

SB 913_PJC_Support.pdf

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Position: FAV



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SB 913
Human Services – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat & Eat Program
Hearing of the Senate Finance Committee
February 18, 2021
1:00 PM

SUPPORT

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a not-for-profit civil rights and anti-poverty legal services organization which seeks to advance social justice, economic and racial equity, and fundamental human rights in Maryland. Our Health Rights Project supports policies and practices that promote the overall health of Marylanders struggling to make ends meet, with the explicit goal of promoting strategies that work to eliminate racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes. PJC strongly supports SB 913, which would establish the Heat and Eat program within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program (SNAP) of the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS). It would also require DHS to adopt regulations to implement the program.

In Maryland, 1 in 9 individuals experience food insecurity.¹ SNAP is a lifeline that helps address hunger in low-income households by enabling them to access healthy and nutritious food. Prior to the pandemic, approximately 10.4% of Marylanders participated in the SNAP program during FY 2019.² It is estimated that households who experience food insecurity in Maryland need a total of \$361,501,000 more per year to address their food needs.³ As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many families are now facing unemployment, housing insecurity, and continue to struggle in affording food.

The need for additional food assistance is greater now than ever in Maryland as evidenced by the significant spike in SNAP applications between March and June 2020. In April 2020, DHS received nearly 150,000 SNAP applications, a record level for this program. The declarations of federal and state public health emergencies have allowed DHS to make temporary programmatic changes to address the pandemic, such as developing the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (P-EBT) and changes to allow SNAP recipients flexibilities in applications, interviews, and

¹ Feeding America, Hunger in Maryland, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/maryland> (last visited on February 7, 2021).

² Marylanders Against Poverty, 2020 Maryland Poverty Profiles (2020), http://mapadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Maryland-Poverty-Profiles_2020-FINAL.pdf.

³ Feeding America, Hunger in Maryland, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/maryland> (last visited on February 7, 2021).

recertification. However, at its current level, the SNAP benefit is still inadequate to address the impact of the pandemic on food insecurity in low-income households.

The Heat and Eat program is a simple and targeted solution that would enable households that receive energy assistance to receive additional SNAP dollars. In December 2019, DHS issued a report to the Maryland General Assembly regarding the Heat and Eat program, stating that approximately 32,690 Marylanders could receive the additional SNAP funding, and that the average increased benefit would be \$59 per household per month according to a 2016 randomized sample.⁴ SB 913, if passed, would hold DHS accountable for finally taking the steps necessary to implement the Heat and Eat program, which would address food insecurity experienced by households that are already struggling to provide for their basic needs, specifically food and energy.

It is time for Maryland to join over a dozen other states that have already implemented the Heat and Eat program. For these reasons, the Public Justice Center urges the committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report for **SB 913**. If you have any questions, please contact Ashley Black at 410-625-9409 x 224 or blacka@publicjustice.org.

⁴ Maryland Department of Health & Human Services, *Restaurant Meals Program and "Heat and Eat" Program Report – MSAR #12137* (December 1, 2019).

SB 913.pdf

Uploaded by: Campbell, James

Position: FAV



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**HB 101 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program
House Appropriations Committee
Favorable
February 10, 2021**

Good afternoon Chairwoman Kelly and members of the Senate Finance Committee. I am Jim Campbell and I am the State President of AARP Maryland. As you may know, AARP Maryland is one of the largest membership-based organizations in Maryland, encompassing over 850,000 members. I represent AARP MD and its members in support of SB 913 **Human Services – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program**. We applaud the sponsors, Senators Cory McCray, Mary Washington and Clarence Lam for introducing this legislation to help increase food benefits for some of the state's neediest citizens.

AARP is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, nationwide organization that helps people turn their goals and dreams into real possibilities, strengthens communities and fights for the issues that matter most to families such as healthcare, employment and income security, retirement planning, affordable utilities and protection from financial abuse.

As has been stated in testimony today, the Heat and Eat program is an existing federal aid program currently in about a dozen states that allows SNAP eligible residents, who also qualify for energy assistance, to receive additional food assistance under the SNAP program. A 2016 study by the Maryland Department of Human Resources, now called the Department of Human Services estimated that under the Heat and Eat provisions, 32,000 Marylanders would receive an additional \$59 a month of SNAP benefits.

As the pandemic began last spring, Maryland Hunger Solution reported that SNAP applications rose by 600%. As of last June, 800,000 Marylanders were enrolled in SNAP, an increase of 14 % over the previous year. In Baltimore City, more than a quarter of households are enrolled in SNAP.

A recent study by the Food and Research Action reported that Maryland has the nation's 7th highest food insecurity rate among 50-59-year hold's (33.89%) and 8th highest food insecurity rate among those 60+ (18.69%).

The SNAP program has been shown to be effective in reducing insecurity for older adults who have limited resources to spend on necessities such as food, housing, medical costs and utilities.

Real Possibilities

Participation in SNAP by older Americans, who are less likely to give up their medicine for food, has been linked to reduced hospital and nursing home admissions, resulting in millions of dollars in taxpayer savings.

AARP is supporting SB 913 to reduce food insecurity and improve food access to older Maryland citizens. AARP through our advocacy, programs, and services, fight against discrimination, advocate for access to health care, and work to improve the lives of all people, especially those most vulnerable. As we consider this moment in time, it's clear, AARP will use its voice, resources, and trust in our brand to continue our fight for what is right so all people can live a life of dignity regardless of race, age, or income. This is why we support SB 913 the Heat and Eat Program.

