



SNAP and Our Community: Protecting Nutrition Assistance for People with Disabilities

Updated December 2025

Overview

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a lifeline for millions of Americans, including thousands of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and autism. Although the historic October 2025 federal shutdown has ended, its temporary suspension of SNAP benefits revealed how fragile the food system can be for families who rely on it.

Unfortunately, there are still looming threats to SNAP. Larger and longer-term policy changes from the federal budget reconciliation bill are before us. The [“Big, Ugly Bill”](#), signed into law in July by the President, will significantly restrict eligibility and reduce benefits over the next 10 years. These changes pose a severe, ongoing threat to food security.

What is SNAP?

SNAP is the nation’s largest anti-hunger program, providing monthly food assistance to [42 million](#) Americans. Benefits are needs-based and are different for recipients, but the average is about [\\$187](#) per month per person. SNAP is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and is administered by states. In Massachusetts, the [Department of Transitional Assistance](#) distributes SNAP benefits.

SNAP in Massachusetts

[1 million](#) people in Massachusetts alone benefit from SNAP each month. 31% are people with disabilities, 32% are children, and 26% are older adults. Massachusetts receives about [\\$240 million](#) per month from the federal government for SNAP.

What Happened During the Shutdown?

On October 1, 2025, the government shut down because of an inability to reach an agreement on a federal budget. Although the longest federal shutdown in history has ended, its impact was significant. During the shutdown:

- The USDA announced that SNAP benefits would not be issued for the month of November.
- Benefits were subsequently paused or partially delayed in several states.
- 20+ states filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration for unlawfully ending SNAP.
- A court mandate required the USDA to fund SNAP benefits for the month of November.

While the shutdown is over, it underscored how vulnerable the system is and created tremendous stress and confusion for families and individuals who were unsure if or when they would receive benefits.

The “Big Ugly Bill” and Long-Term SNAP Cuts

The most significant and lasting threat to food access comes from the President’s budget reconciliation bill. This law makes almost [\\$200 billion](#) cuts to SNAP over the next 10 years. Other policy changes could dramatically reshape the program, including tightening eligibility, expanding work requirements, and shifting greater cost responsibility to the states. This leaves states with more obligations but no way to fill the funding gap.

Impact on the IDD and Autism Community

[4 million people with disabilities](#) nationwide rely on SNAP. The disability community is more susceptible to food insecurity due to rising food costs, housing, employment, medical complexities, and other factors. Group homes and residential providers also use SNAP to supplement food budgets for residents. Cuts or delays strain provider agencies and risk reducing access to healthy foods. In an ongoing survey conducted by The Arc, community members have shared what these SNAP cuts could mean for them. Here are just two examples:

- *“We won’t be able to afford food with SNAP cuts.”*
- *“SNAP benefits will be essential for my son to maintain his own household one day.”*

These perspectives highlight the urgent need to protect and strengthen – not weaken – nutrition supports for people with disabilities.

What Can I Do?

- **Contact** your members of congress and share your story of why SNAP benefits are important. [Find your federal legislators here.](#)
- For **information** about SNAP in Massachusetts: The Department of Transitional Assistance
 - **Contact** [DTA with questions about SNAP here.](#)
- Project Bread’s [Foodsource Hotline](#): **1-800-645-8333**
- **Share** our [list of food resources.](#)
- **Join us!** Advocacy is more effective when individuals join together. Sign up for [The Arc of Massachusetts’s action alerts](#) and [The Arc of the United States’](#) action alerts.

For More Information

Please reach out for more detailed information by contacting Nora Bent, Director of Government Affairs and Strategic Partnerships, at nbent@arcmass.org.