

Department of Legislative Services  
 Maryland General Assembly  
 2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE  
 First Reader

House Bill 1458 (Delegate Shetty, *et al.*)  
 Appropriations

State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Refugees and Asylees -  
 Establishment

This bill establishes the State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for Refugees and Asylees, administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS), to expand food access to households. A household may participate if it includes an individual who (1) was eligible for SNAP under State and federal law on July 3, 2025; (2) is not eligible for SNAP after July 3, 2025; and (3) is a “refugee,” asylee, or humanitarian parolee, as specified. An eligible household may receive a benefit under SNAP eligibility requirements in effect on July 3, 2025. DHS must adopt regulations to verify household eligibility for participation and carry out the bill. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.**

Fiscal Summary

**State Effect:** Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT) general fund expenditures increase by \$191,500 in FY 2027 for programming changes for DHS; future years reflect ongoing maintenance costs. General fund expenditures increase by an additional indeterminate but significant amount (not shown) beginning in FY 2027 to provide a State SNAP benefit to eligible individuals, as discussed below. Revenues are not affected.

(in dollars)	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029	FY 2030	FY 2031
Revenues	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
GF Expenditure	191,500	9,600	9,600	9,600	9,600
Net Effect	(\$191,500)	(\$9,600)	(\$9,600)	(\$9,600)	(\$9,600)

*Note: ( ) = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease*

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

## Analysis

**Bill Summary:** “Refugee” means (1) an individual who is not a U.S. citizen; (2) an individual who has been in the United States for 60 months or less; and (3) an individual who is any of the following:

- a refugee admitted under specified federal law;
- an asylee admitted under specified federal law;
- a Cuban or Haitian entrant as defined under specified federal regulations;
- an individual granted withholding of removal under specified federal law or protection under the Convention Against Torture;
- a parolee designated by federal law as eligible for refugee resettlement services, as specified;
- an Amerasian immigrant lawfully admitted to the United States, as specified;
- a victim of a severe form of trafficking in persons and the victim’s family members who are eligible for benefits and services from specified federal and state programs;
- an Iraqi or Afghan national granted special immigrant status, as specified; and
- any other noncitizen population that the Office of Refugee Resettlement determines to be eligible for refugee resettlement services under the Refugee Act of 1980.

A household is eligible to participate in SNAP for Refugees and Asylees if the household includes an individual who (1) was eligible for SNAP under State and federal law on July 3, 2025; (2) is not eligible for SNAP after July 3, 2025; and (3) is:

- a refugee
- a lawful permanent resident who satisfied the resident requirements in effect on July 3, 2025;
- a noncitizen lawfully present in the United States previously eligible for SNAP under the “qualified alien” framework under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996;
- a parolee eligible for SNAP on July 3, 2025, including an individual paroled into the United States under the Immigration and Nationality Act who met the residency or exemption requirements in effect on July 3, 2025;
- a noncitizen with work authorization who met the eligibility criteria in effect on July 3, 2025;
- a noncitizen eligible under military-related or disability-related exemptions under PRWORA on July 3, 2025; or
- a member of any other noncitizen population eligible for SNAP benefits under federal law on July 3, 2025.

**Current Law:** SNAP is a federally funded benefit that helps low-income households purchase food. Program rules and requirements are issued by the federal government, while administrative costs are split equally between the State and federal government. Participants must meet income and resource requirements. The minimum federal SNAP benefit is \$24 per month. Through December 2025, the average SNAP benefit provided to Maryland households was approximately \$337 per month, and the average SNAP benefit provided to eligible individuals was approximately \$180 per month.

Maryland provides a State supplemental benefit for households with a member who is at least 60 years old to ensure these households receive a total benefit of \$50 per month. In December 2025, there were approximately 30,832 monthly recipients of the State supplemental benefit. An average monthly payment of approximately \$25 was distributed to ensure these households received a total benefit of \$50 per month.