We respectfully ask the committees to respectfully pass SB 913. If you have questions or comments please contact Tammy Bresnahan at tbresnahan@aarp.org or by calling 410-302-8451.

Share Our Strength - Testimony in Support - SB913

Uploaded by: Holmes, Ayesha

Position: FAV



SB913 – SUPPORT

Ayesha Holmes

Share Our Strength/No Kid Hungry
aholmes@strength.org (410)205.1016

SB913 Support
Supplemental Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program

Finance Committee

February 18, 2021

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Finance Committee:

Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Maryland campaign strongly supports SB913, the Heat and Eat Program. No Kid Hungry Maryland is a campaign of national anti-hunger organization Share Our Strength. Since 2008, Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Maryland campaign has worked with partners, schools and advocates to end childhood hunger throughout the state. No Kid Hungry Maryland leads the Partnership to End Childhood Hunger in Maryland.

Twenty-two percent (22%) of kids in Maryland are growing up in a family that struggles with hunger. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a vital support to many families, and it serves as the front line of defense against poverty, food insecurity, and the long-term detriments they cause. Indeed, based on data from 2009 to 2012, SNAP kept 104,000 people out of poverty in Maryland, including 47,000 children, each year.¹

Heat & Eat is a federal program that states can utilize to boost SNAP benefits for SNAP recipients who are also eligible for and accessing energy assistance. By implementing this program, the state could provide millions of dollars of additional SNAP benefits to low-income Marylanders who are eligible for these federal dollars. The program is designed to address energy assistance for homes as well as for apartments where utility costs are included in the rent. As authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, a minimum of \$20 must be expended in energy assistance to qualify for the increased SNAP benefit. A 2016 analysis by MD DHS estimates that approximately 32,000 Marylanders would receive an average \$59 boost to their SNAP benefits monthly. The effects of the pandemic have most likely increased this number.

If implemented by Maryland, Heat and Eat will benefit SNAP participants all across the state; seniors, families with children, as well as veterans and those with disabilities. During this time, with the increased challenges posed by the COVID-19 Pandemic, this program is especially important. By targeting those accessing both SNAP and energy assistance, it lifts those struggling with both food insecurity and energy costs. SNAP is a powerful tool to enable eligible participants to put food on the table by expanding food budgets.

In closing, we strongly support HB101 allowing for the State of Maryland to implement Heat and Eat this year.

¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Maryland Food Supplement Program (December 3, 2018), https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_maryland.pdf.

MAP - SB 913 Heat and Eat - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Jefferson , Stacey

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 913

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program

Senate Finance Committee

February 18, 2021

Submitted by Stacey Jefferson and Julia Gross, Co-Chairs

Member Agencies:

Advocates for Children and Youth
Baltimore Jewish Council
Behavioral Health System Baltimore
CASH Campaign of Maryland
Catholic Charities
Episcopal Diocese of Maryland
Family League of Baltimore
Fuel Fund of Maryland
Health Care for the Homeless
Homeless Persons
Representation Project
Job Opportunities Task Force
League of Women Voters of Maryland
Loyola University Maryland
Maryland Catholic Conference
Maryland Center on Economic Policy
Maryland Community Action
Partnership
Maryland Family Network
Maryland Hunger Solutions
Paul's Place
Public Justice Center
St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore
Welfare Advocates

Marylanders Against Poverty

Stacey Jefferson, Co-Chair
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C: 443-813-9231

E: stacey.jefferson@bhsbaltimore.org

Julia Gross, Co-Chair
P: 410-528-0021x6029

E: jgross@mdhungersolutions.org

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) strongly supports SB 913, which requires the Department of Human Services to establish the Heat & Eat Program within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (also known as SNAP and formerly known as food stamps) in Maryland. The Heat & Eat Program is an existing federal program which allows low-income residents who are eligible for SNAP and eligible for energy assistance to receive additional federal SNAP dollars.

The Heat & Eat program is designed to address food assistance and energy assistance for homes as well as for apartments where utility costs are included in the rent by providing a Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP or MEAP in Maryland) benefit to eligible households. This benefit qualifies recipients for a “standard utility allowance,” an average of the state’s utility costs. This increases the likelihood of the household qualifying for increased shelter deductions and recalculates their SNAP benefits. A 2016 analysis by Maryland Department of Human Services estimates ~32,000 Marylanders would receive an average \$59 boost to their monthly SNAP benefits.

This program is especially critical during the Covid-19 Pandemic. By targeting those accessing both SNAP and energy assistance, it lifts those struggling with both food insecurity and energy costs. SNAP has become a more powerful means of enabling eligible participants to put food on the table by expanding food budgets. With the implementation of the online SNAP program last year, which allows SNAP users to purchase groceries via online retailers, and the incoming Restaurant Meals Program, which allows certain populations to use their benefits at restaurants, SNAP dollars are an important part of our local economy. In FY2020 more than a billion dollars in SNAP benefits was spent in Maryland, providing support to grocery stores, farmers markets, and the entire agriculture supply chain.

MAP advocates for Marylanders from all walks of life, and if the Heat & Eat Program is implemented by Maryland the beneficiaries will include SNAP participants all across the state; seniors, families with children, as well as veterans or people with a disability.

