



TSEU, Every Texan, and Texans Together for Our Common Good Call on Governor Abbott to Address SNAP and Medicaid Backlogs

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The Texas State Employees Union CWA Local 6186, in coalition with Every Texan and Texans Together for Our Common Good, is calling on Governor Abbott to address the pressing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid crisis affecting hundreds of thousands of Texans in need.

We have written a collective appeal to urge Governor Abbott to take immediate action and resolve the extensive delays in accessing essential food and healthcare assistance caused by renewal and eligibility backlogs. Our letter demands immediate policy change to streamline eligibility processes, alleviate backlogs, and ensure families facing hardship receive the crucial support they need, especially during the holiday season.

Read the full letter here:

As we prepare for the holiday season, hundreds of thousands of Texans in need are facing unnecessary delays accessing food and health care assistance because of state paperwork backlogs. Due to Governor Abbott and the Texas Legislature's systemic underfunding of public services and the state workforce, families struggling to make ends meet currently face up to a six-month delay in receiving SNAP and Medicaid benefits. It costs all of us when our family and neighbors cannot access the food and health care they need to thrive. Only Governor Abbott is positioned to respond to this crisis with urgent and meaningful action. If he fails to do so, hardworking, low-wage Texans will continue to face food insecurity and delays in health care, not only during Christmas but well into the new year.

This Texas-sized crisis requires a systemic solution. The Texas Health and Human Services Commission's (HHSC) top leadership announced that it plans to address the backlog crisis by moving state eligibility workers from focusing on one type of assistance to another and by giving current eligibility workers additional training over the next five months. Agency leadership even offered raffle prizes to incentivize state employees to work more overtime throughout the holiday season, in addition to already mandatory overtime workers have been subject to since 2020. These steps are insufficient and will not resolve this system-level crisis.



Governor Abbott must direct immediate and significant policy change to ensure Texas children get food and health care without delay. Texas is a prosperous state. It is unacceptable that so many Texan families go without food assistance at any time of year, but we certainly cannot accept the gravity of this crisis during the holiday season.

Today, we ask Governor Abbott and HHSC leadership to take two immediate actions to help resolve this crisis as quickly as possible. These actions would immediately and substantially reduce the workload of the eligibility system so HHSC can dig out of the backlogs while ensuring Texans in need can eat and access health care.

- 1. Request temporary federal waivers to extend benefits to Texans up for renewal in SNAP and children's Medicaid.** Texas extended SNAP benefits several times in the last three years due to backlogs and delays, and other states have extended children's Medicaid.
- 2. Take immediate steps to streamline eligibility processes.** Texas should quickly remedy its worst-in-the-nation failure rate for data-driven Medicaid renewals and adopt a 12-month certification period for SNAP.

The Texas Legislature's systemic underfunding of our state government and workforce is the root of this crisis, rendering agencies' staffing, technology, and processes insufficient for today's workload. Moving forward, we must invest in the state staff and systems that form the foundation for meeting the food and health care needs of eligible Texans. HHSC's current crisis is exacerbated by high staff turnover that must be addressed during the 2025 legislative session. HHSC's annual staff turnover rate of 29% is at a 30-year high. We surveyed the state workforce in 2023 and found that low pay and poor working conditions are driving state workers from their jobs. While paperwork delays and backlogs at HHSC have grown in recent months, hungry Texan families have faced SNAP benefit delays for nearly three years.

We are grateful to Governor Abbott for his verbal commitment to address the unnecessary backlogs and SNAP benefit delays impacting so many SNAP-eligible families. However, the Governor's verbal commitment is insufficient if not followed by immediate and sufficient action. All Texan families, from Amarillo to McAllen, should be able to enjoy this holiday season free from hunger. We ask the Governor to uphold our shared Texan values of care and compassion for our neighbors to guarantee eligible, hungry families can access food by Christmas.

Every Texan
Texas State Employees Union CWA Local 6186
Texans Together for Our Common Good