

# Proposed cuts to nutrition programs would harm millions of Latino families

## Millions of Latinos rely on nutrition security programs to help feed their families

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a lifeline for hard-working Latino<sup>1</sup> families. Each year, SNAP helps put food on the table for [10 million Latinos, including 5 million children](#).

Free and reduced-price school meals are a core support for American children, including children from Hispanic families. These meals help children from all backgrounds, but Hispanic children are particularly likely to rely on them to prevent hunger. In 2021, [half of all schoolchildren ages 5-17 participated in free or reduced-price school meal programs](#), including two-thirds of Latino children.

### Latino families cannot afford cuts to these or other nutrition assistance programs.

- **Compared to Americans of other races and ethnicities, Latinos work harder but earn less.** In [2023](#), Latinos were 10% more likely than non-Hispanic whites to be in the labor force (67% vs. 61%); but because their education was much more likely to stop with high school (52% vs. 32%), Latino adults' median income was almost 25% lower than for white adults (\$915 vs. \$1,196 a week).
- **As a result, Hispanic families are particularly likely to experience hunger.** [Nearly two in five Latinos](#) did not have enough food to eat in 2023—more than any other racial or ethnic group, and significantly more than in the past.
- **High grocery bills already create unsustainable financial burdens for many Latino families.** [More than one in eight Latino adults have gone into debt to feed their families](#)—more than in any other racial or ethnic group.

No one in America should have to go into debt to feed their family. But millions of hard-working Latinos face that grim choice every day. If Congress takes away resources on which millions of Latino families rely to pay for food, more children will go hungry, and more families will be overwhelmed by unaffordable grocery bills. Unfortunately, some in Congress are proposing to take exactly such steps, as we describe below.

## Congressional leadership is proposing large and dangerous cuts to nutrition security programs.

The House is now considering a Budget Resolution that would commit Congress to enormous cuts to SNAP and other nutrition security programs. In its original form, it required at least \$230 billion in cuts from SNAP and other programs under the Agriculture Committee's jurisdiction.

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "Hispanic" and "Latino" are used interchangeably by the U.S. Census Bureau and throughout this document to refer to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central and South American, Dominican, Spanish and other Hispanic descent; they may be of any race. This document may also refer to this population as "Latinx" to represent the diversity of gender identities and expressions that are present in the community.

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But under the terms of a deal between Republican Leadership and the far-right Freedom Caucus, Congress cannot renew President Trump's 2017 tax package unless Congress enacts an additional \$500 billion in cuts from food programs and other sources. Enactment of the Budget Resolution would commit Congress to passing enormous benefit cuts through fast-track Budget Reconciliation legislation. Proposed food program cuts under discussion include:

- **Cutting SNAP benefits by more than \$250 billion.** [Averaging just \\$6.20 a day](#), SNAP benefits are already inadequate for most families. Since SNAP benefits last experienced a significant increase in 2021, skyrocketing food prices have radically outpaced benefit growth. As a result, the [percentage of counties where SNAP benefits cover the minimum cost of a nutritionally adequate diet has plummeted from 79% to just 2%](#). For the average family with zero income, for whom SNAP pays the maximum possible amount, benefits fall short of minimum food costs by \$50 a month. By making a bad situation far worse, SNAP cuts would leave millions more families unable to feed their children.
- **Taking food assistance away from families who do not complete paperwork documenting employment or an inability to work.** [Most SNAP participants who can work do so](#), earning poverty-level incomes from jobs that pay low wages and often offer unstable hours. Pending proposals would extend current work documentation requirements to additional people, even though research shows the resulting SNAP terminations do not increase employment but do worsen poverty [and hunger, increase borrowing and debt, significantly damage families' physical and mental health, and drive up Medicaid spending](#).
- **Limits to the community eligibility provision (CEP) would take food away from children at school and add administrative headaches for schools and hard-working parents.** When schools with numerous poor children implement CEP, all the school's children automatically qualify for free meals. By eliminating paperwork obstacles and stigma, CEP increases the number of children who get enough to eat in low-income communities. [Schools report](#) that academic performance improves and behavior problems abate. The number of participating schools has thus skyrocketed from 14,000 in 2014 to 48,000 last year. But proposed cuts would [end this program for more than 24,000 schools that serve meals to 12 million children](#). Already hard-pressed schools would be forced to redirect resources out of the classroom and into benefit administration. More important, millions of children would lose the meals that keep them healthy and help them learn.

**Last November, voters demanded that their representatives lower the cost of food and other essentials. Proposals to cut SNAP or limit a community's ability to feed its children would do the exact opposite by increasing food costs for hard-working families.**