MAP appreciates your consideration and urges the committee to issue a favorable report for SB 913.

Marylanders Against Poverty (MAP) is a coalition of service providers, faith communities, and advocacy organizations advancing statewide public policies and programs necessary to alleviate the burdens faced by Marylanders living in or near poverty, and to address the underlying systemic causes of poverty.

WA- SB 913 - Heat and Eat - Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Klingenmaier, Lisa

Position: FAV



Welfare Advocates

Founded 1979

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Phone: 667.600.3356 • Fax: 410.889.0203

Senate Bill 913

Human Services – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program

Senate Finance Committee

February 18, 2021

Support

Welfare Advocates is a statewide coalition of social service organizations, advocacy groups, faith communities, and community members, whose mission it is to educate ourselves, and the wider community and to advocate for an adequate safety net and public policies that support families moving towards economic stability.

Welfare Advocates supports SB 913, which establishes the Heat and Eat Program in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the Department of Human Services.

SNAP is a critical safety-net program that reduces food insecurity for low-income Marylanders. Statewide, over 790,000 Maryland children, families, and seniors utilize SNAP to purchase healthy food and maintain adequate nutrition. While SNAP benefits are an essential part of the safety-net, for many households the benefits are not adequate enough for families to access proper nutrition for the entire month. Thus, any increase that can be made in the SNAP benefit amount for low-income households will reduce food insecurity and combat hunger.

SB 913 establishes the Heat and Eat Program within the SNAP program, creating a new avenue to get additional SNAP dollars to vulnerable households. Heat and Eat is an existing federal option – that Maryland has yet to utilize – that provides an enhanced SNAP benefit for households that receive both SNAP and Energy Assistance. In a 2016 analysis of implementing the Heat & Eat Program in Maryland, the Maryland Department of Human Services estimated 32,000 Marylanders would receive an average of \$59 a month of additional SNAP benefits if the program was implemented. By targeting those accessing both SNAP and energy assistance, it lifts low-income Marylanders struggling with both food insecurity and energy costs. Implementing Heat and Eat – like more than a dozen states have done - Maryland could provide millions of dollars of additional SNAP benefits to low-income households, increasing food security across the state for vulnerable populations.

SB 913 is a smart investment in the wellbeing of low-income Marylanders - and in the local economy. SNAP recipients spend their benefits on food in neighborhood grocery stores, farmers markets, and other local retailers. For every \$5 spent in SNAP, \$9 is generated in local economic activity, yielding a strong return on investment. Implementing Heat and Eat leverages more federal dollars that feed into the local economy.

For the reasons stated above, we respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 913.

Submitted by Lisa Klingenmaier, Chair of Welfare Advocates

MD Catholic Conference _FAV_SB0913.pdf

Uploaded by: Kraska, MJ

Position: FAV



ARCHDIOCESE OF BALTIMORE † ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON † DIOCESE OF WILMINGTON

February 18, 2021

SB 913

Human Services – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program

Senate Finance Committee

Position: Support

The Maryland Catholic Conference (“Conference”) represents the public policy interests of the three Roman Catholic (arch)dioceses serving Maryland: the Archdiocese of Baltimore, the Archdiocese of Washington, and the Diocese of Wilmington.

Senate Bill 913 establishes the Heat and Eat Program within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in the Department of Human Services; providing that the purpose of the Program is to expand food access to households that are receiving or eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits; requiring the Department to make a certain determination for a household to receive certain benefits; and requiring the Department to adopt certain regulations.

The Church strongly supports the continuation of anti-poverty programs that address the basic needs of its poorest individuals and families, including those tackling food insecurity, affordable housing, and unemployment. In his address on the Second World Day of the Poor, Pope Francis clearly illustrated this importance in stating how *“we are called to honour the poor and to give them precedence, out of the conviction that they are a true presence of Jesus in our midst. ‘As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’ (Mt. 25:40).”*

In Maryland, the Conference frequently advocates for the protection of social safety net programs to promote the common good. Household and familial insecurity stemming from the instability and fluctuation of federal assistance programs is detrimental to a healthy society. When there is doubt as to where a next meal will come from, it is extremely difficult to focus on other areas that make a person complete, going against the Church’s inherent belief that every life has dignity. Where one unit of government is failing its most vulnerable members, another must step in to act. Maryland may soon find itself in this situation, and Senate Bill 913 would serve as a means to provide continuing stability and dignity for those who cannot financially withstand losing such an important benefit as food assistance.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and, for these reasons, respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 913.

SB 913_FAV_Critical Issues Foru.pdf

Uploaded by: Mandel, Steven

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY OF THE CRITICAL ISSUES FORUM: ADVOCACY
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
ON FEBRUARY 18, 2021
BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF SB 913
SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - HEAT AND EAT PROGRAM**

Honorable Chair Kelley, Vice-Chair Feldman, and Members of the Finance Committee:

The Critical Issues Forum: Advocacy for Social Justice (CIF), supports SB 913, the Heat and Eat Program, which expands food access to households that are receiving or eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP or food stamps) benefits.

CIF is a coalition of three synagogues, Temple Beth Ami, Kol Shalom, and Adat Shalom, with over 1,750 households and three denominations of Judaism: Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist. CIF serves as a vehicle for our congregations to speak out on policy issues that relate to our shared values, including the Jewish tradition that explicitly commands that we feed the hungry. For the past five years, CIF has advocated for effective solutions to food insecurity in Maryland for families, children, and seniors, including in SNAP.

