



Save Our SNAP: **201 H.R.1 Program Changes in Illinois**

Speakers



**GREATER
CHICAGO**
- FOOD -
DEPOSITORY.



- **Nolan Downey & Beth Kenefick**, *Greater Chicago Food Depository & Illinois Commission to End Hunger*
- **Melissa Cundari**, *Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS)*

Who We Are

ILLINOIS COMMISSION TO END HUNGER

The Illinois Commission to End Hunger is a public-private partnership composed of stakeholders from across the state dedicated to the belief that no one in Illinois should ever face hunger.



Welcome & Housekeeping

- Important Updates
- SNAP Work Requirements
 - Exemptions
 - How to demonstrate compliance
- Opportunities to Take Action!
- Resources
- Q&A



Please note that all information shared in today's webinar is accurate as of January 13, 2026. Illinois is continuing to implement changes per guidance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS), and it is an evolving situation.

H.R. 1 – One Big Beautiful Bill Act



Increases State
Cost Requirements
to Unprecedented
Levels



Cuts SNAP By
Preventing Future
Updates to Benefit
Amounts



Vastly Expands
Failed Work
Requirements
(Time-Limited
SNAP Benefits)



Narrows State
Option to Calculate
Utility Deductions



Bars SNAP
Benefits for Many
Legally Present
Immigrants



Eliminates SNAP
Nutrition Education

Illinois Impact

- All **1.9M** IL residents on SNAP (including nearly **650,000** children) will see the true value of their benefits decrease overtime
- **450,000** SNAP recipients *at risk* of losing benefits due to burdensome work requirements
- **16,000** lawfully present immigrants, including refugees, asylees, immigrant survivors of DV, labor and sex trafficking (and more), are *at risk* of losing access
- Maintaining SNAP could cost the state **\$800M** more per year.



Important Updates!

Noncitizen Eligibility Changes:

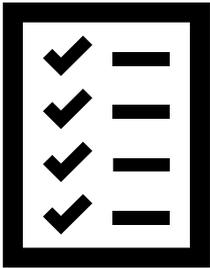
- Will now begin on **April 1, 2026**.
 - WAS – scheduled to be implemented on December 1, but IDHS paused implementation due to an ongoing lawsuit.
 - NOW – IDHS is implementing 120 days from the updated USDA guidance aka April 1, 2026.

Work Requirements:

- Will now begin on **February 1, 2026**.
 - Thus, nonexempt individuals not meeting the work requirement could begin losing benefits as soon as May 1, 2026.
 - WAS – uncertain when work requirements would start due to an ongoing lawsuit.
 - NOW – Timeline is clear – work requirements will begin February 1, 2026.

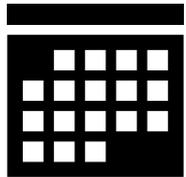
Visit the **IDHS SNAP Federal Impact Center** for updated information -
<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/?item=174038>

Expanded SNAP Work Requirements



What covered last time...

- What they are
- Who is impacted
- Who is exempt
- How to screen and report exemptions



What we will cover today...

