



# STATE OF NEW JERSEY GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Governor Murphy Signs Legislation Increasing Minimum SNAP Benefits Available to New Jersey Residents**

*This Nation-Leading Policy Will Help Combat Food Insecurity Throughout the State as Emergency Federal SNAP Allotments Come to an End*

**WOODBIDGE** – With households throughout America set to receive as low as \$23 in monthly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits when the federal government's emergency allotments come to an end next month, Governor Phil Murphy today signed a bill ([A-5086](#)) to ensure every SNAP household in New Jersey will receive at least \$95 in monthly benefits going forward. This nation-leading legislation represents New Jersey's ongoing commitment to combating food insecurity throughout the state.

The federal government began providing emergency allotments to SNAP households in March 2020 to offer a temporary boost in food assistance benefits to individuals and families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. With these additional payments ending as of February 28, 2023, today's legislation will raise the minimum SNAP benefit in New Jersey to \$95 starting March 1. This represents a \$45 increase over the initial State minimum benefit of \$50 put into place for SNAP recipients when Governor Murphy and the NJ Legislature established the State SNAP Minimum Benefit Program last year.

“As the federal government’s temporary boost to SNAP benefits comes to an end, we cannot ignore the significant impact this will have on households and communities throughout our state,” **said Governor Murphy**. “No one should ever have to wonder where their next meal will come from. By implementing a minimum monthly SNAP benefit of \$95 for all beneficiaries, New Jersey is leading the nation in ensuring families have the support they need to keep putting food on the table. While we may be the first state to do this, it is my hope we will not be the last to put these critical protections into effect.”

If a New Jersey household is approved for less than \$95 in monthly SNAP benefits, they will receive their regular federal benefit plus an additional State supplement to bring them to this new minimum. Although most households will still see some reduction in their benefits, implementing an increased minimum benefit will help soften the impact of the emergency allotments coming to an end.

Sponsors of the legislation include Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin and Senate Majority Leader Teresa Ruiz, as well as Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez and Assembly Members Angela McKnight, Yvonne Lopez, Annette Quijano, Shanique Speight, Raj Mukherji, and Verlina Reynolds-Jackson.

“We know overwhelmingly that a better nourished and more food secure New Jersey makes for a stronger one,” **said Assembly Speaker Coughlin**. “This expansion safeguards the food security of 46,000 SNAP households, mostly vulnerable seniors and individuals with disabilities, whose health and wellbeing relies on keeping healthy and nutritious foods on their plate.”

“With SNAP benefit reductions scheduled to occur at the end of February at the Federal level, many New Jerseyans would see their monthly benefits cut nearly in half without this critical legislation,” **said Senate Majority Leader Ruiz**. “I commend Speaker Coughlin for his work in this space and join him in the efforts to protect and bolster New Jersey’s food security programs.”

The New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Office of the Food Security Advocate have been working to raise awareness about the upcoming end to federal emergency allotments and what that will mean for New Jersey families – including the State’s implementation of a minimum monthly benefit. Last month, DHS rolled out a robust communication and public awareness campaign that included webinars and training to frontline staff, SNAP navigators, food access community organizations, legislative offices, materials for distribution in over 20 languages and videos in English, Spanish and American Sign Language. Materials are available for download [here](#). DHS will mail letters explaining the benefit change to all SNAP households starting next week.

SNAP recipients are encouraged to check their benefit detail any time online at [www.njfamiliesfirst.com](http://www.njfamiliesfirst.com), with the Connect EBT mobile app, or by calling (800) 997-3333.

The Administration will continue to work with stakeholders to spread the word and inform residents about how they can maximize their benefits, such as applying for any additional assistance for which they may be eligible. For more information about additional food resources, visit [nj211.org/food-programs-and-community-resources](http://nj211.org/food-programs-and-community-resources) or text your zip code to 898-211. Individuals and families can apply for SNAP [online](#), in-person or by calling their local [board of social services](#), or through a [SNAP Navigator](#).

“Families are feeling the pinch every time they go grocery shopping. With food prices soaring and the federal emergency SNAP benefits ending this month, we are glad we can provide some relief to families and individuals that rely on this assistance to put food on the table,” **said DHS Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. “The Murphy Administration, in partnership with the Legislature, has made strengthening food security a top priority. Today’s bill signing further proves this commitment. Access to

healthy food is a must, and we will continue to work to connect New Jerseyans in need to food and other important resources vital for their health and well-being.”

“True food security exists when all people at all times have physical, economic, and social access to safe, healthy, nutritious food,” **said Mark Dinglasan, Director, Office of the Food Security Advocate.** “As the needs of our communities continue to rise, I can confidently say that I stand here, shoulder to shoulder with these leaders of New Jersey, looking forward to our continued work in the many ongoing, multisector efforts taking place to expand food access. While we are proud that New Jersey is leading the nation in food security work, today is not the end of the work but just the beginning.”

Not only will the increased minimum help struggling residents, it will also help food retailers who might otherwise see a significant decrease in business as a result of the reduced benefits.

This change to SNAP is an important part of the State’s [ongoing efforts](#) to combat food insecurity, which includes other steps such as providing additional funding to support the critical work of New Jersey’s food banks.

“I commend New Jersey’s lawmakers for raising the minimum monthly SNAP benefit from \$50 to \$95. This is another step in the right direction as we work together to ensure that all of our neighbors have access to nutritious food,” **said Carlos Rodriguez, President & CEO of the Community FoodBank of New Jersey.** “As federal emergency allotments come to an end, this measure ensures permanently expanded household budgets for the most vulnerable on SNAP, continuing our state’s effort as a nationwide leader on food insecurity.”

“We applaud Governor Murphy, Assembly Speaker Coughlin and Senate Majority Leader Ruiz for their leadership and commitment to ensuring food security for all New Jerseyans,” **said Ev Liebman, AARP NJ Director of Advocacy.** “Many seniors live on fixed incomes and struggle to afford food, especially when faced with higher grocery prices. This legislation, which increases the minimum SNAP benefit, will serve to reduce food insecurity for thousands of New Jersey residents and continues the state’s leadership in working to ensure no one is hungry.”

“New Jersey is taking extraordinary steps to prevent the SNAP program from falling over the benefits cliff that this country is facing on March 1,” **said Linda Doherty, President & CEO of NJ Food Council.** “Governor Murphy, Speaker Coughlin and Senate President Scutari serve as trailblazers in advocating and assisting our vulnerable populations. Their work serves as a national role model in tackling food insecurity challenges and making sure our residents have a nutritious meal on the table especially during these times of high food inflation.”

“We applaud the passage of A-5086 and Governor Murphy’s efforts to ensure that New Jersey’s families have access to essential nutrition assistance,” **said Angie Waters, Executive Director, Court Appointed Special Advocates of New Jersey, Inc.** “So many of the youth and families served by Court Appointed Special Advocates struggle with food insecurity and, therefore, rely on SNAP benefits. This legislation will help to ensure critical, continued access to the current level of SNAP benefits, which families have come to rely upon.”

“Good policy comes to us in many forms, sometimes through careful deliberation and other times through necessary experimentation,” **said Woodbridge Mayor John McCormac.** “We have seen that the expansion of SNAP benefits brought about by the tragedy of the pandemic works for our residents and ensures that fewer New Jerseyans will go hungry. I applaud Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, Governor Phil Murphy and the New Jersey State Legislature for continuing to take the issue of hunger seriously and making sure this policy continues to serve our residents for years to come.”