SB 913 establishes a Heat and Eat Program in Maryland. This program would prescribe a streamlining practice whereby SNAP recipients who receive over \$21 in utility assistance benefits would receive additional SNAP benefits. This assistance is critically important now, when more than 700,000 Marylanders, or more than 1 in 10 households, live in poverty and struggle against hunger (<https://www.mdhungersolutions.org/hunger2020>). At least ten other states and the District of Columbia have implemented Heat and Eat programs.

Maryland households in public and Section 8 housing that do not pay a separate heating bill but who pay for heating as part of their rent do not ordinarily have the opportunity to use a Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) deduction as part of their SNAP application. Such a deduction could offset income and result in greater SNAP benefits. However, under Section 4006 of Title IV of the federal Agriculture Act of 2014 (Farm Bill), such households may use a SUA if they receive more than \$20 annually in payments under the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (LIHEAP). In Maryland, LIHEAP is called the Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP).

Maryland has never implemented a Heat and Eat Program that would provide such enhanced SNAP benefits. A 2016 analysis by the Maryland Department of Human Resources determined that under a Heat and Eat Program, 32,690 Marylanders who do not pay a separate heating bill would receive additional food stamp payments. The average increased benefit would be \$59 per household per month, for a total annual expenditure of MEAP funds of \$1.6 million. The collective increase in SNAP benefits would be **\$23.1 million**. Of course, SNAP benefits also

have a multiplier effect on the economy ([<https://www.towson.edu/campus/partnerships-research/economic-studies/documents/resi-policy-brief-food-insecurity.pdf>]).

Thus, a Heat and Eat Program is a win-win. Low-income Maryland residents would receive utility assistance **and** increased SNAP benefits. It would be unconscionable **not** to implement a Heat and Eat Program when Marylanders are suffering the effects of the economic downturn created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Researchers found that Maryland's food insecurity had more than doubled early in the pandemic, Schanzenbach & Pitts (2020), Institute for Policy Research Rapid Research Report, <https://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/documens/reports/ipr-rapid-research-repoarts-pulse-hh-data-1--june-220.pdf>, and the effects have gotten even more severe. Recent Census data shows that of 1,446,000 Marylanders responding, about 88,500 reported they often did not have enough to eat, and about 384,000 reported they sometimes did not have enough to eat. This represents 33% of responding Maryland residents who are food insecure.

Not surprisingly, the number of Maryland households using SNAP has surged from 591,474 in February 2020 to 697,144 in October 2020. Thus, hundreds of thousands of our neighbors rely on SNAP benefits to put food on their family tables and avoid going hungry.

The Critical Issues Forum respectfully requests a favorable report on SB 913, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Heat and Eat Program.

SB 913- Human Services - Supplemental Nutrition As

Uploaded by: McCray, Cory

Position: FAV

CORY V. MCCRAY
Legislative District 45
Baltimore City

Budget and Taxation Committee

Capital Budget Subcommittee
Health and Human Services Subcommittee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Vote Yes on Senate Bill 913

Bill Title: Human Services - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Heat and Eat Program

Hearing Date: February 18, 2021, Finance

Chair, Vice Chair and members of the committee,

I write to you today requesting a favorable vote on SB 913. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the primary source of nutrition assistance for many low-income families and individuals. SNAP enables low-income households to spend more on food than their limited budgets would otherwise allow and makes it easier to put enough food on the table. Households participating in SNAP include low-wage working families, low-income seniors, and people with disabilities living on fixed incomes. Almost 70 percent of participants in an average month are in families with children, and more than one-quarter are in households with seniors or people with disabilities. SNAP forms a critical foundation for their health and well-being, lifting millions out of poverty and improving food security.

“Heat and Eat” is a federal program that more than a dozen states and the District of Columbia already utilize which can boost benefits for SNAP recipients who are also eligible for and receiving energy assistance. The program is designed to address energy assistance for homes as well as for apartments where utility costs are included in the rent. This federal program allows individuals who pay utilities through their rent, but are eligible for utility assistance, to claim the Standard Utility Allowance on their SNAP application, thus increasing their SNAP benefits. By implementing this program, Maryland could provide millions of dollars of additional SNAP benefits to low-income individuals who are eligible for these federal dollars. 2

This program is especially critical during the Covid-19 Pandemic. By targeting those receiving both SNAP and energy assistance, it lifts those struggling with both food insecurity and energy costs. While food banks and food pantries continue to meet the rising need, SNAP has become a more powerful means of enabling eligible participants to put food on the table by expanding food budgets. With the implementation of the online SNAP program last year, which allows SNAP users to purchase groceries via online retailers, and the incoming Restaurant Meals Program, which allows certain populations to use their benefits at restaurants, SNAP dollars are an 2 Maryland Hunger Solutions;
<https://www.mdhungersolutions.org>

important part of our local economy. In FY2020 more than a billion dollars in SNAP benefits was spent in Maryland, providing support to grocery stores, farmers markets, and the entire agriculture supply chain.

2

This bill requires the Maryland Department of Human Services to implement the “Heat and Eat” program in the state, providing a fix to ensure we are bringing in as much federal funds as possible to support food-insecure Marylanders.