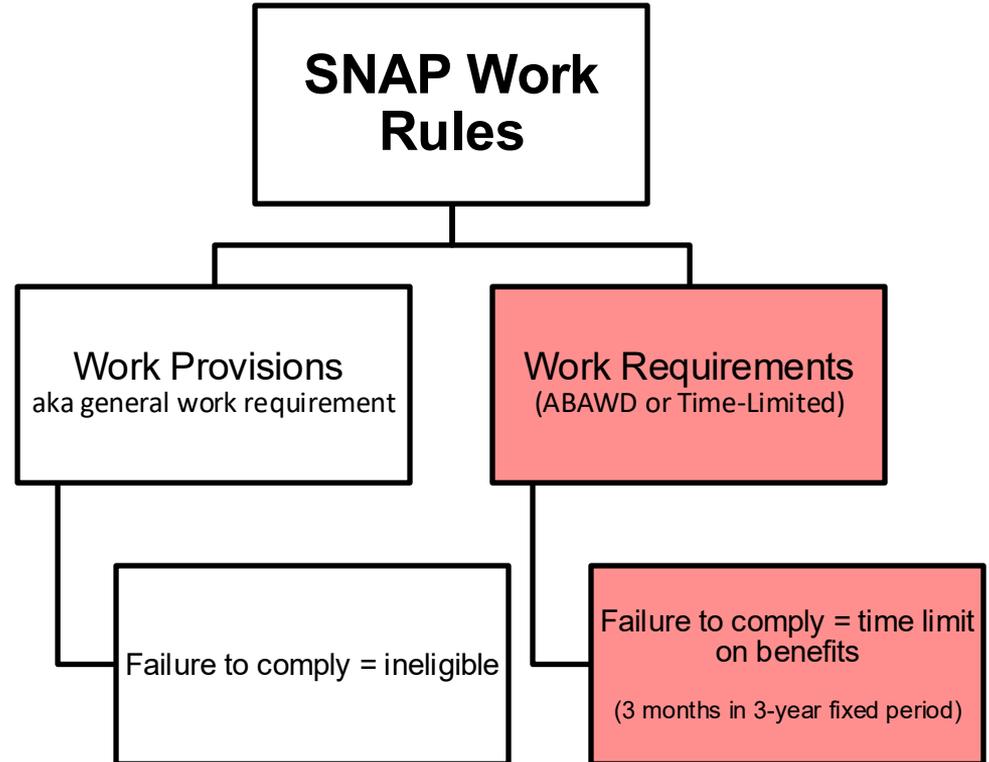
- How impacted individuals meet / comply with them
- How to regain eligibility

Expanded SNAP Work Requirements



SNAP has TWO sets of work rules that existed *prior* to the passage of H.R.1 in July 2025.

H.R.1 *only* made changes to WHO must comply with the ABAWD / Time-limited Work Requirements and limited the flexibilities states had to waive them during periods of high unemployment.



Expanded SNAP Work Requirements

WHAT are they?

Work Provisions:

Applies to individuals ages 16-59 who are able to work. Requirements include:

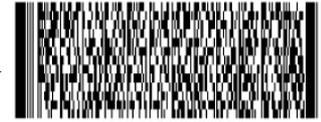
- Registering for work (by receiving notice from IDHS),
- Taking a suitable job if offered, and
- Not voluntarily quitting a job or reducing work hours below 30 a week without a good reason.

ABAWD or Time-Limited Work Requirements:

- Some SNAP recipients must work, volunteer, or participate in an employment or training program for **80 hours a month**.
- Recipients who do not meet the work requirement or qualify for an exemption only get **3 months of SNAP in a fixed 3-year period**.
- These recipients can get SNAP benefits again during the 3-year period if they **become exempt or start meeting the work requirement**.

Expanded SNAP Work Requirements

- SNAP Work Rules (IL 444-5175)



Date: [Redacted]

Case Name: [Redacted]

Address: [Redacted]

City, State, Zip: [Redacted]

Case Number: [Redacted]

Office Name: [Redacted]

Office Address: [Redacted]

Phone: [Redacted]

TTY: [Redacted]

Tenemos este aviso en español. Para solicitar avisos en español, por Internet vaya al sitio ABE-MMC o llamas al 1-800-843-6154 (TTY 1-866-324-5553 TTY/Nextalk, 711 TTY Relay).

You can manage your account online at: ABE.illinois.gov

This notice tells you about the work rules that apply to people who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and are able to work. There are two types of work rules, Work Provisions and Work Requirements.

If these work rules are not followed, your SNAP benefits may decrease or stop if there is not a good cause reason. A household member(s) needs to meet work rules to receive SNAP benefits. The name of the individual(s) is listed below.

- The person(s) listed below is required to comply with the Work Provisions. To learn more about the requirements that must be followed to get SNAP, read the Work Provisions included with this notice.

1. Name: [Redacted] Birth Date: [Redacted]
2. Name: [Redacted] Birth Date: [Redacted]
3. Name: [Redacted] Birth Date: [Redacted]

- The person(s) listed below is required to comply with the Work Provisions and the Work Requirement. To learn more about the requirements that must be followed to get SNAP, read the Work Provisions and the Work Requirement rules included with this notice.

1. Name: [Redacted] Birth Date: [Redacted]
2. Name: [Redacted] Birth Date: [Redacted]
3. Name: [Redacted] Birth Date: [Redacted]

- The person(s) listed below is required to comply with the Work Requirement. To learn more about the requirements that must be followed to get SNAP, read the Work Requirement rules included with this notice.

