

Nutrition Note



TENNESSEE JUSTICE CENTER

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Unemployment rates reached the highest level seen since World War II resulting in record numbers of lost jobs and income in Tennessee. More Tennesseans are facing hunger at this time and we must work to meet this basic need.

Participation in SNAP and WIC are on the rise. School meals and summer program providers are working hard to provide meals to children as schools and programs remain closed. While the state embarks in the process of reopening, many people will not be able to return to work for some time and others have been laid-off indefinitely.

It is more important than ever before to support and share information about the federal nutrition programs. Read on to learn more about how SNAP, WIC and the child nutrition programs are working to support Tennesseans during the COVID-19 pandemic and how you can raise your voice to make these programs even stronger.

COVID-19 Updates

Addressing Hunger in the Next Stimulus

Policymakers are considering additional response measures in the face of mounting job losses and other dire economic signs due to COVID-19. A top item on their list should be raising SNAP (food stamp) benefits until the economy recovers to help people struggling to put food on the table and inject fast, high

“bang-for-the-buck” stimulus into the economy. Congress needs to act now to help respond to the fallout of the expected prolonged economic downturn, including helping those who will be hit hardest.

A critical step is to temporarily increase the maximum SNAP benefit by 15 percent. SNAP is one of the most effective mechanisms available both to quickly reach low-income households and prevent larger increases in poverty. **You can act now to through TJC’s Feed Tennessee Campaign to urge the Senate to strengthen SNAP:**

URGENT: #FeedTN Campaign

TELL YOUR SENATORS: Strengthen SNAP in the next COVID-19 legislative response package

1. *Increase the max SNAP benefit by 15%*
2. *Increase the min SNAP benefit from \$16 to \$30 per month*
3. *Suspend all SNAP administrative rules that would weaken or terminate benefits*

#FEEDTN

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Join us in urging our U.S. Senators to support strengthening SNAP in the next COVID-19 legislative response package.

[Click here to email your senators now](#)

COVID-19 Webpage for Partner Organizations

The nutrition team has compiled all our COVID-19 resources for partner organizations on our website. You can find policy updates, advocacy opportunities, and additional resources at the following locations:

[SNAP & COVID-19](#)

[WIC & COVID-19](#)

[Child Nutrition Programs & COVID-19](#)

If you or someone you know is experiencing food insecurity and needs assistance, please [click here](#).

SNAP Benefits Changes

SNAP applications can be submitted online, over the phone, or by fax to your county DHS or Family Assistance Office. A list of county offices and contact information can be found [here](#). **DHS will not be contacting applicants for**

interviews before making determinations – make sure to include all relevant information, such as medical bills if applicable, when applying to receive the correct amount.

All existing and new applicants will receive the maximum amount of SNAP benefits through May due to COVID-19 (\$194 for a household of 1). See DHS's notice on this [here](#).

If you have any questions or are concerned that you or a client have not received the correct amount in SNAP or if you experience barriers to applying please contact Sarah Henson at shenson@tnjustice.org.

Pending Changes to Nutrition Programs

Pandemic EBT

A few weeks ago we called for advocates to sign a petition urging Governor Lee to take advantage of the provisions in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to implement Pandemic EBT, a program that would provide food for families while school is out through an EBT card (similar to a debit card). [View our letter to the Governor or add you name to the list here](#).

Tennessee has not yet been approved to implement P-EBT. We will send updates on any breaking news regarding P-EBT.

Online SNAP Purchasing

USDA has launched an online SNAP purchasing pilot allowing states to submit plan for approval. Several states have received approval from USDA to implement the use of SNAP benefits online during COVID-19, meaning participants can purchase food online and pick it up/have it delivered instead of going into the store. This is helpful to seniors and immunocompromised individuals. To read more about how this can be used, see [this guidance from USDA](#). Tennessee has not yet been approved for online SNAP purchasing. We are monitoring this and other waivers and will continue to notify followers with updates.