I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 913.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Cory V. McCray". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Cory V. McCray
State Senator

MSCAN - SB 913 - SNAP Heat and Eat.pdf

Uploaded by: Miicke , Sarah

Position: FAV



Maryland Senior Citizens Action Network

MSCAN

AARP Maryland

Alzheimer's
Association,
Maryland Chapters

Baltimore Jewish
Council

Catholic Charities

Central Maryland
Ecumenical Council

Church of the Brethren

Episcopal Diocese of
Maryland

Housing Opportunities
Commission of
Montgomery County

Jewish Community
Relations Council of
Greater Washington

Lutheran Office on
Public Policy in
Maryland

Maryland Association of
Area Agencies on Aging

Maryland Catholic
Conference

Mental Health
Association of Maryland

Mid-Atlantic LifeSpan

National Association of
Social Workers,
Maryland Chapter

Presbytery of Baltimore

The Coordinating
Center

MSCAN Co-Chairs:
Carol Lienhard
Sarah Mücke
410-542-4850

SB 913

Human Services – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program

Senate Finance Committee
February 18, 2021

Support

MSCAN is a statewide coalition of advocacy groups, service providers, faith-based and mission-driven organizations that supports policies that meet the housing and care needs of Maryland's low and moderate-income senior citizens.

MSCAN supports SB 913, which establishes the Heat and Eat Program in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the Department of Human Services.

Many of our seniors – especially seniors living with a disability - are on fixed income and struggle with meeting their basic needs. Nearly one in five low-income seniors in Maryland struggles with hunger, resulting in Maryland having the 8th highest food insecurity rate among low-income seniors.ⁱ Low-income seniors rely on Maryland's safety-net programs – like SNAP – to supplement their household budgets and purchase the items they need to live a healthy life. Unfortunately, one in five seniors who apply for SNAP in Maryland receive the minimum benefit, an amount that is woefully inadequate for seniors to access proper nutrition.

SB 913 will reduce hunger among seniors in Maryland by establishing the Heat and Eat Program within the SNAP program. Heat and Eat is an existing federal option – that Maryland has yet to utilize – that provides an enhanced SNAP benefit for households that receive both SNAP and Energy Assistance. In a 2016 analysis of implementing the Heat & Eat Program in Maryland, the Maryland Department of Human Services estimated 32,000 Marylanders would receive an average of \$59 a month of additional SNAP benefits if the program was implemented. By implementing Heat and Eat – like more than a dozen states have done - Maryland could provide millions of dollars of additional SNAP benefits to low-income households, increasing food security across the state for vulnerable populations.

For the reasons stated above, MSCAN urges a favorable report on SB 913.
Thank you for your consideration.

ⁱ Maryland Hunger Solutions. 2019. Senior Hunger in Maryland.

http://mdhungersolutions.org/pdf/Senior_hunger_fact_sheet_OFFICIAL.pdf

SB0913_FAV_Montgomery County Food Council.pdf

Uploaded by: Nardi, Catherine

Position: FAV



February 18, 2021

**2021 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY
SB0913: Heat and Eat Program**

BILL: SB0913: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Testimony of Support of Senate Bill 0913
BILL ANALYSIS: Establishing the Heat and Eat Program within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in the Department of Human Services; providing that the purpose of the Program is to expand food access to households that are receiving or eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits; requiring the Department to make a certain determination for a household to receive certain benefits; and requiring the Department to adopt certain regulations.

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the House Finance Committee:

The Montgomery County Food Council urges you to **SUPPORT** this bill as it seeks to enhance food access for food-insecure Maryland residents and families that rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The “Heat and Eat” program is an existing Federal program that allows certain SNAP-eligible residents to qualify for additional benefits. Through this program, SNAP eligible households that pay utility costs in their rent can receive an annual Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP or MEAP in Maryland) benefit. This benefit automatically qualifies recipients for a “standard utility allowance,” which increases the likelihood that they will be eligible for greater “shelter deductions,” that in turn can give the household access to additional SNAP benefits. In essence, this program supports households with lower incomes by providing both energy and food assistance.

The hunger crisis that has developed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in record-setting SNAP enrollment rates, a 40%+ increase in demand amongst food assistance providers, and supply chain challenges that have left grocery store shelves empty. While food banks and pantries have mobilized to meet the rising need, SNAP continues to be a critical and essential tool for residents to directly purchase culturally appropriate, nutritious food in flexible, dignified, and efficient ways. According to the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), on average, nearly 43 million people participated in SNAP in September 2020, up from nearly 38 million in September 2019. It is clear that food access challenges are more prevalent now than ever before, and this legislation, which will bolster food security by increasing a family’s likelihood to qualify for greater SNAP benefits, is critical to addressing hunger in Maryland.

FRAC research shows that each dollar in SNAP benefits spent during an economic downturn generates between \$1.50 and \$1.80 in economic activity, thereby supporting the entire food system and supply chain. Expanding the impact of food supplement program benefits through SB0913 will effectively enhance the economic and food security of our communities, at a time when both businesses and residents are facing ongoing financial hardships.

This bill also addresses the inequities that low-income, Black, Hispanic, and Native American households all face in regards to “energy burdens.” The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy found that these groups



consistently spend a greater percentage of their income on energy bills, as compared to the average household.¹ These same low-income, Black, Hispanic, and Native American households are at the greatest risk of food insecurity.² Maryland residents--including seniors, families with children, veterans, and people with disabilities-- should not have to choose between keeping their lights on, or keeping their families fed. This bill will simultaneously boost SNAP benefits and address energy assistance for families experiencing food insecurity.

