

SENATE BILL 461

02, 01

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By: **Senator McCray**

Introduced and read first time: February 2, 2026

Assigned to: Finance

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program –**
3 **Eligibility**

4 FOR the purpose of altering the eligibility requirements for the Heat and Eat Program
5 within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in the Department of
6 Human Services to require a household to include an elderly or disabled individual;
7 and generally relating to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and the
8 Heat and Eat Program.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
10 Article – Human Services
11 Section 5–506
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2025 Supplement)

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

16 **Article – Human Services**

17 5–506.

18 (a) In this section, “standard utility allowance” means a Maryland Energy
19 Assistance Program payment to a household that is at least \$21 per year.

20 (b) (1) There is a Heat and Eat Program within the Supplemental Nutrition
21 Assistance Program in the Department.

22 (2) The purpose of the Heat and Eat Program is to expand food access to
23 households that are receiving or eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
24 benefits.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(c) (1) A household is eligible to participate in the Heat and Eat Program if the household:

(I) is eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits under State and federal law; AND

(II) INCLUDES AN ELDERLY OR DISABLED INDIVIDUAL.

(2) In determining the eligibility of a household to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, the Department shall apply a standard utility allowance to the shelter deduction that is used for the purpose of determining countable gross income for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program eligibility.

(d) The Department shall adopt regulations:

(1) to verify household eligibility for participation in the Heat and Eat Program; and

(2) otherwise necessary to carry out this section.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2026.