

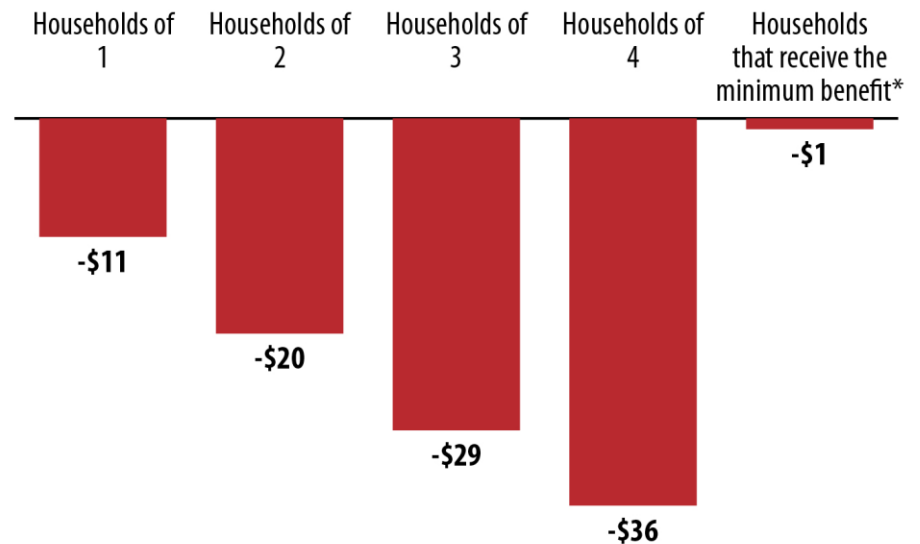
## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ARRA Benefit Cuts

### Background

As part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), Congress provided a temporary increase in SNAP benefits. The SNAP benefit boost was included in ARRA both because it would help struggling low-income households to provide enough food for their families during the recession and because of the stimulative effect it would have on local economies.

The ARRA benefit boost was structured to phase out incrementally as food prices rose and caught up with boosted benefit levels. However, in 2010 Congress passed two bills that paid for investments in other priorities by prematurely ending the boost to SNAP benefits. As a result, all SNAP participants will see their benefits cut on November 1, 2013 when the ARRA benefit boost expires, with benefits falling on average by about **\$36 for a family of four**.

Monthly cut in SNAP benefits by household size



SNAP benefits are already inadequate to get through the month.

- The November benefit cut will make it tougher for millions of families to put food on the table. An average family of 4 will see their benefits cut by \$36 a month.<sup>i</sup> Over the entire year, the average family of 4 will have \$396 less to spend on food.
- **Ohio will lose \$193 million** in direct benefits from the program as a result, affecting grocery stores, distribution chains, processors and farmers. 1.8 million Ohioans would be affected; 42% of them are children.<sup>ii</sup>
- SNAP benefits are already meager, and the benefits cut set for November 1 will only reduce the amount of money low-income families have to put food on the table. SNAP benefit levels will drop from its current average of about \$1.50 per person per meal to less than \$1.40 per person per meal.
- Any additional cut to SNAP would only make it more difficult for families to get the resources they need to obtain an adequate diet throughout the month. Most participants already run through their SNAP benefits by the third week of the month, with 90% of SNAP benefits redeemed by day 21 of the month. Due in part to SNAP benefit inadequacy, 58% of food bank clients currently receiving SNAP benefits turn to food banks for assistance at least 6 months out of the year.<sup>iii</sup>

Charity can't fill the gap.

- Feeding America food banks and the agencies they work with are on the front lines and see firsthand the impact our nation's struggling economy has had on their neighbors. The number of people seeking emergency food assistance from the Feeding America network increased 46% from 2006 to 2010.
- The upcoming cut in SNAP benefits will mean that each of the over 47 million people who currently receive SNAP assistance will have their food assistance cut. Faced with this sudden drop in their monthly food budget, SNAP households are likely to turn to our nation's food banks to help make ends meet. This increase in demand will only add to the strain felt by our emergency food system already struggling to keep up with increased demand resulting from the recession and slow economic recovery.
- Fighting hunger is a public-private partnership. We need a strong charitable system AND a strong federal anti-hunger safety net.

Lower SNAP benefits will make it harder for participants to access adequate nutrition and increase trade-offs between food and other household necessities.

- While a cut of \$36 a month for a family of 4 may not sound like much to you, it means several days' worth of food for a struggling family. **\$36 is the equivalent of** a gallon of low-fat milk (\$3.69), a box of corn flakes (\$2.99), eight bananas (\$3.12); a loaf of wheat bread (\$2.00), some deli ham (\$2.49); some deli cheese (\$3.49), two boxes of spaghetti (\$2.00), spaghetti sauce (\$1.79), some ground beef (\$4.99), some chicken breasts (\$5.69), and 4 potatoes (\$2.36) (total \$34.62).<sup>iv</sup>
- Low-income households already face additional hurdles to accessing a nutritious diet. For many families, stretching limited food resources may mean sacrificing the nutritional quality or variety of food in order to make food dollars last through the month. The cut in SNAP benefits also comes at a time when SNAP nutrition education funding was cut by 25% in 2013, meaning that families will have less support in how to maximize nutrition with limited food resources.
- Even before the November SNAP ARRA benefit cut, many client households served by Feeding America food banks report that their household incomes are inadequate to cover their basic household expenses. In fact, 46% of client households served reported having to choose between paying for utilities or heating fuel and food and 39% reported choosing between food and paying for rent or a mortgage.<sup>v</sup>

At a time when so many families are still struggling to make ends meet and all SNAP participants will see their benefits reduced, Congress must not make further cuts to SNAP.

