

Trump SNAP cuts take effect: 2.4 million people at risk of losing food assistance by 2034

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2 February 2026

Sweeping cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) taking effect February 1 signal an escalation of the Trump administration's assault on what remains of the social safety net program in the US. Nationally, 2.4 million people could lose their SNAP benefits by 2034, while more than 1 million face the short-term risk of losing their benefits in 2026 from work rules alone.

The cuts to SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, are part of the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act" (OBBBA), a budget reconciliation package signed into law by President Trump on July 4, 2025. With it, the Trump White House has weaponized hunger as a tool of class warfare.

This legislative assault represents a massive upward transfer of wealth, slashing the social safety net to fund trillions in tax breaks for the ultra-wealthy and corporations. By imposing draconian work requirements for both SNAP and Medicaid, the health insurance program jointly funded by the federal government and states, the administration is deliberately exacerbating economic inequality and placing millions of vulnerable Americans at risk of hunger, malnutrition and starvation.

Established in 1964 to address the scourge of hunger among low-income households, SNAP has long served as the nation's first line of defense against food insecurity. It currently supports more than 42 million Americans, including 16-18 million children, with an average benefit of \$6 per day.

Research has consistently shown that SNAP is a critical public health tool. Food insecurity is linked to higher risks of chronic conditions like heart disease and diabetes, while SNAP participation is associated with improved health outcomes and a 25 percent reduction in annual healthcare costs. Despite this reality, the

OBBBA slashes \$186 billion from federal nutrition funding over the next decade, a cut of approximately 20 percent.

The centerpiece of this assault on SNAP is the expansion of work requirements that target the most marginalized sections of the population. Starting February 1, able-bodied adults up to age 64—up from the previous age limit of 54—must provide proof of 80 hours per month of work, training or volunteering to receive benefits beyond a three-month window.

The bill also ruthlessly eliminates exemptions for veterans, people experiencing homelessness, and youth aging out of foster care, while narrowing exemptions for parents to only those with children under age 14. The bill also increases SNAP's administrative cost share for states from 50 percent to 75 percent.

In Texas, which began implementing SNAP work requirements ahead of schedule in October 2025, about 500,000 are at risk of losing benefits. In Illinois, up to 340,000 residents are at risk. In virtually every state, tens if not hundreds of thousands face imminent cutoff.

Beyond the direct cuts to food assistance, the OBBBA represents the largest attack on federal health support in US history. The bill slashes over \$1 trillion from federal health programs, including \$793 billion from Medicaid and \$268 billion from the Affordable Care Act marketplaces. These cuts occur even as 30 percent of Medicaid enrollees already report experiencing food insecurity.

While the poor are told to tighten their belts, the administration is funneling unprecedented sums into the machinery of state repression and the pockets of the rich. The bill permanently extended the 2017 individual tax rates, benefiting the super-rich. It authorized \$150 billion in new military spending, including \$29 billion for shipbuilding, \$25 billion for the "Golden Dome"

missile defense system and \$16 billion for AI and drone technology.

The legislation also wages a two-pronged attack on immigrant workers and their families. It allocated \$170 billion for border security and deportation operations, including \$46.5 billion dedicated to the US-Mexico border wall, and funding for 100,000 new migrant detention beds and 10,000 new ICE agents. At the same time, it established \$100 application fees for asylum seekers and \$550 fees for work authorization applicants. Contrary to howls from the fascistic right, undocumented immigrants are not eligible for SNAP benefits.

To implement the savage cuts to food stamps, the Trump administration has also issued an unprecedented demand for states to provide data on SNAP recipients, with the unstated aim of denying benefits to as many people as possible. In what amounts to mass surveillance, personal data requested includes SNAP recipient identities, Social Security numbers, household composition, income verification, work compliance proof (e.g., 80 hours/month) and citizenship/immigration documents. At least 27 states have complied with requests to turn over this sensitive personal information.

In Minnesota, the target of ongoing ICE gestapo raids and deadly violence by federal agents, the USDA (US Department of Agriculture) issued an impossible demand for in-person interviews of 100,000 households within 30 days, threatening to disqualify the state from the program entirely before a federal court intervened with a preliminary injunction.

Amid this crisis, Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins has provocatively claimed that Americans can eat on just \$3 a meal, with a diet of pork, eggs, whole milk and broccoli. Critics have criticized this as a “prison diet,” noting it lacks essential variety and ignores the reality of rising grocery prices, which saw their largest jump since 2022 this past December.

As in all aspects of social life, the super-wealthy live in a different universe compared to the poor. The 2024 BLS data (adjusted for 2-3 percent food inflation into 2026) shows stark divides in spending on food for a family of four. The bottom quintile, or lowest 20 percent of households, often earning under \$30,000 annually, spend about \$450–\$550 a month on all food and beverages. This equates to roughly 30-35 percent

of after-tax income, prioritizing cheap staples and minimal eating.

By contrast, the top quintile of households, earning over \$150,000 annually, allocate \$1,400–\$1,800 or more monthly, or just 3-5 percent of income. This covers premium groceries, frequent dining out and takeout, with away-from-home spending on food topping at-home spending. The top 1 percent of households, earning \$1 million-plus annually, allocate an average of \$3,000–\$5,000 or more monthly on food and beverages, dining at luxury restaurants, prioritizing premium food and imported wines and spirits.

Multiple polls indicate that a majority of Americans oppose the cuts implemented by the OBBBA, including those to SNAP. Researchers at Yale and the University of Pennsylvania have warned that these cuts to health and nutrition programs could lead to over 51,000 preventable deaths annually. The OBBBA stands as a testament to an administration dedicated to rewarding the wealthy at the direct expense of the health and lives of the working class.



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