

The President's Fiscal Year 2019 (FY 19) budget includes several harmful proposals that would drastically cut and restructure domestic food assistance programs that serve children. If enacted, these changes would be devastating for children struggling with poverty and food insecurity (the lack of consistent access to healthy meals). Here's how the proposed budget would make it harder for struggling families to put food on the table:

**Cuts and drastically restructures of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** SNAP is the largest federal nutrition program, and every year its benefits help millions of low-income households afford nutritious food, with children comprising nearly half of participants. Monthly benefits are already thought to be inadequate to mitigate the effects of food insecurity on participating children. But rather than strengthening SNAP, the FY 19 budget proposes cuts to SNAP of \$213 billion over 10 years. Many of these cuts are thanks to policy changes that would harm children:

- **Replaces some electronic benefits with direct USDA food packages:** The proposal to reduce SNAP benefits in exchange for a food box (lacking fresh produce or meat) for households receiving more than \$90 would disproportionately impact the 9.2 million SNAP households with children, as their benefit levels tend to be highest on average. The proposed system is not grounded in evidence, and its implementation would be complicated, prohibitively costly (the administration did not incorporate the food delivery costs into its analysis), and reduce the quality of SNAP diets.
- **Reintroduces burdensome and redundant eligibility requirements:** the FY 19 budget would add restrictions on Broad Based Categorical Eligibility and eliminate the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program link. These provisions would reduce participation in SNAP amongst eligible families.
- **Eliminates protections from unrealistic work requirements:** denying States waivers from SNAP time-limits associated with part-time work and removing an automatic 15 percent hardship waiver from the same requirement would especially harm marginalized young adults, such as homeless or low-income college students and youth again out of foster care.
- **Cap SNAP benefits for large families (six or more members):** this arbitrary limit on benefits disproportionately harms children living in large households.

- **Eliminate valuable nutrition education (SNAP-ED):** this harmful proposal disregards evidence that SNAP-Ed has improved the diet quality of participating children

**Possibly Underestimates Caseloads for Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC):** WIC helps improve the health and nutritional intake of low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants and children up to their fifth birthday. WIC serves about half of all babies in the United States. The President's FY 19 proposal for grants to states for WIC is \$5.75 billion, a 13 percent cut. This cut is based on a declining projected caseload, but because WIC relies on discretionary funding appropriated annually, these levels could prove inadequate if caseloads exceed the administration's estimates.

#### **Reduces Access to and Investment in School Meals:**

The President's FY 2019 budget does not propose any cuts to mandatory spending for the Special Milk, Child and Adult Food Care, or Summer Food Service Programs. However, because children who participate in SNAP are considered categorically eligible for school meals, the Administration expects its changes to SNAP (and subsequent reduction in SNAP households) to also reduce participation in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs. The loss of automatic eligibility would create an additional barrier to accessing school meals, cutting spending on the programs by an estimated \$161 million in FY 19. The President's budget also eliminates a \$35 million discretionary program for school meal equipment grants. This cut weakens the ability of School Food Authorities to serve healthier meals that meet updated meal patterns.