1. Name: [Redacted] Birth Date: [Redacted]
2. Name: [Redacted] Birth Date: [Redacted]
3. Name: [Redacted] Birth Date: [Redacted]

VOLUNTARY SNAP EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING PROGRAM (SNAP E&T)

Information about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Program is also included with this notice. SNAP E&T is a voluntary program to help SNAP customers acquire work skills and find employment and can help you meet the work rules. To learn more, read the SNAP Employment and Training Program section of this notice.



Expanded SNAP Work Requirements

WHO is impacted?

SNAP recipients considered, **able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs)** must meet the work requirement unless they are exempt.

BEFORE H.R. 1

- Adults aged **18-54**
- No dependents **under 18**
- **Exceptions** for people experiencing homelessness, veterans, & former foster youth (18-24)

States can waive the requirement if unemployment over 10% **OR** insufficient jobs. Illinois meets this threshold.



AFTER H.R. 1

- Adults aged **18-64**
- No dependents **under 14**
- **Limited exception pathways**

States can waive the requirement **ONLY** if unemployment over 10%. No county in Illinois *currently* meets this threshold.

Who is Exempt from Work Requirements?

WHO is impacted?

- IDHS is working behind the scenes to systematically categorize those who they already know are exempt from work requirements through existing data sources.
- Customer statements are sufficient to verify exemptions (aka a "self-attestation")
 - IDHS will only request additional information if questionable or contradicting information is provided.
- Medical/Social Service Providers *can* complete a form attesting to someone's inability to work or maintain work but not required.



We will talk about exemptions to the general work requirements / provisions AND the ABAWD work requirements together because it is often easier to screen for the full universe.

Who is Exempt from Work Requirements?

A person is exempt from the SNAP Work Requirement if they are:

- under age 18 or 65 years of age or older; or
- physical or mental limitations that impact their ability to work, including experiencing chronic homelessness, domestic violence, and/or other barriers; or
- pregnant; or
- living in a SNAP household (purchase and prepare) with a child under age 14, even if the child is ineligible for SNAP; or
- Individuals who are an Alaskan Native, American Indian, American Urban Indian, or California Indian (as defined in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act); or
- residing in a waived (exempt) county; or
- Caring for a child under age 6 or a person who needs help caring for themselves; or
- Going to school, college, or training program at least half time (subject to student eligibility rules); or
- Meeting the work rules for TANF; or
- Receiving unemployment benefits or applied for unemployment benefits; or
- Participating regularly in alcohol or drug treatment program; or
- Working at least 30 hours a week or earning at least \$217.50 (federal minimum wage \$7.25 multiplied by 30 hours) a week. The person can be employed or self-employed.

Meeting the Work Requirement



Impacted SNAP individuals (aka ABAWDs) are required to spend at least 80 hours a month:

Working

(Paid, unpaid, in-kind*, and community service)

Participating in a Qualifying Work Program

(SNAP E&T, WIOA Title I, other federal/state/local programs)

Combination of working and participating in a qualifying work program

**Note: In-kind means for goods or services, aka for something other than money such as rent.*

Note: Time limited adults (or ABAWDs) can also meet the SNAP work requirement by participating in workfare for the assigned number of hours each month (the # of hours will depend on the amount of your SNAP benefit so it may total less than 80 hours.) In Illinois, *only* SNAP E&T providers can offer the workfare activity at this time.

Meeting the Work Requirement



What does 80 hours a month mean?

- Adults between the ages of 18-64 who are not exempt from the work requirements must work, volunteer, or participate in certain training or education activities for a minimum of 80 hours per month, or an average of 20 hours per week, to receive SNAP benefits beyond 3 months in a fixed 3-year period.
- 80 hours per month
 - Based on calendar month
 - No weekly requirement
 - Example – If a person does not participate in any qualifying work activity in the first two weeks of the month but does 40 hours per week in the last two weeks of the same month, they have met the work requirement for that month.

Note: *Certain situations can be deemed as "good cause" for going under the 80 hours...*

Meeting the Work Requirement

What does "good cause" mean?

