

[Date]

[Name]

[Address]

RE: Strengthen SNAP in the Next Federal COVID-19 Relief Package to Lift Up Vulnerable Families and the Economy

Dear [],

We the undersigned organizations appreciate the investments and economic supports provided for in the CARES Act to help laid-off workers, older Americans and children, but there is more that needs to be done. During this time of soaring unemployment and financial insecurity, we were disappointed that the legislation did not include provisions to strengthen the Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). **We strongly urge Congress and the Administration to increase the SNAP benefit levels in the next federal COVID-19 relief package.**

The unprecedented disruption to the economy, incomes, and employment triggered by COVID-19 means that communities will need every option available to fight hunger and strengthen the economy. SNAP serves as a frontline defense against food insecurity, poverty, and the long-term detriments they cause. By providing families with a grocery benefit they can use to purchase food directly, SNAP is a safe, effective way to ensure that low-income children, families, and seniors can get the food they need.

While the CARES Act included increased funding for SNAP to cover the costs associated with an increase in caseload, it did not raise benefits for SNAP recipients. **Given the extraordinary increase in need during this public health pandemic and related economic crisis, we urge you to use the next federal relief package to strengthen SNAP by increasing the maximum benefit available to all households by 15% and increasing the minimum benefit from \$16 dollars to \$30.** This increase is needed to offset the significant loss in income and soaring unemployment resulting from COVID-19-related closures and disruptions.

Strengthening SNAP will not only feed families – it will also boost the economy. Economists estimate that every SNAP dollar that households redeem expands the economy by about \$1.50 because it frees cash for poor households to buy other essential items, like diapers and medication, and provides revenue directly to stores, thus helping maintain local jobs. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service estimates that every \$1 billion invested in SNAP supports 13,600 jobs and approximately \$32 million in farm revenue. Therefore, as the federal government continues to evaluate effective policies to stimulate the economy, **we recommend that the increase to SNAP benefits as outlined above be kept in place until the economy recovers from its current shock.**

We are also asking Congress to delay the implementation of proposed and final rules that the Administration has issued for SNAP. The implementation of new rules on program eligibility and restrictions would exacerbate the hardship of low-income families and children. Implementation of these regulations would also divert vital state resources away from responding

to the impacts of COVID-19 on communities across the nation. Now is not the time to finalize and implement these harmful restrictions on kids and families in need.

In sum, we appreciate the work that Congress and the Administration have done to help Americans struggling during this trying time, but more is required. Given the unprecedented nature of this crisis, seniors, families, and children need SNAP benefits more than ever before. Congress should act now to make these benefits more robust, which will ensure that everyone is able to put food on the table in the coming months and support the economic recovery.

Sincerely,