



Every Texan **Supports** HB 945 by Romero, Jr.

Relating to the period of eligibility of certain persons for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits.

Rachel Cooper, Senior Policy Analyst Every Texan, cooper@everytexan.org

Every Texan supports HB 945 by Romero, Jr. as it will reduce child hunger in Texas by extending Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) certification for families with children to 12 months and provide more stable access to healthy food for struggling families.

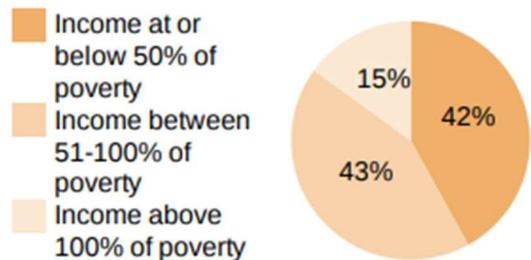
Enrollment in SNAP is the best defense against hunger as it is designed to supplement food budgets and make it possible for low-income Texans to buy the food they need. SNAP benefits can be used only on food items like fruits and vegetables, flour, meat, fish and dairy products at supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores and farmers' markets. By improving food security, SNAP leads to better nutrition, improved health, and better outcomes for children. Because of Texas' long and often brutal history of racial discrimination, Black and Hispanic Texans are more likely to work in low-wage jobs with few benefits - SNAP is critical to their ability to put food on the table. While 6 percent of White Texans rely on SNAP, 20 percent of all Black and Hispanic families in Texas depend on SNAP.

Although SNAP has been proved to be key to supporting low-income families ability to put food on the table, Texas only certifies families with children for a maximum of 6 months of benefits despite federal law allowing for a maximum of 12 months with an interim report of any changes at 6 months. As most households do not see major increases in income within a six months period, the vast majority of SNAP families remain eligible for the program but are forced to reapply twice a year. As recertification requirements including an interview can often be difficult to complete within the 10-day window families are allotted, failing to recertify in a timely manner is common. Even though they are still eligible for SNAP, Texas families risk losing their benefits and facing hunger until they can reapply for assistance.

HB 945 would allow for 12 months of continuous eligibility, with an interim report at 6 months, for SNAP families with children and better align with the legislature's expressed intent for Children's Medicaid. SNAP benefits are 100 percent federally funded, so extending certifications would not cost the state, but instead it is expected to lead to administrative cost savings as the number of recertifications would decrease. By providing more stable access to SNAP, Texas can improve the food security of its lowest paid families.

Most SNAP Participants in Texas Are Poor

Share of participants by household income, FY 2019



Source: CBPP analysis of data from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, FY 2019