



Greater Chicago Food Depository
Statement on Illinois Joining Federal Lawsuit Against SNAP Rule Change
Jan. 31, 2019

On Thursday, Jan. 30, Illinois joined a growing list of 14 states, plus New York City and Washington D.C., in a lawsuit filed against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) intended to block implementation of a harmful rule that would result in about 700,000 Americans losing needed food assistance.

The Greater Chicago Food Depository applauds Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul for joining this suit and for his dedication to protecting Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for the estimated 100,000 Illinoisans who would be affected if this rule takes effect.

The lawsuit aims to block a rule announced by the USDA in December 2019 that limits states' ability to waive an onerous work requirement for so-called able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) who receive SNAP.

Under existing rules, states can waive the work requirement for the entire state or areas within the state experiencing higher unemployment rates relative to the national unemployment rate. Under the current rule, DuPage and Cook County are ineligible for a waiver and have implemented the work requirement in 2018 and 2020 respectively. Barring court action, USDA's proposed rule would take effect as soon as April 1, 2020, prompting more counties to lose the waiver.

Simply put, taking away a person's needed food assistance doesn't help them find employment.

While unemployment rates overall have been on a steady decline, people across our state with low educational attainment, criminal backgrounds, limited access to transportation, and histories of long-term unemployment continue to face challenges to employment opportunities.

The Food Depository is grateful to Attorney General Raoul for his staff for working to ensure unemployed and underemployed individuals have access to the food they need to remain healthy and thrive.

To learn more about how you can get involved with the Food Depository's advocacy efforts, visit chicagosfoodbank.org/advocacy