

Advocacy Guide

Support Refugee & Immigrant Communities As States Implement Federal Food Assistance Cuts

Thousands of refugees and others seeking safety from persecution are losing access to the federal assistance that makes it possible for them to put food on the table. Learn how you can advocate to prevent refugee and immigrant communities in your state from going hungry.

Background

On July 4, President Trump signed the [“One Big Beautiful Bill Act”](#) (OBBBA) into law. The massive tax and spending package includes an unprecedented expansion of funding for immigration enforcement and detention and makes devastating cuts to social safety net programs. Millions of immigrants and U.S.-born community members alike will lose access to vital [health care](#) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ([SNAP](#)) benefits.

The bill **specifically targets food assistance for refugees, asylees, and other immigrants seeking safety from persecution and violence** (“humanitarian arrivals”). With the exception of those who obtain Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status – which often entails a lengthy and expensive process – many humanitarian arrivals are now categorically ineligible for SNAP.

Learn more about SNAP benefits and how states are responding to the changes in eligibility for the program [here](#).

What you can do to prevent communities from going hungry as states implement SNAP cuts

1. **Take action:** email and call your state elected officials to urge them to take steps to prevent newcomer communities from going hungry.
2. **Donate to [local organizations](#)** that are working to fill the gaps, such as food banks and refugee and immigrant service providers.
3. **Meet with your state lawmakers** to advocate for state-level solutions to meet community needs as many newcomers lose access to SNAP. See below for sample outreach templates and instructions for setting up a successful in person-or virtual conversation with your state legislators.

Overview of Policy Asks For States

See in-depth policy asks and examples [here](#).

Though a large number of eligible newcomers are at risk of being improperly cut off from their SNAP benefits, many are also now statutorily ineligible for the food assistance they once counted on. Here’s an overview of what states can do to proactively mitigate harm in the wake of Congress’s decision to cut off newcomer communities from vital food assistance:

1. **Ensure that SNAP implementing agencies do not cut off eligible immigrants.** States must properly interpret federal [law](#) and [policy guidance](#) to make sure that eligible Lawful Permanent Residents – such as Special Immigrant Visa recipients and green card holders or citizens who were once refugees or asylees – are not cut off from SNAP.

2. **Create and fund [state-run programs](#)** that can [fill the gap](#) for newcomers who are newly cut off from SNAP benefits.
3. **Invest in programs and partnerships** with food banks, ethnic and community based organizations, educational institutions, businesses, faith-based organizations, and refugee and immigrant service providers working to prevent communities from going hungry.

Meet with your state lawmakers

State legislators often make themselves available to meet with their constituents to learn about issues impacting people in the community and hear their constituents' concerns and priorities. Unlike federal lawmakers, who typically have a team of staff to support them, state legislators often have few or no full-time staff, so they rely on community members like you to keep them informed and help them make decisions. Find contact information for your state lawmakers here and use the resources below to help you meet with them.

Outreach email template to request a meeting

Subject Line – *Constituent Meeting Request: Preventing Refugees From Going Hungry in the Wake of Congress's SNAP Cuts*

Dear Representative/Senator [Last],

I'm a constituent from [city/town] reaching out on behalf of [community/group/organization] to request a meeting with you or a member of your team to discuss steps you can take to prevent refugees and others seeking safety from violence and persecution from going hungry in the wake of cuts to federal food assistance programs.

States are beginning to implement changes in eligibility for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that Congress passed in the so-called "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," cutting off many refugees and other newcomers from accessing benefits for which they were previously eligible.

We would like to meet to discuss the ways that [State] can mitigate the harm that many newcomers will face as our state begins to implement federal SNAP eligibility changes. Are you available for a 30-minute meeting [via Zoom/at your office] to discuss steps you can take to ensure members of our community don't go hungry as they lose access to life-sustaining federal support?

- [Day of the week, date, time range]
- [Day of the week, date, time range]
- [Day of the week, date, time range]

Thank you for your work and please let me know if you have any questions or need more information.

Best,

[Your name]

[Your mailing address]

Sample meeting agenda

Introductions: briefly share your name, where you live, and why you care about food security for refugees and other humanitarian arrivals. Invite your lawmaker and/or their staff member to introduce themselves and describe their work.

Describe the problem:

- Congress made many refugees and other humanitarian arrivals ineligible for SNAP benefits when it passed H.R. 1, or the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act.”
- States are now charged with implementing the federal changes. Many community members are now losing access to their federal food assistance benefits.
- Some states are implementing the changes too broadly, cutting off people who should still qualify. Learn more about how states are improperly cutting off eligible newcomers [here](#).

Describe the solutions. Your state lawmaker can:

- Urge the agency within the state government that administers SNAP to carefully implement eligibility changes to ensure that eligible Lawful Permanent Residents – such as Afghan Special Immigrant Visa recipients and green card holders who were once refugees or asylees – are not improperly turned away from SNAP benefits.
- Create and fund [state-run programs](#) that can fill the gap for newcomers who have been newly cut off from SNAP benefits.
- Invest in programs to prevent communities from going hungry by partnering with groups like refugee and immigrant service providers, ethnic community based organizations, educational institutions, businesses, food banks, and faith-based organizations. Successful public-private partnership models include:
 - Provide funding to food banks to help them meet the needs of newcomers newly cut off from SNAP.
 - Promote and fund farmers’ markets, restaurants, and local businesses and organizations that connect community members to nutritious food.
 - Expand access to school meals for children enrolled in public schools and support initiatives to purchase food from local farmers and producers providing culturally-relevant foods to schools and organizations working to meet communities’ nutrition needs.

Ask for questions. It is okay if you don’t know all the answers! You can offer to look for more information and send it in your follow-up communication.

Thank your lawmaker for their time, leave them a printed copy of the [policy solutions](#) leave-behind, and let them know you’ll follow up with more resources and information.

Follow-up Email Template

Dear Representative/Senator [Last],

Thank you for making time to meet with me and other members of [community/group/organization] to discuss what you can do to prevent refugees and other newcomers from going hungry as [State] implements cuts to SNAP. I've CCed the group here so everyone can stay in touch. See the attached document for detailed policy solutions.

To reiterate, we urge you to:

- **Ensure that SNAP implementing agencies do not cut off eligible immigrants.** States must properly interpret federal [law](#) and [policy guidance](#) to make sure that eligible Lawful Permanent Residents – such as Special Immigrant Visa recipients and green card holders or citizens who were once refugees or asylees – are not cut off from SNAP.
- **Create and fund [state-run programs](#)** that can [fill the gap](#) for newcomers who are newly cut off from SNAP benefits.
- **Invest in programs and partnerships** with food banks, ethnic and community based organizations, educational institutions, businesses, faith-based organizations, and refugee and immigrant service providers working to prevent communities from going hungry.

Thank you for your work and please let me know if you have any questions or need more information.

Sincerely,

[Your name]