

POLICY PRIORITIES: THRIVING KANSAS FAMILIES



KANSAS APPLESEED

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as “food stamps,” is one of the main ways to fight hunger, malnutrition, and poverty in Kansas. Access to SNAP food assistance reduces hunger, improves health, bolsters local economies, creates jobs, and helps lift people out of poverty. Limiting access to food assistance negatively impacts families and is also strongly correlated with more kids entering foster care in Kansas.



REDUCING HUNGER FOR KANSAS FAMILIES

Legislation removing child support cooperation from the eligibility requirements for food assistance would be a game-changer for thousands of Kansas families. Currently, both custodial and non-custodial parents must willingly work with child support services to receive SNAP food assistance. If they do not, they will not be able to access SNAP.

- Taking away food access does not increase child support payments.¹
- Nearly 1/5 of all SNAP households with children already receive child support payments.²
- Mandatory cooperation can disrupt already existing family arrangements, actually reducing the amount of support children receive.³

“I’m afraid of having to deal with [child support cooperation]. I don’t know where my son’s dad lives, and I’m nervous what would happen if I was forced to put him on child support.”

—Southeast Kansas Resident

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EXPANDING ACCESS TO FOOD TO ALL KANSANS

House Bill 2215 would allow people with more than one felony drug conviction to receive food assistance. Losing access to food, no matter one's past, does not help individuals nor the state of Kansas.

- Preventing people from receiving food assistance because of a drug-related conviction has not deterred drug use or drug crime. In fact, drug use and drug crime are higher in states that impose stricter drug felony bans on SNAP.⁴
- States with drug felony bans on food assistance have twice the poverty rates as states without bans.⁵
- SNAP access has been shown to reduce the risk of returning to prison by 10%.⁶
- Black and Latino/a populations are significantly more likely to be convicted of drug-related crimes, even though data on drug use shows white, Black, and Latino/a populations use drugs at similar rates.⁷

Given the current recidivism and drug felony prisoner rates, ending the drug felony ban could result in an estimated 60 fewer people being incarcerated per year and save the State of Kansas approximately \$1,750,000 annually just in incarceration costs.

HOW FOOD ASSISTANCE BENEFITS KANSAS

Every dollar in SNAP benefits generates \$1.54 in economic activity that goes back into our communities and up to \$1.70 in a weak economy.⁸

Food assistance is linked with improved health outcomes & lower overall health care expenditures.

Food assistance helps Kansas kids. In FY 2019, nearly 72% of Kansans utilizing SNAP food assistance are members of families with children.⁹

Sources:

1. Llobera, J. "[Requirements in SNAP are Unproved, Costly, and Put Families at Risk.](#)" Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. 2020.
2. Id.
3. Id.
4. Mauer, M. "[A Lifetime of Punishment: The Impact of the Felony Drug Ban on Welfare Benefits.](#)" Sentencing Project. 2013.
5. Sheely, A. "[State supervision, punishment and poverty: The case of drug bans on welfare receipt.](#)" Punishment & Society. 2020.
6. Yang, C. "[Does Public Assistance Reduce Recidivism?](#)" American Economic Review. 2017.
7. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration. "[Results from the 2011 National Survey on Drug Use and Health: Survey of National Findings.](#)" 2012.
8. Canning, P. & Mentzer Morrison, R. "[Quantifying the Impact of SNAP Benefits on the U.S. Economy and Jobs.](#)" U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. 2019.
9. "[Kansas Food Assistance Program.](#)" Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. 2021.

