



# The 2023 Farm Bill

## What is the Farm Bill?

The Farm Bill is a comprehensive piece of legislation that authorizes most federal policies governing food and agriculture programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Farm Bill is reauthorized by Congress about every five years, offering policy makers an opportunity to review the programs included in the legislation and make programmatic changes.

## What is at stake this year?

Millions of low-income families and seniors gain access to healthy food through the Farm Bill nutrition programs each year. SNAP is the largest of the federal food assistance programs, and the SNAP makes up a vast majority of the 2018 Farm Bill's spending.

In New Jersey alone, over 857,000 residents were reached by SNAP in fiscal year 2022. More than 63 percent of SNAP participants in New Jersey are in families with children, and over 44 percent are in families with members who are seniors or disabled. In NJ, 55 percent of SNAP participants have an income below the poverty line. SNAP brings hundreds of millions of federal dollars into New Jersey's economy. The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that in a weak economy, \$1 in SNAP benefits generates \$1.50 in economic activity.

In reauthorizing the Farm Bill, Congress must commit to strengthening SNAP and improving equitable access to this critical nutrition program.

## What marker bills are we supporting?

Marker bills are legislation introduced in Congress to signal policy ideas and gather support for those ideas, with the goal of inclusion in an omnibus bill like the Farm Bill. Here are some marker bills we are supporting that would make necessary improvements to SNAP:

### The Closing the Meal Gap Act

The average SNAP benefit is about \$6 per person per day.

This bill would give a much-needed boost to SNAP benefit amounts by changing the way SNAP benefits are calculated, as well as remove unrealistic barriers to SNAP.

### The Improving Access to Nutrition Act

Some SNAP households are subject to three-month time limits if they cannot verify that they are working or in a work training program at least 20 hours per week. SNAP time limits are harsh and arbitrary, don't promote employment and increase hunger and food insecurity.

This legislation would end the three-month time limit on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for certain unemployed and underemployed adults who do not document sufficient hours of work each month.

### The Enhanced Access to SNAP Act

Low-income college students must meet certain criteria to receive SNAP. During the pandemic, Congress temporarily expanded SNAP eligibility for college students, but like many other pandemic-era changes, these eligibility rules will expire, leaving many struggling, low-income college students without access to SNAP.

This bill would permanently expand SNAP eligibility, eliminating work-for-food SNAP rules that require students to work 20 hours a week or have a federal work-study job to receive SNAP.

### The SNAP Plus Act

Hot prepared foods, like rotisserie chicken, can be a great help to someone with a disability or a senior with limited mobility. This legislation would permanently end the prohibition on use of SNAP benefits to purchase hot prepared foods from food retailers.

### The Lift the Bar Act

This legislation would restore access to public programs for lawfully present immigrants by removing the five-year waiting period and other restrictions to SNAP eligibility. The proposal also would remove that waiting period in Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program.

Hunger Free New Jersey changes policy and practice so every New Jersey resident has enough to eat, every single day.

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