



**Greater Chicago Food Depository**  
**Statement on Proposal to Restrict SNAP Categorical Eligibility**  
**July 25, 2019**

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The Greater Chicago Food Depository strongly opposes the Trump administration's latest proposal to deny food assistance to millions of Americans.

The proposed rule change announced Tuesday would result in millions of Americans losing their benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In Illinois, tens of thousands of individuals will be affected, according to our best estimates.

In simplest terms, this ill-conceived proposal will increase hunger in our communities, place more hurdles on families trying to lift themselves out of poverty and increase administrative red tape for state caseworkers administering the program.

The purpose of broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE) – which the administration's proposal seeks to restrict – is to streamline the process by which families' eligibility for SNAP is determined. This policy makes it easier for families in need to receive food assistance and allows state agencies to run more efficiently.

Categorical eligibility allows states to designate a household as meeting SNAP's income eligibility requirement if the household's eligibility for another means-tested program has already been established. As a result, if individuals receive transportation or childcare assistance through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF), for example, they'd also be considered eligible for SNAP benefits.

Giving low-income families more hoops to jump through hurts their chances for a better life. In addition, thousands of school-age children in those households would no longer be automatically eligible for free school meals through their receipt of SNAP benefits.

SNAP is the frontline defense against hunger in this country. It works as it should, expanding and contracting to help people in times of need. Cutting the program will lead to greater financial and societal costs down the road.

As a country, we can and should do better to make sure our most vulnerable neighbors have consistent access to nutritious food.

In the days ahead, we'll be calling on our advocacy partners to submit their public comments in opposition to this rule change. In the meantime, we implore the Trump administration to reconsider this heartless and misguided proposal.