in response to tornado damage which allows DHS to apply for D-SNAP in Davidson, Putnam and Wilson Counties - <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/president-donald-j-trump-approves-tennessee-disaster-declaration-5/>

The [Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(D-SNAP\)](#) gives food assistance to low-income households with food loss or damage caused by a natural disaster. TJC is urging DHS to apply and share information widely. We are monitoring this and will send an alert if it is approved.

Learn more about D-SNAP

- **FRAC D-SNAP Guide** - <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/d-snap-advocates-guide-1.pdf>
- **USDA D-SNAP Guide**- <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/dsnap/state-agencies-partners-resources>

POSTPONED: Mid-TN Anti-Hunger Summit

The Middle Tennessee Anti-Hunger Meeting scheduled for March 25 is *****POSTPONED***** due to the COVID-19 presence in Tennessee. Anyone who is registered will automatically be registered for the new date and we will send

updated information to all who are registered. [Please register here](#) if you would like to join us and to stay updated on meeting details. TJC will be in touch soon about the rescheduled meeting.

SNAP

Public Charge Rule

The new public charge rule went into effect February 24, 2020. Public charge does NOT apply to all immigrants. Benefit use for children 18 and under does not affect the immigration status of adults in the household. Participation in school meals, summer meals, WIC, and CHIP do not affect your immigration status. Stay informed and [know your rights](#) before making any decisions about benefit use.

The public charge rule has been used by immigration officials since 1999 to determine whether a person can enter the U.S. on certain visas or qualify as a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR; also known as “green card” holders). Officials consider income, health, employment, skills, education, family situation, and whether a sponsor signed a support contract. Historically, the only benefits considered in determining who is likely to become a “public charge” are: 1) cash assistance for income maintenance, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and similar state or local programs; and 2) government-funded long-term institutional care. **The new rule adds participation in the following public programs as a factor:**

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, “EBT”, or “food stamps”)
- Federal Public Housing and Section 8 assistance
- Medicaid (except emergencies, children under 21 years, pregnant women, and new mothers)

ABAWD Time Limit Rule

On April 1, 2020 Tennessee will lose all time limit waivers for Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) as a result of the proposed rule issued by the Trump Administration. Lake, Lauderdale, Bledsoe, Hancock, Jackson, McNairy, and Scott counties received the waiver in 2019. All individuals in these counties between the ages of 18 and 49 will now be restricted to 3 months of SNAP unless they meet work requirements or certain exemptions. <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/snap-abawd-information.html>

The final rule restricts the ability of states to apply for waivers that would provide relief for unemployed and underemployed Tennesseans 18-50 years old who live in economically distressed areas.

Over the last 3 years, Tennessee DHS has applied for fewer and fewer waivers for qualifying counties, dropping from 86 in 2017 to 7 in 2019 and now zero starting on april 1, 2020 in anticipation of this ruling.

Federal Legislation We Are Watching

SNAP Making Essentials Affordable and Lawful (MEAL) Act

Each year, thousands of people are released from state and federal prisons in the United States. Individuals with prior drug felony convictions face significant challenges when they reenter their communities, including restrictions or lifetime bans on food assistance under the SNAP and TANF programs. Most states have opted to alter or remove such bans, but lingering barriers to SNAP and TANF continue to hinder returning citizens and expose them to higher risks of recidivism.

To address this problem, Congressman Cohen of Memphis [introduced](#) the [Making Essentials Affordable and Lawful \(MEAL\) Act](#), which would lift restrictions for people with felony drug convictions. Further, this bill would codify the USDA waiver that allows currently incarcerated individuals to apply for SNAP up to 30 days before they are released, ensuring that they will be able to meet their basic needs as soon as they reenter society.

To learn more, please contact Merrilee Rogers in Congressman Cohen's office at merrilee.rogers@mail.house.gov.

State Legislation We Are Watching

HB 110/SB 550 – Employment Opportunities for Parents Act

This harmful legislation was introduced again to impose workfare and employment requirement to parents with children older than age 5. This is NOT the best way to support low-income families who are trying to work and raise children. It also targets older adults. Here are some negative impacts this bill would have:

- Take away food assistance from people including parents and older workers who do not prove every month that they are participating in a workfare program, working enough hours, or meet an exemption.
- Mandate participation in a workfare program for parents with children age 6 and older and older workers age 50 to 59 who are not working or participating in an employment and training program.
- Put kids at risk because parents with kids age 6 and up who are unable to prove that they meet all these harsh, unnecessary requirements will lose SNAP. When parents lose SNAP, kids go hungry.

[Learn more about the bill here.](#)

Please contact Signe Anderson at sanderson@tnjustice.org if you would like more information about how to oppose this bill.

HB 2823/SB 2660 – TN College Hunger Legislation

The Student Basic Needs Coalition at the University of Tennessee Knoxville wrote [a bill](#) that has been sponsored by Jernigan in the TN House and Yarbro in the TN Senate. The bill's goal is for state universities to submit reports detailing the food insecurity on campuses across Tennessee.

Child Nutrition

LAST CHANCE: Comment Period Ends This Month for Proposed Rule to Roll Back School Nutrition Standards

USDA announced in January that they would roll back school nutrition standards 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](#)

Upcoming Webinars

March 30, 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 26, 2020 at
11:00am CDT/3:00pm EDT

[Gearing up for the Summer Food Service Program \(SFSP\) in TN](#)

This webinar will discuss best practices for summer meal sponsors, how 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.

The WIC Program

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 19, 2020 at 10am CDT. [Register for the call here](#). 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.

WIC Advocacy 101 Webinar

[The National WIC Association](#) hosted a “WIC 101: How Washington Shapes WIC Policy” webinar on February 27, 2020 about the basics of WIC policy making and how advocates can take action to support the program. [Click here to access the recording and learn about the importance of Washington processes to anti-hunger efforts](#).

TJC Internships

The TJC Nutrition Team is now accepting applications for summer internships. Focus areas can include child nutrition programs, the WIC Program, SNAP, strategic communications, and policy research.

If you or someone you know are interested in applying, please submit a cover letter and resume to Kelli Klein at kklein@tnjustice.org

Social Media

March is National Nutrition Month!

Tweet about ending hunger! Click these to tweet our top tweets from February.

Tweet this: URGENT! KIDS NEED YOU NOW: Call your House member and tell them to PASS the Families First Coronavirus Response Act TODAY. We need this so that kids from low-income families get the food they need during the #CoronaOutbreak emergency. Find your Rep here:

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>

[SNAP reaches millions of children who need food assistance. In a typical month, SNAP currently serves about 20 million children - roughly 1 out of every 4 children in the U.S. and 1 out of 3 pre-school children.](#)

The [#TrumpBudget wants to cut \\$180 billion from SNAP/food stamps. We know that #SNAPworks!](#)

["Hunger & food insecurity is definitely still a problem that Tennesseans face even if SNAP numbers are going down. There are a lot of people who have turned to emergency food pantries or go without." - Signe Anderson of TJC Nutrition](#)

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Tennessee Justice Center
211 7th Ave N
Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37219
United States

info@tnjustice.org | 1-877-608-1009 | <https://www.tnjustice.org>

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