WIC Benefits Changes

Most WIC appointments are still by phone only. We recommend calling your nearest WIC clinic to ask about new processes and accommodations.

You can find your nearest WIC clinic at www.signupwic.com or by calling 1-800-DIAL-WIC.

If you or someone you know is experiencing barriers to scheduling or attending a WIC appointment, please contact Signe Anderson at sanderson@tnjustice.org.

Due to grocery store inventory shortages, WIC participants now have some flexibilities in the food they purchase with WIC. If the designated WIC food is sold out at the grocery, WIC participants can purchase alternative food.

For more information about what food is currently eligible in WIC benefits packages, [please see here](#).

School Meals

Schools are closed for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year, yet many schools across the state are still providing meals to children. Operating schools are providing pick-up meals and delivery. Visit this site locator to find out where school meals are available: [School Meal Finder](#).

Summer Meals

2019 Summer Meal Service Sponsors have continued to operate to close the hunger gap that has resulted from unanticipated school closures.

The deadline for 2020 sponsor applications was May 1, 2020. If you missed this deadline or had to alter your application quickly, please contact Signe Anderson at sanderson@tnjustice.org.

TJC COVID-19 Webinars

[UPCOMING] COVID-19 and the Nutrition Safety Net: Part 3

The third part in our COVID-19 webinar series is now available to register.

May 28, 2020 at 1:00pm CT/2:00pm ET

[Click here to register.](#)

The Nutrition Team hosted two webinars on COVID-19 and the federal nutrition programs. We covered how SNAP, WIC, and Child Nutrition Programs are responding to the pandemic; shared updates on implementation of the Families First Act and the CARES Act recently passed by Congress; and looked at additional opportunities for federal nutrition programs to aid individuals affected by the crisis. Access the recordings here:

COVID-19 & the Nutrition Safety Net

Recorded March 24, 2020

[View recording here](#)

COVID-19 & the Nutrition Safety Net: Part 2

Recorded April 2, 2020

[View recording here](#)

SNAP

TJC Mother of the Year Event

Every Mother's Day TJC honors the strength and determination of clients with our Mother of the Year Award. Working with families in times of crisis, TJC has witnessed the extraordinary love and courage of mothers and caregivers, year after year. This year we awarded Teresa Thompson, a fierce advocate for her parents to have access to healthy food through SNAP. Read her story [here](#) and find a video of Sarah, our SNAP Nutrition Advocate honoring her [here](#).

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our annual TJC Mother of the Year fundraising event and gave money during the Big Payback! Your donations make our casework and advocacy possible and are especially important now to our advocacy work to prevent hunger during this pandemic.

College Hunger

Colleges and Universities are closed for the rest of the 2019-2020 school year disrupting life for many students. Our college partners are hard at work during this time to ensure TN students basic needs are met.

TJC held a College Hunger Call on April 15 and will host another call soon. Find the recording [here](#). Email Sarah at shenson@tnjustice.org to join the next call.

College partner highlights:

University of Memphis Tiger Pantry/SNAP Assistance ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#))

UTK Student Basic Needs Coalition & End Hunger/FEED Change ([Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [twitter](#), [UTK Specific Resource Guide](#))

Swipe Out Hunger ([COVID-19 Advocacy Toolkit](#), weekly [COVID-19 webinars](#))

Hope Center for College, Community, & Justice ([guides](#), [social media](#), [surveys](#), [policy updates](#))

Have you or someone you know lost power after thunderstorms?

Tennessee experienced several severe storms in recent months that have caused people to lose power. Any SNAP participant who loses power for at least 12 hours can apply through their county DHS office for *replacement benefits* for food loss.

What are SNAP replacement benefits?

Who is eligible?

- Current SNAP recipients who have lost power for at least 12 hours as a result of inclement weather.

When are replacement benefits available?

- Any time inclement weather (e.g. thunderstorms) causes households to lose power for 12+ hours.

How does someone apply?

- Contact your county DHS office [here](#).

