



Alliance to End Hunger Opposes Proposed Rule Revising Utility Allowances in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

November 18, 2019

WASHINGTON DC, November 18, 2019 – Once again, the Administration is proposing a rule that would have a devastating effect on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants. The rule, Standardization of State Heating and Cooling Standard Utility Allowances, would change states' ability to account for the costs of utilities (including home heating and cooling) as they calculate SNAP household benefits. The change will result in 19 percent of SNAP households getting lower SNAP monthly benefits and will disproportionately affect seniors and people with disabilities. This rule would result in a \$4.5 billion net cut to SNAP benefits over five years. The Alliance to End Hunger strongly opposes such a plan and urges the withdrawal of the proposal.

Currently, SNAP rules allow states to take some critical household expenses (such as housing, childcare and utilities) into account when determining eligibility for SNAP and the size of a household's monthly benefit amount. States adjust household benefits based on a state-specific Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) calculated by the state and approved by USDA. The current policy allows variances in SUAs to accommodate for differences in utility costs-allowing states flexibility in how they calculate those costs. The proposed rule would standardize and cap SUA calculations across the country rather than allowing states to set their own rates. The rule would not result in a more accurate measurement of the true costs of families' utility bills.

The Administration's plan to standardize and cap SUAs would result in a significant rise in hunger among our most vulnerable residents. Millions of low-income households struggle to pay for food, utilities and other household expenses. The proposed rule would lower SUAs in 28 states resulting in lower SNAP benefits for millions of participants.

SNAP is an efficient program that stimulates local economies and helps families thrive. The numerous positive impacts of SNAP on participants' health and household well-being are well-founded. These kinds of policy changes were not included in the bipartisan 2018 Farm Bill after vigorous review and debate. The Administration should not impose a rule that will limit states' flexibility and deny families access to food. The Alliance to End Hunger calls on the Administration to withdraw this proposal. We encourage Alliance members and partners to submit [comments](#) by December 2nd.

We will continue to work with our network, as well as Members of Congress and the Administration, to ensure SNAP is protected and continues to play a vital role in the lives of food-insecure families.

The Alliance to End Hunger engages diverse institutions to build the public and political will to end hunger at home and abroad. Our 100 member organizations span nonprofit, faith, corporate, academic and philanthropic sectors.