

Food and Nutrition Services Benefits to Increase by 25% Starting Oct. 1

Sept. 24, 2021

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services today announced that households enrolled in the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) program will see their [benefits increase by 25%](#) beginning Oct. 1, 2021 as part of a national re-evaluation of benefit amounts by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. More than 1.6 million people are enrolled in FNS in North Carolina

The increase is the result of a congressionally mandated re-evaluation of the program to determine if it reflects the current cost of a nutritionally adequate diet. This is the largest benefit increase in the program's history, with the average monthly per-person benefit rising from \$121 to \$157. The amount was last revised in 2006.

More than 1.4 million North Carolinians are facing hunger - and of them 419,470 are children, [according to Feeding America](#). That is one in seven people and one in five children. Food insecurity is associated with numerous adverse health outcomes ranging from high blood pressure to diabetes to mental illness. Children are particularly susceptible to the negative impacts of a lack of access to healthy food because their brains and bodies are still developing.

This permanent 25% increase in FNS benefits will begin at the same time as a temporary 15% increase due to the COVID-19 pandemic ends on Sept. 30.

"Having enough nutritious food every day is an essential part of health and well-being," said NCDHHS Chief Deputy Secretary for Opportunity and Well-Being Susan Gale Perry. "Too many of our fellow North Carolinians suffer from food insecurity. This will help hundreds of thousands of North Carolina families – many with young children - keep nutritious food on the table."

SNAP is credited with lifting millions of people out of poverty each year. It helps families buy adequate food, reduces poverty, and helps stabilize the economy during recessions.

More information about the North Carolina Food and Nutrition Services program can be found at www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/low-income-services/food-nutrition-services-food-stamps. North Carolina individuals and families can apply for FNS at epass.nc.gov.

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