The “Heat & Eat” provision has already been implemented with success in more than 15 states and the District of Columbia to increase the benefits that SNAP recipients can put towards food purchases each month. New York, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania boosted their LIHEAP benefits in 2014 by leveraging federal and state dollars, and effectively increased SNAP benefits for thousands of residents. A 2016 analysis conducted by the Maryland Department of Human Resources found that implementing the Heat & Eat Program could provide nearly 32,000 Marylanders with an average of \$59 per month in additional SNAP benefits.

The passage of SB0913 is an important opportunity for Maryland to connect millions of dollars in Federal funding to our local economy while enhancing food security and providing energy assistance to struggling households. For these reasons, the Montgomery County Food Council supports and urges you to vote **FOR** this bill.

The Montgomery County Food Council is an independent council formed and led by individual community members and representatives of local businesses, government, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions. Our mission is to bring together a diverse representation of stakeholders to improve the environmental, economic, social and nutritional health of Montgomery County, Maryland through the creation of a robust, local, sustainable food system. Our vision is to cultivate a vibrant food system in Montgomery County that consciously produces, distributes, and recycles food, making it accessible to all residents while promoting the health of the local food economy, its consumers, and the environment.

For more information, please contact: Heather Bruskin, MCFC Executive Director at the email and phone number below.

¹ American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, 2020. “Low-Income, Black, Hispanic, and Native American Households Face High Energy Burdens.”

² Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, 2020. “Food Insecurity.”



2021 Vanessa Pierre Letter of Support -SB0913.pdf

Uploaded by: Pierre, Vanessa

Position: FAV

February 16, 2021

**2021 SESSION SUPPORT TESTIMONY
SB0913: Heat and Eat Program**

BILL: SB0913: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program
COMMITTEE: Finance
POSITION: Testimony of Support of Senate Bill 0913
BILL ANALYSIS: Establishing the Heat and Eat Program within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in the Department of Human Services; providing that the purpose of the Program is to expand food access to households that are receiving or eligible for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits; requiring the Department to make a certain determination for a household to receive certain benefits; and requiring the Department to adopt certain regulations.

Dear Chair Kelley and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today. My name is Vanessa Pierre and I am a resident and food activist in Montgomery County, Maryland. The mission of my organization, Homestead Hustle & Healing, is to build strong, self sufficient, empowered and healthy minority communities through food & gardening education, demonstration, & advocacy. I also have the pleasure of serving on the Montgomery County Food Council's Food Security Community Advisory Board and the Client Leadership Council for the Capital Area Food Bank. It is with deep personal understanding of the needs of food insecure residents, through my work in the community, that I urge you to **SUPPORT** this bill.

The "Heat & Eat" program will allow the State of Maryland to become a bridge - connecting an estimated 32,000 residents to a Federally funded program already enacted by 15 other states and the District of Columbia. In your consideration of supporting this program, it is my intent to draw your attention to the real life implications of this bill. The impact on the people we aim to help today is oftentimes lost in the numbers and legal jargon. I invite you to take a moment and consider the real impact on families and businesses.

It goes without saying the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has left on Marylanders. In a state where the cost of living already exceeds that of many states in the country, SNAP-enrollment has grown to nearly 43 million families. Food banks and pantries have risen to the challenge with boots on the ground to meet the needs of the people, many of which are forced to supplement their SNAP benefits by standing in line hours at a time no matter the weather conditions to make sure they can feed their families for seven days instead of five. In the midst of the decisions that have had to be made during this most difficult times, Marylanders who have already established a need are being forced to choose not only the quantity of their meals, but also the quality of their meals. Food prices are rising, unemployment is rising, as well as infection rates of those affected by food related pre-existing conditions. It is time that our support of food insecure families, seniors, veterans, and disabled community members rise as well.

A 2016 study by the Maryland Department of Human Resources has estimated that the Heat & Eat Program could provide nearly 32,000 Marylanders with an average of \$59 per month in additional SNAP benefits. The impact of \$59, seemingly small in the grand scheme of legislation, can have a profound

impact on the lives of everyday people. This can eliminate the decision of a single mother on whether to join her children for a meal or skip it to make sure everyone eats. For families, this is the difference between weekend hunger or weekend meals. For food providers, this lessens the burden and allows them to fight another day to feed those who are really in need. The larger impact is seen in the local economy, with small businesses already struggling to keep their doors open. Of all consumer purchases - Food is-the most local. When we pour into our communities members,as is possible through the passage of this bill, they will in turn, pour back support into their own communities and stimulate local economies.

The passage of SB0913 is essential for Maryland to directly combat food insecurity and provide energy assistance to hard hit households across the state, as well as stimulate our own local economies and decrease the demand on local food banks and pantries. For these reasons and more, I urge you to vote **FOR** this bill.

Homestead Hustle & Healing is an organization in Montgomery County, Maryland established to combat food insecurity in low income, minority, and immigrant communities through food & garden education, demonstration and advocacy. Our initiatives aim to promote self sufficiency in these targeted groups through school gardening, workshops and seminars, the promotion, community garden projects, creation of farmers markets in underserved areas, and support of aligned partner organizations initiatives.

