



FOOD RESEARCH & ACTION CENTER'S REVIEW OF PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED FY 2018 BUDGET

WASHINGTON, May 25, 2017 — On Tuesday, President Trump released his FY 2018 budget proposal. The devastating cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) reflect a callous failure to recognize the critical role SNAP plays as a first line of defense against hunger for tens of millions of Americans. See a [statement by FRAC's president on the cuts](#).

Below is a summary of proposed reductions to SNAP and an overview of how other critical nutrition programs and other social safety net programs fare in the president's budget.

Cuts to SNAP (over 10 years) amount to \$193 billion:

- **\$116 billion** would come from a wholly new state cost-sharing requirement designed to drive cuts to both benefits and eligibility. It mandates that states pay for a percentage of SNAP benefits (to be phased in, starting with a 10 percent match in 2020 and hitting 25 percent by 2023). This new requirement makes up the lion's share of the \$193 billion in cuts to SNAP. This cataclysmic change to the structure of the program would lead states to cut benefits and eligibility in good times, and would eviscerate SNAP's ability to respond to economic downturns, when state fiscal problems would be cascading.
- **\$49.7 billion** would come from eliminating SNAP eligibility for many jobless adults and working families with children. Regarding the jobless, the budget proposes to restrict the current waivers of the existing three months (out of 36 months) time limit on certain adults who lack sufficient hours of work. Waivers would be limited to geographic areas of 10 percent or higher unemployment rates, not areas which have other indices that can demonstrate an area's economic weakness. Regarding working families with children, the budget proposes to greatly restrict the state option to apply Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) asset rules and higher gross income levels to households under the "categorical eligibility" option. The latter change also will put at risk the connection to free school meals for the children in those households.
- **\$20.5 billion** in SNAP cuts would make it harder for people struggling to afford to "heat and eat," by eliminating the state option of connecting the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the SNAP Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) in computing SNAP benefits, and by standardizing the SUA methodology.
- **\$2.7 billion** would eliminate the minimum SNAP monthly benefit (currently \$16), which would particularly exacerbate hunger among seniors.
- **\$1.8 billion** would come from benefits for larger households, typically those with children, by capping the SNAP benefit at the maximum allotment for a six-person household.
- **\$2.4 billion** in fees charged to retailers to apply and be certified to accept SNAP at their stores, which may undermine the public-private partnership that has made SNAP a cost-efficient and mainstream transaction, and could exacerbate problems of food access for people in many urban and rural areas.

Child Nutrition Programs (over one year)

The president's budget does not propose to cut the core child nutrition entitlement programs. It assumes almost 5.4 billion lunches and snacks served to 31 million children through the National School Lunch Program; almost 2.6 billion breakfasts through the School Breakfast Program served to more than 15 million children; and over 2.2 billion meals through the Child and Adult Care Food Program served in day care facilities. The budget proposes funding that recognizes how participation and costs may grow:

- **\$13.1 billion** for the National School Lunch Program (an increase of \$659 million from FY 2017);
- **\$4.8 billion** for the School Breakfast Program (an increase of \$287 million from FY 2017); and
- **\$3.9 billion** for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (an increase of \$261 million from FY 2017).

For other child nutrition programs, the budget proposes different changes — some increases, (e.g., the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program), some decreases or eliminations (e.g., school equipment grants), and some flat funding:

- **\$640 million** for the Summer Food Service Program (an increase of \$50 million from FY 2017);
- **\$23 million** to continue the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Demonstration Projects (same as FY 2017);
- **\$297 million** for the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (an increase of \$168 million from FY 2017);
- **\$8.4 million** for Farm to School, with \$5 million for grants (mandatory funding) and \$3.4 million for USDA's Farm to School Team (a decrease from \$4.16 million for USDA's Farm to School Team);
- **\$17 million** for Team Nutrition and Healthier USDA School Challenge (a decrease from \$20 million in FY 2017);
- **No funding** for school meal equipment grants, which were funded at \$35 million in FY 2017; and
- **\$6.2 billion** for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), to support an anticipated caseload of 7.2 million women, infants, and children (slightly higher than the recent caseload); **\$60 million** for WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counseling; **\$20 million** for WIC MIS/EBT systems; **\$16 million** for WIC program initiatives and evaluation; and **\$14 million** for WIC infrastructure and technical assistance. However, the budget eliminates funding for the WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (\$19 million in FY 2017).

In other programs:

Senior Hunger (over one year)

- **\$21 million** for the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (same as FY 2017).

Commodity Programs (over one year)

- **\$238 million** for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, which is intended to support the current caseload of 690,000 elderly individuals (a \$2 million increase from FY 2017 to accommodate rising food costs); and
- **\$289 million** for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) commodities (a decrease of \$27 million from FY 2017); and **\$54 million** for TEFAP Storage and Transportation Grants (a \$5 million decrease from FY 2017).

The president's budget eliminates funding for the **Congressional Hunger Center (CHC)** fellowship program. The CHC fellowship program has historically been funded at \$2 million.

Outside of the domestic nutrition programs, the president's budget eliminates funding for the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. The program provides U.S. agricultural commodities and associated technical and financial assistance to carry out preschool and school feeding programs in developing countries. The Food for Peace program (P.L.480) was also eliminated.

The president's budget also includes brutal cuts that propose to further shred the nation's safety net and put the food security, health, learning, and productivity of Americans in peril:

- **\$627 billion** in cuts to Medicaid over the next 10 years. This does not include the nearly \$880 billion in proposed cuts to Medicaid through the GOP's plan to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act;
- **\$21 billion** in cuts to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; and
- **\$40 billion** reduction to the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax.

These proposed cuts to SNAP and other safety net programs are unacceptable. They will have a negative, domino effect on the health and well-being of low-income people in rural, suburban, and urban areas alike.

FRAC will be working with national, state, and local groups concerned about U.S. hunger and poverty to urge Congress to reject these proposed cuts. Congress must return to its historic bipartisan commitment to protect nutrition assistance programs and reject any budget proposal that abdicates the federal responsibility to combat hunger and deprives struggling and hungry Americans access to nutritious food.

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