- Sometimes things happen that prevent a person from following the work rules like getting sick, lack of transportation to get to work, or last-minute schedule change.
 - Good Cause can be claimed for either work rule (general work provisions and ABAWD work requirements).
 - Re: Meeting the work requirement, if the nonexempt person with established paid/unpaid work has cause for not meeting it, no action is taken to stop benefits.
- Before accruing a "countable month", it must be determined if an individual had a "good cause" reason for not complying. Good cause **includes situations beyond the individual's control**, such as but not limited to:
 - The individual's illness or illness of another SNAP household member that requires that individual's presence;
 - Lack of transportation;
 - Household emergency;

Meeting the Work Requirement



What does "good cause" mean? (Cont.)

- Customer attestation of good cause is sufficient verification unless questionable. Additional verification is not required unless the information contradicts other information provided or found through clearances.

Takeaway: *When reporting a change in hours, give the reason why (e.g., sick, transportation access, etc.)*

Meeting the Work Requirement



- Upon determining members of the household who may be subject to the SNAP work requirements during initial screening, federal law requires caseworkers to both verbally explain the SNAP Work Rules and mail the **SNAP Work Rules Notice (Form IL 444-5175)**.
- IDHS recent adoption of simplified reporting for *all* households means those subject to the work requirement have reduced reporting obligations.
 - **Make sure your current work situation is updated before February 1st!**
 - Are you engaging in any qualified work activities? For how many hours a month?

Meeting the Work Requirement



What to report? When?

Always report:

- An exemption - If you meet an exemption – report this by submitting a request for an exemption **IMMEDIATELY**
- Household income goes above the income limit for the household size

If you are non-exempt and currently participating in unpaid/paid work for 80 hours a month, report when:

- Work hours fall below 80 a month (why did this happen – do you have good cause?)

If you are non-exempt and **NOT** currently participating in work or qualifying work activities for 80 hours a month, report when:

- You get a new job, join a training program, and/or complete community service activities
- Your hours go above 80 hours a month

Meeting the Work Requirement



What happens if you don't report?

- ABAWDs who do not meet work requirements are limited to only **three months of SNAP benefits in a fixed three-year period** unless they begin meeting the work requirement or become exempt.
- If an individual must meet the work requirement but they don't, they will lose their benefits after three months. To **regain SNAP benefits**, the individual must meet the ABAWD work requirement for a 30-day period or become exempt. Otherwise, they will need to wait until the end of the fixed three-year period, when they'll get another three months under the time limit.
- In Illinois, the current fixed 3-year period began **January 1, 2024, and ends December 31, 2026**. The new fixed 3-year period begins **January 1, 2027**.
- **One-Time Additional Eligibility Period**
 - ABAWDs who regain eligibility by meeting the work requirements for a 30-day period are eligible for **one additional set of three consecutive countable months** if they later stop meeting the requirement and notify their eligibility worker/caseworker. This additional 3-month period is available **only once** during the fixed 3-year period.

IDHS is working to distribute full SNAP benefits, now that the federal government shutdown has ended. We anticipate that the remaining benefit payments will be made over the coming days, with all SNAP recipients receiving their full November benefits by Nov. 20. Customers should continue applying and managing their cases as normal.

Got Medicaid? *Get ready to renew!* Use Manage My Case to access your benefits, check your redetermination due date, and verify your mailing address. If you're due, renew online right away.

Login - A new way to log in to ABE and Manage My Case. For more information and Troubleshooting tips visit the [ABE Customer Support Center](#).

Welcome to ABE

Helping people in Illinois lead healthy and independent lives

Use this site to apply for and manage your healthcare, food, and cash assistance benefits.

[Check if I Should Apply](#)

[Apply for Benefits](#)

[Manage My Case](#)

[Check if I Should Apply for Summer EBT](#)

[Check if I Meet SNAP Work Requirements](#)





Let's see if you are meeting SNAP Work Requirements.

Check which work requirements you need to meet for SNAP.

Please Enter Your Date of Birth 



MM/DD/YYYY

← Previous

Next

← [Back to Home Page](#)

Let's see if you are meeting SNAP Work Requirements.

Check which work requirements you need to meet for SNAP.

Are you the main caretaker of a child under the age of 6 who lives outside of your home? ?

No Yes

Based on what you told us, you may qualify for an exemption from the SNAP work requirements. Ensure you have accurately reported the child under age 6 outside of your home who you are caring for through Manage My Case, a Change Report form or completing an Exemption Request form.

[Link to Change Report form](#)

[Link to Manage My Case](#)

[Link to SNAP Exemption form](#)

Submit your forms by uploading them to ABE Manage My Case (MMC), in person, or by mail to your local FCRC.

