

Cutting the Thrifty Food Plan Takes Food From Families Undermines Already Inadequate SNAP Benefit

The 2018 Farm Bill no longer constrained reevaluations to be cost-neutral, as doing so would prevent the USDA from incorporating changes based on current scientific evidence, therefore harming the food security, health, and nutrition of families. Inflation adjustments on their own are not enough, future reevaluations must continue to follow the science so SNAP benefits reflect the dietary restrictions, cultural and religious preferences, time pressures, and other factors to ensure equitable food access for all Californians.

If the Thrifty Food Plan were cut by \$30 billion, SNAP households would receive approximately a \$6 per month cut - a whole day's worth of food. This includes many older adults, people with disabilities, and working families who receive a minimum allotment of \$23 a month, an approximate 25% cut.

This not only harms families but costs the state as food insecurity is associated with \$7.2 billion in annual healthcare costs in California and cuts to SNAP mean cuts to local economies. We must look forward, and mitigate hunger by moving towards a Low-Cost Food Plan and passing the Closing the Meal Gap Act to also remove the shelter cap to support families on SNAP like the one described below.

Example: Married couple Sara and Isaac live in California with their two children Ana and Jacob. Sara receives \$500 monthly from state disability benefits and Isaac gets \$1200 monthly from work. They pay \$150 monthly in dependent care (afterschool program). Their rent and utilities is \$1400.

Proposed cuts to Thrifty Food Plan	Thrifty Food Plan	Low Cost Food Plan	Closing the Meal Gap Act H.R. 3037 (Adams) S. 1336 (Gillibrand)
\$1.68 per meal per person	\$2.33 per meal per person	\$2.58 per meal per person	\$3.19 per meal per person

Congress has Solutions in Hand: Strengthen SNAP Benefit Adequacy in the Farm Bill

SNAP Emergency Allotments (EAs) allowed Californians to buy more and a greater variety of food, helped families weather income fluctuations, and stabilized households. Now that EAs have ended, food insecurity has intensified, households are making tradeoffs between food and other expenses, physical and mental health have declined, and local economies have suffered. We must strengthen, not cut, critical food benefits for households facing hunger.

“My biggest expenses right now is all my money goes to the utilities, gas and light. I don’t have money to get school clothes for my kids, and school shoes. Like, everything is going to the utilities and not towards the day to day needs.”

— SNAP Recipient

