



August 16, 2021

Statement on revision of the Thrifty Food Plan

The Greater Chicago Food Depository applauds the U.S. Department of Agriculture's long overdue revision of the Thrifty Food Plan, which is used to determine the base value of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

As a result of this revision, people who receive SNAP benefits will receive assistance that more accurately reflects the cost of a healthy diet in today's world. Under the new plan, average SNAP benefits will increase by about \$36 per person per month or about 40 cents per meal.

For years, SNAP benefits have been inadequate and out of touch with how people buy, prepare and consume food. More than 2 million people in Illinois receive SNAP benefits – a lifeline for many still reeling from the pandemic.

But most SNAP benefits are exhausted by day 21 of the month, according to USDA data. For these households, Feeding America research shows that more than 30 percent turned to a food pantry every month.

Thanks to the USDA's careful science-based correction of the Thrifty Food Plan, SNAP benefits will be even more effective in lifting people out of poverty. Children need healthy food to learn, grow and thrive.

The need for food assistance ballooned during the ongoing pandemic. Both in Cook County, and nationally, lower-income Black and Latino communities were hit especially hard by the economic impact of the pandemic.

The Food Depository has long advocated for a strong federal safety net to help people who struggle to consistently afford food. The revision of the Thrifty Food Plan is a meaningful step, particularly as other forms of federal assistance could soon expire.

We urge the Biden administration and lawmakers in Congress to continue working together to provide a strong nutritional safety net for households in need of food assistance.