How long do I have to apply?

- Typically individuals only have 10 days from the date of the storm, but DHS has expressed that there may be some flexibility in applying for replacement benefits during COVID-19. Apply as soon as possible.

If you have issues getting your SNAP replacement benefits, please email shenson@tnjustice.org.

Disaster-SNAP in Chattanooga

D-SNAP is for families who might not normally be eligible for SNAP but were impacted by storms. They will receive the maximum of one month's allotment. Read the [announcement from USDA](#) here. The stated deadline to apply is May 12. If you missed the deadline, please contact Sarah at shenson@tnjustice.org.

Tennessee DHS applied for Disaster SNAP following the April 12 tornado in the Chattanooga area and the White House just granted approval on May 4 for individuals who live OR work in Bradley and Hamilton Counties. DHS [announced](#) this on May 5.

The WIC Program

WIC Champions Call Scheduled for May 20, 2020 at 2:00pm CDT

[Click here to register](#)

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.](#)

Child Nutrition

Summer Meals Network

The Nutrition Team is fielding preliminary interest in an SFSP sponsor network. If you are a current or potential SFSP sponsor and would be interested in a support network to share best practices and information, please email Signe Anderson at sanderson@tnjustice.org.

Census 2020

Census 2020 is here and it's important for you and your community to be counted. Work with us to share information about why the census is important and urge your network and clients to be counted. The census impacts funding for programs and services that affect our daily lives and is crucial to federal programs like WIC, TennCare, and many other programs that support low-income communities.

Census Jobs and SNAP

Tennessee Department of Human Services applied for a USDA waiver that allows this temporary work to be waived from income when applying for SNAP. That means working for the census won't cut anyone's SNAP benefits in Tennessee!

[Check out TJC's Census Website!](#)

Social Media

#FeedTN Campaign

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TJC Tennessee Tuesday Tweetstorm

Join us Tuesday, May 19 from 1-2 pm CT for our next TJC Tennessee Tuesday Tweetstorm to highlight the importance of SNAP in the next stimulus. On May 5, we had a Tweetstorm to get the attention of TN Senators and share information on the importance of SNAP, especially during a pandemic and widespread economic hardship. Email shenson@tnjustice.org for more information

Want to join? Here's our [social media toolkit](#)! Just copy and paste these graphics and sample messages we've created.

What We're Reading

The nutrition safety net has been changing rapidly due to COVID-19. Here are some resources we have found helpful:

COVID-19: Food Insecurity

[More Than One in Five US Adults Experienced Food Insecurity in the Early Weeks of the Pandemic](#), Urban Institute, April 28, 2020

[1 in 5 Children Don't Have Enough to Eat in the Coronavirus Pandemic](#), US News, May 6, 2020

COVID-19 & the SNAP Program

[COVID-19 Exposes Stark Inequalities Across U.S. as Thousands Struggle Daily to Find Food](#), The Appeal, May 7, 2020

[Newly unemployed may qualify for federal food assistance](#), WCV Boston, May 8,

2020

[New Stimulus Package Passed by Senate Missed the Mark, Rural Advocates Say](#), The Daily Yonder, April 22, 2020

College Hunger and SNAP

[Student SNAP Waivers Denied](#), Inside Higher Ed, April 21, 2020

[COVID-19 Crisis Makes Food Stamps More Dire](#), The Philadelphia Inquirer, May 4, 2020

SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot

[For Most Food Stamp Users, Online Shopping Isn't an Option](#), The New York Times, May 1, 2020

COVID-19: Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT)

[States Are Embracing Extra Funds from Pandemic EBT to Cover Missing School Meals](#), Civil Eats, May 4, 2020

[Here's How States Can Deliver More Food Assistance to Low-Income Children During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), Health Affairs Blog, May 10, 2020

COVID-19: Disproportionate Racial Impact

['People are really suffering': Black and Latino communities help their own amid coronavirus crisis](#), USA Today, May 9, 2020

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