

January 23, 2024

The Honorable Ben Barnes
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
House Office Building, Room 121
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: TESTIMONY ON HB0183 - HUMAN SERVICES - FOOD SUPPLEMENT PROGRAM
(SUMMER SNAP FOR CHILDREN ACT) - POSITION: FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

Dear Chair Barnes, Vice Chair Chang, and Members of the House Appropriations Committee:

The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) thanks the Committee for consideration of HB0183. With offices in every one of Maryland's jurisdictions, DHS helps Marylanders in economic need, provides preventive services, and protects children and adults. The Family Investment Administration (FIA) within DHS administers the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) program which is impacted by HB0183.

Since the bill was enacted in 2019, Summer SNAP for Children has grown from serving 3,923 children in four jurisdictions to 90,571 children in fourteen jurisdictions in 2023. The proposed amendments to Human Service §5-501.1 seek to address certain timelines which do not align with the state's budgeting schedule and the federal SNAP program. The deadlines outlined in the Summer SNAP for Children Act bill present operational challenges to DHS to make sure we serve our customers more seamlessly.

The Act requires DHS to initiate the Summer SNAP application for local jurisdictions in December, before the program budget is determined. Also, in its current form, the Act requires that Summer SNAP benefits be issued 15 days following the dates on which federal SNAP benefits are issued in June through August; and 7 days after the December issuance. In Maryland, SNAP benefits are issued monthly between the 4th and the 23rd, based on the first three letters of the recipient's last name. If DHS follows the schedule stipulated in the Act, some of the Summer SNAP benefits will not be issued in the designated month. This causes unnecessary and burdensome confusion for the customer and puts the agency at risk of audit findings.

We request the partnership of the Committee in amending 5-501.1(G) on page 4 of the bill to state that funding for Summer SNAP for Children is subject to limitations in the State budget, and may be used at the discretion of DHS. Amending 5-501.1(G) is necessary for the continued administration of Summer SNAP for Children. The amendments will build on the progress of the 2023 state Summer SNAP program which enabled local departments of social services to serve the children with the greatest food needs. The amendments give DHS the flexibility to align resources for the state Summer SNAP Program with the new federal Summer EBT Program allowing Maryland to maximize the federal funds to serve an estimated 500,000 school-age children's nutritional needs when they are out of school and unable to rely on free or reduced school meals beginning Summer 2024.



We appreciate the opportunity to submit HB0183 and the amendments to the Committee for consideration during your deliberations. We look forward to working with you and welcome continued collaboration on HB0183.

If you require additional information, please contact Rachel Sledge, Director of Government Affairs, at rachel.sledge@maryland.gov.

In service,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rafael López', written in a cursive style.

Rafael López
Secretary

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O4, O1

HOUSE BILL 183

(PRE-FILED)

4lr0138

CF SB 213

By: **Chair, Appropriations Committee (By Request - Departmental - Human Services)**

Requested: September 18, 2023

Introduced and read first time: January 10, 2024

Assigned to: Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Human Services - Food Supplement Program**
3 **(Summer SNAP for Children Act)**

4 FOR the purpose of making technical and clarifying changes to the administration of
5 certain food supplement benefits for children; ~~increasing the amount the Governor~~
6 ~~is required to include in the annual budget bill for certain food supplement benefits~~
7 ~~for children~~ providing discretion to the Department of Human Services to use certain funding to
provide certain matching funds to a county to supplement certain benefits and to offset certain
administrative costs; and generally relating to the food supplement program.

8 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
9 Article - Human Services
10 Section 5-501.1
11 Annotated Code of Maryland
12 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

13 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
14 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

15 **Article - Human Services**

16 5-501.1.

17 (a) In this section, "child" means an individual who is under the age of 19 years
18 at any time during a calendar year.

19 (b) (1) Subject to subsections (e) and (f) of this section, if a household includes
20 an individual who receives a federally funded benefit under the food supplement program,
21 the State shall provide matching funds to a county to supplement benefits received under
22 § 5-501 of this subtitle for each child in the household.

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1 (2) For each child in the household, the combined State and county
2 supplement under paragraph (1) of this subsection shall equal at least:

3 (i) \$30 per month in the months of June, July, and August; and

4 (ii) \$10 in the month of December.

5 (c) (1) A supplement provided under subsection [(b)] (B)(2)(I) of this section
6 shall be added to the household food supplement program benefit account [15 days after
7 the federally funded benefit is added to the account] in June, July, and August.

8 (2) A supplement provided under subsection [(b)] (B)(2)(II) of this section
9 shall be added to the household food supplement program benefit account [7 days after the
10 federally funded benefit is added to the account] in December.

11 (d) A household may not receive more than one supplement per child under
12 subsection (b) of this section.

13 (e) (1) (i) To receive funding in the following fiscal year for the
14 supplements under subsection (b) of this section, a county shall submit an application to
15 the Department on or before [December 1] THE DATE ESTABLISHED BY THE
16 DEPARTMENT.