### *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Citizenship Requirements*

Generally, to receive SNAP benefits, an individual must be a U.S. citizen and a resident in the state in which they receive benefits. Individuals must prove residency in the state in which they apply for benefits, in addition to meeting income and citizenship requirements.

The federal Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 limited eligibility for SNAP benefits to U.S. citizens and certain lawfully present noncitizens, provided these individuals were otherwise eligible to receive SNAP benefits. To qualify for SNAP, noncitizens must meet one of the following citizenship criteria: (1) have lived in the U.S. for at least five years; (2) receive disability-related assistance or benefits; or (3) be younger than age 18. Exceptions to these requirements applied to refugees, asylees, and other humanitarian parolees.

### *Recent Federal Changes*

The federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) of 2025 made substantial changes to SNAP eligibility requirements for noncitizens. Effective July 4, 2025, many lawfully present immigrants are no longer eligible for SNAP benefits. OBBBA removed SNAP eligibility for refugees and asylees. Individuals remain eligible without a waiting period if they are Cuban or Haitian entrants or Compacts of Free Association citizens. Lawful permanent residents remain eligible after a five-year waiting period, provided they otherwise meet SNAP eligibility requirements.

Lawful permanent residents may bypass the five-year waiting period if they meet specified criteria, including if they (1) are younger than age 18; (2) have 40 qualifying work quarters; (3) are blind or disabled; (4) were lawfully residing in the United States and are 65 years or older on August 22, 1996; (5) have a U.S. military connection; (6) are admitted to the

United States as an Amerasian immigrant; (7) are an American Indian born abroad; or (8) are certain Hmong or Highland Laotian tribal members.

States, including Maryland, initially challenged the determination that refugees and asylees would not be eligible for SNAP benefits under OBBBA, even after the five-year waiting period. However, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) revised its guidance to conform with other federal law that would allow refugees, asylees, and certain other humanitarian parolees to be eligible after a change in status to lawful permanent resident without a five-year waiting period.

Although these changes were effective upon enactment of OBBBA, guidance by USDA was not issued until October 2025. DHS began implementing the changes in November 2025, with the impact on recipients occurring on a phased-in basis.

### **State Expenditures:**

#### *State Benefit Costs*

Under the bill, general fund expenditures increase to ensure that eligible households receive a State SNAP benefit under specified noncitizen eligibility requirements in effect on July 3, 2025.

DHS advises that, as of June 2025 (prior to passage of OBBBA), there were as many as 10,100 eligible noncitizen individuals (in approximately 4,400 households) receiving federal SNAP benefits in Maryland. DHS notes that to ensure that the average SNAP benefit of \$180 per month per individual is provided to eligible noncitizen individuals under the bill, general fund expenditures increase by as much as \$21.8 million annually beginning in fiscal 2027.

However, the Department of Legislative Services advises that it is unclear if all 10,100 noncitizen individuals eligible for SNAP in June 2025 will be eligible to receive the State SNAP benefit under the bill. It is also unclear the specific household size and monthly benefit for which eligible households will qualify.

*For illustrative purposes only*, for every 1,000 eligible noncitizen individuals that receive the average monthly individual SNAP benefit of \$180 per month under the bill, general fund expenditures increase by \$2.2 million annually. For every 1,000 households that receive the average monthly household SNAP benefit of \$337 under the bill, general fund expenditures increase by \$4.0 million annually.

## *Eligibility and Enrollment System*

To consider an individual's eligibility status under the bill, DHS advises that it must update its Eligibility and Enrollment System (E&E). Oversight of (and all funds associated with E&E) is handled by DoIT. Thus, this analysis assumes that DoIT general fund expenditures increase by an estimated \$191,520 in fiscal 2027 for initial modifications to the system; maintenance costs of approximately \$9,576 are incurred annually beginning in fiscal 2028. Since the bill requires eligibility determinations for a State benefit, federal matching funds are not available for these costs.

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### **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Human Services; Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - March 17, 2026  
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Analysis by: Amberly E. Holcomb

Direct Inquiries to:  
(410) 946-5510  
(301) 970-5510