[← Previous](#)

Next

Let's see if you are meeting SNAP Work Requirements.

Check which work requirements you need to meet for SNAP.

Are you currently pregnant? ?

No Yes

Based on what you told us, you are likely exempt from the SNAP work requirements. Ensure you have accurately reported your pregnancy status through Manage My Case, a Change Report form or an Unable to Work Determination form completed by your medical/social service provider.

You may also request this exemption by completing the Exemption Request form.

[Link to Change Report form](#)

[Link to Manage My Case](#)

[Link to SNAP Exemption form](#)

[Link to Unable to Work Determination form](#)

Submit your forms by uploading them to ABE Manage My Case (MMC), in person, or by mail to your local FCRC.

[← Previous](#)

Next

Let's see if you are meeting SNAP Work Requirements.

Check which work requirements you need to meet for SNAP.

Are you the main caretaker for an incapacitated or disabled person? ?

No Yes

Based on what you told us, you're likely exempt from the SNAP work requirements.

If you are caring for an incapacitated or disabled individual outside of your home, ensure this is reported with an Exemptions Request form.

If this person lives in your home, make sure you have accurately reported this through Manage My Case or a Change Report form. You may also request this exemption by completing the Exemption Request form.

[Link to Change Report form](#)

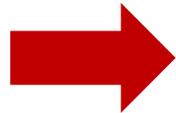
[Link to Manage My Case](#)

[Link to SNAP Exemption form](#)

Submit your forms by uploading them to ABE Manage My Case (MMC), in person, or by mail to your local FCRC.

[← Previous](#)

Next



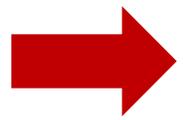
NOTE: Answering yes to anything in the screener suggests an individual “may” qualify for an exemption and links to MMC and/or forms.

Let's see if you are meeting SNAP Work Requirements.

Check which work requirements you need to meet for SNAP.

What is your current county of residence? ?

Cook



Based on what you have told us, you likely will be required to meet the SNAP work requirements.

You can meet the SNAP Work Requirement by doing one or a combination of the following:

- Work at least 80 hours per month. Work can be for pay, for goods or services, unpaid or as a volunteer.
- Participate in a work program at least 80 hours per month. A work program could be SNAP Employment and Training or another federal, state or local work program.
- Participate in workfare for the number of hours assigned to you each month (the number of hours will depend on the amount of your SNAP benefit).

You can report that you are meeting the SNAP work requirements through Manage My Case or a Change Report form. You may also request an exemption by

NOTE: Answering “no” to everything will lead to a page that says the individual IS REQUIRED to meet the SNAP work requirements.

Will discuss more at next webinar!

Next Steps: Forms

- [Manage My Case \(MMC\)](#)
- [Change Report Form \(IL444-1978\)](#)
- [Unable to Work Determination Form \(IL444-2340\)](#) completed by their medical/social service provider
- [SNAP Exemption Form \(IL444-2341\)](#)

IDHS > About IDHS > Publications >

Forms

Search Forms

1. by Name/Number - in the "Form" field enter all or part of the form name or number.
2. by Division - choose the desired division from the "Division" field.
3. [Search Forms Help](#)
4. if 'PROCESS WITH DOCUSIGN' is listed next to a form, this means the form can be processed through DocuSign. To use DocuSign please visit [DocuSign Forms](#).

Important! Please use *Adobe Acrobat* or *Reader* to open PDF forms. See [How to Open PDF Forms](#).

Form:

Division:

Language:

Manage My Case (MMC)

Advice:

- Go to “Manage My Work Requirements”
- Check all the boxes that apply.
- Click “Submit Exemption Request”

ABE APPLICATION FOR BENEFITS ELIGIBILITY Help | Print Logged in: hannahstevens@mailinator.com Logout

| Am I Eligible? | Apply For Benefits | Appeals |

Hello, Hannah. You are logged in.

ALERT

- Go Green today! Update your Preferred Delivery Method in [Communication Preferences](#) to receive Electronic Only notices.

Case Summary **Benefit Details** Contact Information Account Management

Report My Changes Click this button to report changes to your DHS or HFS Office.

Apply for Other Benefits Click this button to apply for additional benefits.

Manage My SNAP Work Requirements Click this button to manage your SNAP Work Requirements.