For more information, please contact: Vanessa Pierre, MCFC Food Security Community Advisory Board Member and Founder of Homestead Hustle & Healing, vanessa@homesteadhustlehealing.com

SB0913_SNAP_Heat_and_Eat_MLC_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Plante, Cecilia

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY FOR SB0913
HUMAN SERVICES – SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM – HEAT
AND EAT PROGRAM**

Bill Sponsor: Senator McCray

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of SB0913 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists, and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

This bill would establish a Heat and Eat Program within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program within the Department of Human Services. The program would allow individuals who pay utilities through their rent, but are eligible for utility assistance, to claim a standard utility allowance on their SNAP application, thus increasing their SNAP benefits.

We support any efforts to help Maryland families who are struggling by allowing them a small increase in their SNAP benefits.

We support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB0913 - FAV - Maryland Hunger Solutions.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Robinson, JD

Position: FAV



Testimony in Support of SB0913
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program
Finance
February 18, 2021

Dear Chair Kelley, Vice-Chair Feldman, and Members of the Finance Committee,

Maryland Hunger Solutions is a statewide, non-partisan, non-profit organization working to end hunger and improve the nutrition, health, and well-being of individuals, children, and families in Maryland. Maryland Hunger Solutions strives to overcome barriers and create self-sustaining connections between Maryland residents and nutritious foods. Maryland Hunger Solutions works with state and community partners to seek to:

- provide education about the stark reality of hunger's existence in Maryland and the proven solutions to reduce food insecurity;
- improve public policies to end food insecurity and poverty; and
- ensure that all eligible residents are connected to federal and state nutrition programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (also known as SNAP and formerly known as food stamps) and school meals programs.

It is within that regard that we are testifying in support of SB0913, which requires the Department of Human Services to establish the Heat & Eat Program within the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Maryland. The Heat & Eat Program is an existing federal program which allows low-income residents who are eligible for SNAP and eligible for energy assistance to receive additional federal SNAP dollars. It is not a new program, and more than a dozen states have implemented this program across the nation. It is a benefit that Maryland is leaving on the table as other jurisdictions have thoughtfully, efficiently, and in a non-partisan way have maximized federal assistance for their low-income residents. Maryland's unwillingness and inability to implement this effective program can only be corrected by having the state legislature require the Department of Human Services to implement the program.

The program functions by providing a Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP or MEAP in Maryland) benefit to eligible households paying utility costs through their rent. This annual benefit would automatically qualify recipients for a "standard utility allowance," an average of the state's utility costs. This increases the likelihood of the household qualifying for increased shelter deductions and thus, higher SNAP benefits.

There are two important items for consideration. First, the way that the program is implemented must conform to the federal requirements as stipulated in the 2014 Farm Bill, as passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama. We reference here a summary provided by the National Conference of State Legislatures ¹, which I will summarize here; states may ensure that LIHEAP eligible households receive benefits of more than \$20 a year, which will ensure compliance and enable those same households, if they are also SNAP participating households, to boost their SNAP allotment. Prior to 2014, there was no minimum, and many states provided less than \$20 in order to increase SNAP allotments.

The NCSL also pointed out that if a state is running low on federal LIHEAP funds, that they may allocate state funding to boost funds available for assistance.

This is a critical point; existing federal dollars may be used. Additional state dollars may also be used. We believe that using additional state dollars would be appropriate and a smart investment. But for Maryland to continue as they have and not at least ensure that federal LIHEAP dollars are utilized is wasteful and inefficient.

A second and critical point is that Maryland would not be the first state to use this program. As quoted in the USA Today of March 14, 2014 ² New York decided to spend \$6 million in federal funds to preserve \$457 in food aid for 300,000 households rather than cut the benefit because of the change in the federal law, essentially using those federal funds to ensure that a minimum of \$20 was spent per household. Similarly, Rhode Island spent an additional \$1.3 million to avoid a cut of \$69 million. Across the border in the District of Columbia, DC needed to boost their LIHEAP funding by \$1.3 million. These jurisdictions had to boost spending to avoid cuts. Maryland is in a different place. By implementing the program and applying our existing LIHEAP funding for our SNAP eligible residents who are not getting LIHEAP, we can increase our federal SNAP benefits.

Pennsylvania's Republican Governor Tom Corbett agreed to spend \$8 million in federal LIHEAP benefits to save \$300 million in SNAP benefits for 400,000 Pennsylvanians.³

Our colleague Louise Hayes of Community Legal Services of Philadelphia has submitted testimony in support of this legislation. In it, she says, "From Pennsylvania's perspective, Heat and Eat is a no-brainer. It greatly benefits Pennsylvania's neediest seniors and people with disabilities, and it greatly simplifies program administration, at minimal cost. I heartily urge Maryland to adopt Heat & Eat." She also submitted an operations memo from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania from February of 2011 from Acting Director of Operations from the Department of Public Welfare, Lourdes Padilla. It details how local executive directors are to implement heat and eat in Pennsylvania.

¹ <https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/-heat-and-eat-and-snap-changes-in-the-2014-farm-bill.aspx>

² <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/03/17/stateline-food-stamps/6538141/>

³ https://www.inquirer.com/philly/news/politics/20140306_In_surprising_move__Corbett_forestalls_deep_cuts_in_food_stamps.html

That memo is from the current Secretary of the Maryland Department of Human Services who was an official in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania when their policy was put into place in that state.