- On top of the benefit cliff SNAP families will face in November, Congress is considering even deeper cuts to SNAP that would result in millions of people seeing their benefits cut further or losing benefits entirely.
- In September, the House of Representatives is expected to consider a bill with \$40 billion in SNAP cuts, resulting in over 15 billion lost meals for struggling families over the next ten years. To put this in context, if these cuts were divided evenly across Feeding America's

national network of food banks, every food bank would have to provide an additional 7.5 million meals each year for the next ten years.

- Cuts to SNAP are borne by our most vulnerable citizens because the program primarily serves children, seniors, and the disabled living in our poorest households. Nationally, 76% of SNAP households included a child, senior, or disabled person and 83% of SNAP households have gross income at or below 100% of the poverty guideline (\$19,530 for a family of 3 in 2013).<sup>vi</sup>

State-by-State Impact of SNAP ARRA Cuts in Fiscal Year 2014			
	Total SNAP Benefit Cut to State (in millions of dollars, from November 2013 through September 2014)	Number of SNAP Recipients Impacted by the Benefit Cut in FY 2014	
		Total	Share of Total State Population
Alabama	-\$98	910,000	19%
Alaska	-\$12	95,000	13%
Arizona	-\$109	1,101,000	17%
Arkansas	-\$52	501,000	17%
California	-\$457	4,168,000	11%
Colorado	-\$55	511,000	10%
Connecticut	-\$44	424,000	12%
Delaware	-\$16	154,000	17%
District of Columbia	-\$15	144,000	22%
Florida	-\$379	3,552,000	18%
Georgia	-\$210	1,947,000	19%
Hawaii	-\$33	190,000	13%
Idaho	-\$24	230,000	14%
Illinois	-\$220	2,031,000	16%
Indiana	-\$98	925,000	14%
Iowa	-\$43	421,000	13%
Kansas	-\$33	317,000	11%
Kentucky	-\$94	875,000	20%
Louisiana	-\$98	920,000	20%
Maine	-\$26	251,000	19%
Maryland	-\$82	774,000	13%
Massachusetts	-\$95	889,000	13%
Michigan	-\$183	1,775,000	18%
Minnesota	-\$55	556,000	10%
Mississippi	-\$70	664,000	22%
Missouri	-\$96	933,000	15%

Montana	-\$13	131,000	13%
Nebraska	-\$18	180,000	10%
Nevada	-\$37	359,000	13%
New Hampshire	-\$12	117,000	9%
New Jersey	-\$90	873,000	10%
New Mexico	-\$47	442,000	21%
New York	-\$332	3,185,000	16%
North Carolina	-\$166	1,708,000	17%
North Dakota	-\$6	57,000	8%
<b>Ohio</b>	<b>-\$193</b>	<b>1,847,000</b>	<b>16%</b>
Oklahoma	-\$66	615,000	16%
Oregon	-\$84	819,000	21%
Pennsylvania	-\$183	1,779,000	14%
Rhode Island	-\$20	181,000	17%
South Carolina	-\$93	875,000	18%
South Dakota	-\$11	104,000	12%
Tennessee	-\$141	1,345,000	20%
Texas	-\$411	3,997,000	15%
Utah	-\$26	253,000	9%
Vermont	-\$10	101,000	16%
Virginia	-\$99	941,000	11%
Washington	-\$114	1,113,000	16%
West Virginia	-\$36	350,000	19%
Wisconsin	-\$89	861,000	15%
Wyoming	-\$4	39,000	7%
Guam	-\$7	45,000	N/A
Virgin Islands	-\$4	27,000	N/A
Puerto Rico Block Grant	\$0	N/A	N/A
<b>Total</b>	<b>-\$5,000</b>	<b>47,600,000</b>	<b>15%</b>

Source: CBPP estimates based on USDA's June 2013 Thrifty Food Plan, CBO May 2013 baseline, 2011 USDA data on SNAP Household Characteristics, recent USDA administrative data on the number of SNAP participants, and U.S. Census Bureau data on state populations.

<sup>i</sup> August 2013 data, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3899>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://jfs.ohio.gov/pams/Reports/May-PAMS-Report.stm>

<sup>iii</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *Benefit Redemption Patterns in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. Final Report. February 2011.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/Published/SNAP/FILES/ProgramOperations/ARRASpendingPatterns.pdf>

Feeding America. *Food Banks: Hunger's New Staple*. Preliminary Findings. September 2011.

<http://feedingamerica.org/press-room/in-the-news/the-new-normal.aspx>

<sup>iv</sup> Prices based on a [shopping basket for Washington](#), DC in August 2013, Peapod

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<sup>v</sup> Feeding America, Hunger in America. 2010.

[http://feedingamerica.issuelab.org/resource/hunger\\_in\\_america\\_2010\\_national\\_report](http://feedingamerica.issuelab.org/resource/hunger_in_america_2010_national_report)

<sup>vi</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2011*. Table A.14 and Table 3.1. November 2012.

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/Published/snap/SNAPPartHH.htm>