Welcome to the Case Summary Page. This page gives you a look at your benefits, and lets you know if there is anything you need to do to receive or continue benefits. From this page you can find information about your [benefit status](#), [verifications](#), [notices](#), [application or change report status](#).

We have taken a number of steps to keep your information private and secure. To learn more, [view your security and account management information](#).

As a head of household, you can control benefit information displayed to other adults in your household.

What is the status of my benefit programs?

You have requested or are receiving the benefits mentioned below. Click on the “Click Here” link for each program to view a summary of your benefits. This information is current as of **November 13, 2025 11:06 AM**.

Follow this link and select Other Changes to [Cancel Your Case](#).

Benefit	Description	Summary
	Food Assistance Program	Food Assistance Program Details
	Healthcare Coverage Program	Healthcare Coverage Program Details

Next Steps: Submitting



Customers can request an exemption at any time by:

- Contacting their local DHS Office / Family Community Resource Center (FCRC) in person, via phone call, etc.
- Submitting one of the forms by:
 - uploading it to ABE Manage My Case (MMC)
 - faxing to the Central Scanning Unit,
 - Bringing in person or by mail to a local FCRC/DHS office

For questions call the IDHS Help Line at **1-800-843-6154**

To find the closest FCRC/DHS office, [IDHS: Office Locator](#)

For help with MMC, contact ABE.questions@illinois.gov

**Note: A service provider may support an individual with completing this process.*

Next Steps: Confirming



Currently, customers can confirm an exemption at any time by:

- Contacting their local DHS Office / Family Community Resource Center (FCRC) in person, via phone call, etc.
- Call the IDHS Help Line at **1-800-843-6154**
- Check ABE Manage My Case (MMC)

Next Steps: Timeline



Dec 1, 2026
Now!

Feb 1, 2026
*Work Requirements
Time Clock Starts*

Mar 1, 2026
Month 2 starts

May 1, 2026
First SNAP recipients removed for non-compliance.

Jan 31, 2026
Illinois' statewide ABAWD waiver ends

Feb 28, 2026
Last day to submit an exemption that counts for this month.

Apr 1, 2026
Month 3 starts

Best time to screen and apply for exemptions!

But exemptions can be applied for at any time
**Remember a situation can change, including age!*

Opportunities to Take Action!

Community partners can help minimize customers losing SNAP benefits.



Help **communicate SNAP changes** to customers



Help customers **navigate changes to eligibility** requirements



Help **test new wording in application or other materials** to ensure it's easy to understand



Help IDHS **learn more about challenges** customers are facing



Help customers **understand changes to application and work** requirements

Opportunities to Take Action!

Visit <https://www.endhungerillinois.org/snap-changes-materials> to find:

- Factsheets, posters, and flyers
- Social media posts & captions
- Sample copy & graphics for newsletter, bulletin & websites



Need Help?

- Go online to the Illinois Application for Benefits Eligibility (ABE) at ABE.Illinois.gov. Use Manage My Case to access your benefits, check your redetermination due date, and verify your mailing address
- Visit your local DHS Office / Family Community Resource Center (FCRC) aka "one-stop" centers for cash & medical assistance, food stamps, and job services. See [IDHS: Office Locator](#) to find the closest one
- Call the IDHS Help Line at **1-800-843-6154**
- Identify your area's local SNAP Outreach Plan partner.

More Information

Visit the following resource centers online:

- IDHS SNAP Federal Impact Center - <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/?item=174038>
- We Got You Illinois - <https://wegotyouillinois.org/>
- Illinois Commission to End Hunger - <https://www.endhungerillinois.org/>

Or sign up for:

- Benefits Access Group Monthly Meeting by emailing Lynette.mackenzie2@illinois.gov
- Illinois Anti-Hunger Advocates Monthly Meeting - <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZctdumpqz0oGd1O2zW6K-2JUUbQ8r9tUcY9T#/registration>

More Information

REGISTER for Save Our SNAP: Deep Dive Series on Pending Changes in Illinois

For individuals and organizations that support Illinois neighbors to enroll in and navigate the program, the commission will also be hosting a webinar series in early 2026 to dive deeper into the technical policy changes and implementation. This series is ideal for benefit enrollers/navigators, social service providers, and policy experts.