17 (ii) The application shall include the following information:

18 1. [a proposed plan to successfully implement distribution of
19 supplements awarded to the county] THE NUMBER OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS TO BE
20 SERVED;

21 2. [a proposed plan to communicate the availability of food
22 supplement program benefits and supplements to eligible families] THE COUNTY'S
23 COMMITMENT TO CONDUCTING AN EVALUATION TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
24 THE PROGRAM;

25 ~~3. the process by which the county will evaluate the impact~~
26 ~~of the supplements;~~

27 ~~[4. food supplement program eligibility and enrollment rates~~
28 ~~in the county;~~

29 ~~5.] 4. 3.~~
certification of the [maximum amount] AVAILABILITY of
30 local share funds [available]; and

31 [6.] ~~5. 4.~~ any other relevant information required by the
32 Department.

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- 1 (2) (i) On or before [January 15 each year] **THE DATE ESTABLISHED**
2 **BY THE DEPARTMENT**, the Department shall notify each county that submitted a
3 complete application of the amount of funding available in the next fiscal year for
4 supplements under subsection (b) of this section.
- 5 (ii) Receipt of available funding under subparagraph (i) of this
6 paragraph is contingent on approval by the Department of a county's final plan submitted
7 in accordance with paragraph (3) of this subsection.
- 8 (3) On or before [March 1 each year] **THE DATE ESTABLISHED BY THE**
9 **DEPARTMENT**, a county that is notified of available funding shall submit a final plan to
10 the Department that includes:
- 11 (i) a communication plan , **COORDINATED WITH THE DEPARTMENT**, to inform eligible
12 families of the food supplement program and the supplements available under this section;
- 13 (ii) if funding is not sufficient to provide a minimum supplement of
14 \$100 to all children in the county receiving food supplement program benefits in the fiscal
15 year, a designation of which children will be eligible to receive the supplements under this
16 section;
- 17 (iii) the criteria used to determine eligibility under item (ii) of this
18 paragraph; and
- 19 (iv) an evaluation plan to measure:
- 20 1. the impact of the supplements on recipients;
- 21 2. food supplement program participation; and
- 22 3. any other relevant information required by the
23 Department.
- 24 (4) (i) The Department shall review a final plan submitted under
25 paragraph (3) of this subsection and approve or reject the final plan.
- 26 (ii) The Department shall notify a county of its decision under
27 subparagraph (i) of this paragraph on or before April 1.
- 28 (iii) If the Department rejects a county's final plan, the county may
29 submit a revised final plan for approval on or before April 15.
- 30 (iv) If the Department approves a county's final plan, the
31 Department shall certify the amount of funding that will be provided for the county in the
32 following fiscal year.

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1 (5) Each county with an approved final plan shall be awarded funding in
2 accordance with subsection (f) of this section.

3 (f) (1) The State and local shares of funding required for a county with an
4 approved final plan shall be equal to the State and local share percentages established by
5 the State and local cost-share formula for that county required under § 5-303(d)(3)(i) of
6 the Education Article.

7 (2) (i) Except as provided in subparagraph (ii) of this paragraph, in
8 each fiscal year, the Department shall provide the State share of funds for each county with
9 an approved final plan for the fiscal year in an amount equal to the product of:

10 1. the total amount of funds appropriated under subsection
11 (g) of this section; and

12 2. the number of children in households that receive a federal
13 benefit under the food supplement program in the county, divided by the total number of
14 children in households that receive a federal benefit under the food supplement program in
15 all counties with an approved final plan.

16 (ii) The amount of funds provided to a county under subparagraph
17 (i) of this paragraph may not be greater than the State share amount that corresponds to
18 the maximum available local share funds certified under subsection (e)(1)(ii)5 of this
19 section.

20 (3) (i) A county may provide funding in addition to the funding required
21 under paragraph (1) of this subsection to increase the number of supplements provided in
22 the county.

23 (ii) Funding provided by a county under subparagraph (i) of this
24 paragraph may not affect the amount of funding the Department is required to provide
25 under paragraph (2) of this subsection.

26 ~~(g) Each year, the Governor shall include in the annual budget bill an~~
27 ~~appropriation of at least [\$200,000] \$5,000,000 for the supplements under subsection (b)~~
28 ~~of this section.~~

(G) SUBJECT TO THE STATE BUDGET, THE DEPARTMENT MAY USE THE FUNDING THE STATE IS REQUIRED TO PROVIDE UNDER SUBSECTION(B)(1) OF THIS SECTION TO:

(1) PROVIDE FUNDS TO A COUNTY TO SUPPLEMENT BENEFITS;

AND

(2) OFFSET ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS OF THE FEDERAL SUMMER ELECTRONIC BENEFIT TRANSFER PROGRAM.

29 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
30 October 1, 2024.

