

HB 2836

REDUCE PAPERWORK FOR SNAP FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN



BACKGROUND

Enrollment in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the best tool to fight hunger by making it possible for low-income families to buy the food they need. Texas chooses to require families with children to renew their application every 6 months.

PROBLEM

Unnecessary paperwork requirements cause eligible families to lose their SNAP benefits and risk hunger until they can reapply for assistance.

- Texas only certifies families with children for a maximum of 6 months of benefits despite federal law allowing for 12 months with a report of any changes at 6 months. Few families see major increases in income within six months so most families remain eligible for SNAP but still have to reapply twice a year.
- The recertification process, including an interview, is often difficult for families to complete within the 10-day window and failing to recertify in time is common. Families must restart the application process and go without benefits while they wait for their cases to be approved.
- Due to staffing shortages the Texas Health and Human Service Commission (HHSC) has successfully been using pandemic-era flexibilities to extend SNAP certifications to 12 months to help manage their workload. The flexibilities are ending and families with children will have to go back to applying every 6 months. The extra paperwork burden will lead to even longer delays in cases being approved.



SOLUTION

Most states extend SNAP certification for households with children to 12 months as it provides more stable access to healthy food for struggling families and reduces the paperwork burden. SNAP benefits are 100 percent federally funded, so extending certifications does not cost the state and leads to administrative cost savings.

Texas should allow for 12 months of continuous eligibility, with an interim report at 6 months, for SNAP families with children. Providing more stable access to SNAP leads to better nutrition, improved health, and better outcomes for children.





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