



Montgomery County Community Action Board Testimony
SB213 - Human Services – Food Supplement Program (Summer SNAP for Children Act)
February 8, 2024
SUPPORT

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle Chair; The Honorable Katherine Klausmeier, Vice Chair; and Members of the Finance Committee
FROM: Dr. Jeffery Johnson, Chair, Montgomery County Community Action Board

The Montgomery County Community Action Board (CAB), the County’s local, state, and federally designated anti-poverty group, is in full support of SB213 and asks the Committee for a favorable report. This bill would support the state’s supplement to SNAP for counties during the summer months and December when school is not in session, and would allocate \$5,000,000 for this important program.

As the governing body, along with the Head Start Parent Policy Council, of the Montgomery County Head Start Program that serves 648 low-income children and their families, we are well aware of the importance of school nutrition programs and recognize the role that school meals play in providing improved access to nutritious meals for low-income school children. Of note, over one-third of children in Montgomery County Public Schools are eligible for Free and Reduced Meals.¹ During school breaks, parents face a significant burden to provide an additional one or two meals a day for their children. When parents are not able to afford additional food, children go hungry.

Now that the increased SNAP benefits put in place during the pandemic have ended, supplements for households receiving SNAP would be crucial, especially as food costs have risen. Support for food and nutrition programs has been a longstanding priority for our board because food insecurity remains a serious challenge here in Montgomery County and across the state. The food insecurity rate in Maryland is 9%, meaning that 543,650 residents struggle with *a lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life.*² It is important to note that food insecurity is compounded in areas like Montgomery County and so many parts of the state, where the cost of living is extremely high, and wages have not kept up. According to the Maryland Community Action Partnership’s most recent report, the Montgomery County Self-Sufficiency Standard for a household with two working adults, one preschooler, and one school-age child is now \$122,943, over four times the federal poverty level.³

We ask the Committee for a favorable report and ask that you consider other policies and funding opportunities to provide critical support to households receiving SNAP, especially those with young and school-aged children.

¹<https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/food-and-nutrition/about-us/#:~:text=Approximately%2035%25%20of%20MCPS%20students,gap%E2%80%9D%20when%20school%20is%20out.>

² <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2020/overall/maryland>

³ <https://maryland-cap.org/the-maryland-2023-self-sufficiency-standard-calculator/>