Protect Essential Nutrition Access for Neighbors: Delay the SNAP Benefit Cost Shift

As grocery costs have stayed stubbornly high, communities across the country are stepping up to care for one another. Food banks, houses of worship, farmers and local groups are leading the way to help end hunger, working together to ensure more families have the support they need. In addition, programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) complement these community efforts, helping neighbors regain stability and move toward lasting well-being.

Under H.R. 1, states are newly required to cover a portion of SNAP benefit costs based on unintentional paperwork and administrative errors, known as payment error rates, without the necessary time and resources to improve their systems. States could be pushed into tough trade-offs, including reducing or limiting SNAP eligibility, cutting other community services or raising taxes. SNAP provides broad, consistent support to help neighbors facing hunger regain stability, while food banks and local partners provide emergency and local support, working together to ensure communities have access to the food and resources they need.

Congress must delay implementation of the SNAP cost shift to states by two years, as requested by states and counties, to allow states more time to reduce SNAP payment error rates and food banks to adjust to changes in participation that impact the food assistance we provide.

Payment error rates are about program accuracy. They generally reflect unintentional paperwork or calculation mistakes that lead to underpayment or overpayment of benefits. We aim to be partners in accuracy with states to ensure eligible households receive the right benefit amount—no more and no less.

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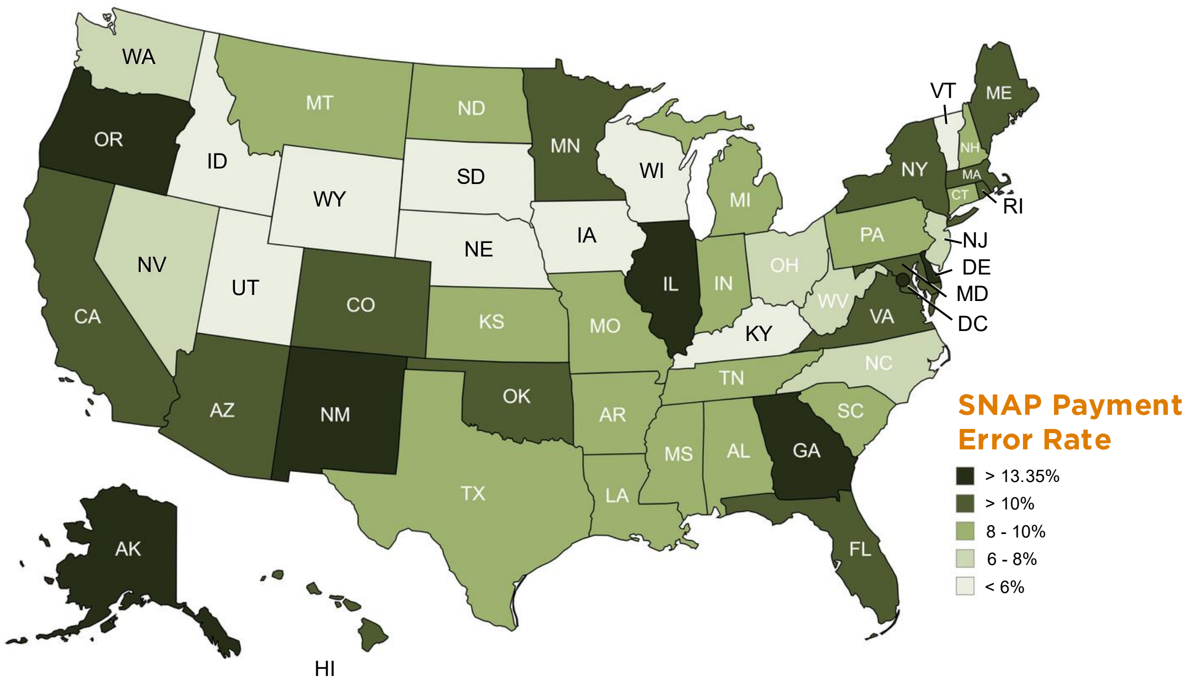
How the State SNAP Benefit Cost Shift Works

Right now, the federal government covers 100% of the cost of SNAP food benefits. Due to H.R. 1, starting in October 2027 (FY28), states may have to pay up to 15% of SNAP benefit costs depending on how accurate their benefit payments are.

- In the first year (FY28), each state can choose to use its FY25 or FY26 payment error rate to calculate any required contribution. This means states' future costs are being determined right now, leaving virtually no time to reduce errors to avoid these costs.
- Beginning in FY29, a state's required share will be based on its payment error rate from three years earlier.

States with the highest error rates may qualify to delay this new requirement. If a state's error rate is high enough, it can wait until FY30 to start contributing. Each state's timeline will vary depending on changes in its payment accuracy over time.

FY25 SNAP Payment Error Rates Across the U.S.



SNAP Payment Error Rate	SNAP Benefit Cost Shift	Examples of Impact to States (Based on FY25 Payment Error Rates)
< 6%	0%	VT would need to keep its error rate < 6% or risk having to allocate an estimated $8 million to maintain SNAP benefits.
6% - 8%	5%	WA would need to allocate an estimated $100 million to maintain SNAP benefits.
8% - 10%	10%	PA would need to allocate an estimated $425 million to maintain SNAP benefits.
> 10%	15%	CA would need to allocate an estimated $1.8 billion to maintain SNAP benefits.
> 13.34%	0%	Delayed Implementation FY28, FY29; then 15%

States Face Factors Beyond Their Control

While states are working hard to improve SNAP payment accuracy, multiple factors could increase error rates. Some of these factors are outside states' control, including the lapse in SNAP benefits during the 2025 government shutdown, delayed USDA guidance on H.R. 1 changes to SNAP, and the requirement to take on a higher share of SNAP administrative costs beginning in October 2026. With so many challenges happening at once, many states are not in a position to quickly bring their payment error rates down.

How the State SNAP Benefit Cost Shift Will Impact People Facing Hunger

With little time to identify all the reasons for payment errors and deploy targeted solutions, some states are already adding red tape that seeks to reduce errors but makes it much harder for eligible families to access SNAP.

Without thoughtful implementation and adequate investment, families, seniors, veterans and children may increasingly encounter greater barriers to accessing the food assistance they need. The result would be additional strain on local communities and the charitable food network at a moment when resources are already stretched.


Adriana, California


Anne Lee & family, New York

Delaying the SNAP Benefit Cost Shift Supports Our Communities

Giving states more time to improve their payment error rates is the most responsible path forward. It ensures neighbors continue to receive the food assistance they need, protects local economies that benefit from SNAP spending, and supports the long-term health and stability of communities.

Food support programs, like SNAP, matter now more than ever as grocery prices have remained high for several years. They help people bridge the gap when times get tough. They strengthen our communities, support local grocery stores, farmers and economies, as well as restore stability to families that have hit a rough patch.

Delay implementation of the SNAP cost shift to states by two years, as requested by states and counties, to allow states more time to reduce SNAP payment error rates and food banks to adjust to changes in participation that impact the food assistance we provide.