- Friday, December 12th from 11am-noon CT
- Tuesday, January 13th from 1-2 pm CT
- Tuesday, February 10th from 1-2 pm CT

Register --> https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8517634239421/WN_iagh1CRTR8q3Jk9hJOJbnQ

Q & A

Overview of Program Accuracy Changes

Illinois has begun making changes in state-level policies for documentation and re-determination to mitigate Payment Error Rate (PER) impacts. Several of those changes began October 2025.

Policy Change	Summary of Change	Notes	Manual Updates
Simplified Reporting	Households generally must only report when their income (before taxes) goes above the SNAP income limit for their household size.	Older adult households with expanded 24-month certification periods are NOT impacted because they currently have no reporting obligations.	<u><i>Policy Memo: Reinstatement of Six-Month Redetermination Process and EZ REDE for SNAP (10/23/25)</i></u>
6-month Certification Periods	Households certified after October 23, 2025, will have to complete a full redetermination every 6-months, with NO mid-point report. Interviews will occur at initial application, the first 6-month redetermination, and then every 12 months after that.	Older adult households with expanded 24-month certification periods are NOT impacted.	<u><i>Policy Memo: Reinstatement of Six-Month Redetermination Process and EZ REDE for SNAP (10/23/25)</i></u>

Overview of Program Accuracy Changes

Illinois has begun making changes in state-level policies for documentation and re-determination to mitigate Payment Error Rate (PER) impacts. Several of those changes began October 2025.



Policy Change	Main Takeaway for Neighbors
Simplified Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only report when monthly income (before taxes) exceeds the monthly income limit for its household size. • E.g. Monthly income limit for household of 3 without a qualifying member is \$3664.37. Household must only report if their monthly income before taxes goes above that amount
6-month Certification Periods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be proactive to complete interviews to ensure they don't miss them – go to the closest local FCRC / DHS Office to request or by calling the IDHS Help Line • Interviews will be scheduled in-person unless requested at application for hardship or call IDHS Help Line. • Recertification may take longer to complete so plan accordingly.

Overview of Program Accuracy Changes

Illinois has begun making changes in state-level policies for documentation and re-determination to mitigate Payment Error Rate (PER) impacts. Several of those changes began October 23, 2025.

Policy Change	Summary of Change	Notes	Manual Updates
Verifying Shelter Costs	Households will now be required to submit proof of their housing / shelter expenses at initial application and redetermination. (This does NOT include utilities.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documents could include lease, letter from landlord, bills, rent receipt, etc. An application will NOT be denied for failure to verify. Instead shelter expenses will be excluded from budgeting <i>until</i> verified. For those eligible, homeless shelter deduction does not require shelter cost verification. 	MR #25.38 Verifications of Housing Costs for SNAP (10/22/25)
Utility Deduction Changes	Illinois adopted USDA’s simplified process for calculating the FY26 standard utility allowances (SUAs).	<p>H.R. 1 also included two changes to utility deductions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> LIHEAP will no longer qualify households for a SUA if they do not have an elderly or disabled family member. Internet connection service costs cannot be deducted. 	MR #25.33 October 2025 SNAP Adjustments due to COLA and Changes to AC/Heating Standard Eligibility for Certain Households (9/26/25)
Update Out-of-Pocket Medical Costs	At initial application and redetermination, recipients will be asked to verify any out-of-pocket medical cost. Previously IDHS would assume these stayed consistent	Change not currently in effect. Will be implemented in early 2026.	<i>Pending.</i>

Overview of Program Accuracy Changes

Illinois has begun making changes in state-level policies for documentation and re-determination to mitigate Payment Error Rate (PER) impacts. Several of those changes began October 23, 2025.



Policy Change	Main Takeaway for Neighbors
Verifying Shelter Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications with shelter costs included will not be denied for not providing verification, but it's likely that the household will be approved for less benefits because the expense will be counted as zero until verified. Can be adjusted later. • Utilities are not included so if rate of rent includes utilities, they will need a letter explaining the portion. • People experiencing homelessness under SNAP rules do not have to verify shelter costs and should qualify for the homeless shelter deduction if they have any expense related to being homeless (e.g., laundry, phone, storage).
Update Out-of-Pocket Medical Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that eligible medical costs like insurance premiums (including Medicare) change and neighbors should show documentation.
Utility Deduction Changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the average household, SNAP benefits will decrease by \$15 starting Oct 1, 2025.