New York, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania are examples of states that immediately boosted their LIHEAP benefits to accommodate the federal changes enacted in 2014. Two states: Wisconsin⁴ and New Jersey⁵, failed to act, with an estimated 250,000 and 160,000 residents, respectively, seeing a loss to their benefits as a result. New Jersey estimated that the average benefit lost to their recipients was around \$90 a month. Michigan similarly did not make the necessary accommodations to fulfill federal guidelines and 159,000 households saw an \$80 reduction in their benefits. From their losses we can see what Marylanders stand to gain from the program.

In a 2016 analysis of implementing the Heat & Eat Program, the Maryland Department of Human Resources estimated 32,000 Marylanders would receive an average of \$59 a month of additional SNAP benefits. This has most likely increased due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Our on-the-ground experience with those who are food insecure is that the inadequacy of the SNAP benefit has always been a challenge. When the coronavirus pandemic began, our federal and state governments took action to ensure moratoriums would be placed on energy bills, helping families keep the lights on as businesses closed and unemployment skyrocketed. We also saw the enactment of policies to address food insecurity such as the emergency benefit, which increased SNAP allotments for most households, and procedures to enable remote application and recertification.

However, the effects of the pandemic will be felt for years to come. The challenge is to analyze which changes should continue beyond the pandemic. The Heat & Eat Program is one of the small beneficial policy changes which we should have made years ago which would be beneficial beyond the pandemic, and which will provide benefits to low-income Marylanders.

Thank you for your consideration, Maryland Hunger Solutions **urges a favorable report on SB0913.**

⁴ <https://urbanmilwaukee.com/pressrelease/rep-bowen-introduces-heat-eat-legislation/>

⁵ <https://www.assemblydems.com/mosquera-speaker-prieto-decry-heat-eat-bill-veto-override-failure/>

SB0913 - FAV - Organizational Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Robinson, JD

Position: FAV

To the Honorable Members of the General Assembly,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing to ask for your support of SB913: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - Heat & Eat Program. The Heat & Eat Program will provide a boost to SNAP benefits for recipients eligible for both SNAP and energy assistance. By implementing this program, the state could provide millions of dollars of additional SNAP benefits to low-income Marylanders who are eligible for these federal dollars. There's no reason that Maryland should continue to deny these benefits which more than a dozen other states are already utilizing.

In an analysis in 2016, the Maryland Department of Human Services estimated 32,000 Marylanders would benefit from the Heat & Eat Program, with an average monthly benefit of \$50-\$60 in SNAP. If implemented by Maryland the beneficiaries will include SNAP participants all across the state; seniors, families with children, as well as those who are veterans or have a disability.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Maryland Hunger Solutions	AARP Maryland	Share Our Strength
Marylanders Against Poverty	Manna Food Center	Critical Issues Forum
Montgomery County Food Council	Public Justice Center	Fair Farms Maryland
Capitol Area Food Bank	Maryland Food Bank	Homestead Hustle & Healing
Prince George's County Food Equity Council		Germantown HELP
Homeless Persons Representation Project		Small Things Matter
Am Kolel Jewish Renewal Community		Justice and Service
Rainbow Community Development Center		Community FarmShare
Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington		A Place of Hope
Kings & Priests' Court International Ministries		AfriThrive
St John's Norwood Episcopal Church	Crossroads Community Food Network	
Hughes United Methodist Church	Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington	

Reproductive Health Equity Alliance of Maryland

Food & Friends

Rockville Senior Center

Up2Us Foundation

Family League of Baltimore

SB913 - PA Heat & Eat Operations Memo 2011.pdf

Uploaded by: Robinson, JD

Position: FAV

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Department of Public Welfare
February 17, 2011

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM 11-02-02
SNAP

SUBJECT: Automated Heat and Eat Initiative

TO: Executive Directors

FROM: Lourdes Padilla
Acting Director
Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE

To inform County Assistance Offices that following a third run of the Heat and Eat Initiative on February 19, 2011, Heat and Eat will become an automated process that enrolls eligible households at the time of application. Automation of Heat and Eat will be effective February 22, 2011.

BACKGROUND

Heat and Eat is an initiative that gives the Heating Shelter Utility Allowance (HSUA) to eligible households currently receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. Since its implementation on September 10, 2010, eligible households were enrolled in the Heat and Eat Initiative only during special enrollment runs held on October 25, 2010 and November 20, 2010. On February 19, 2011, a final Heat and Eat run will occur to enroll any eligible households that are not already participating in Heat and Eat.

DISCUSSION

Effective February 22, 2011, Heat and Eat will become an ongoing automated process that enrolls eligible households at the time of application. Enrollment in Heat and Eat allows households and all household members to receive the HSUA until September 30 of the year in which they are enrolled, at which time eligibility will be reevaluated.

When a household is enrolled in Heat and Eat, a "Y" indicator will appear in protected fields on two Client Information System (CIS) screens:

CASHEL - The "Y" indicator will appear in both the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and the Heat & Eat (H&E) Issued fields.

CAINDL – A new H&E field has been created. The "Y" indicator will appear if the individual has received the Heat and Eat benefit during the current LIHEAP period.

Examples:

CASHEL CIS SHELTER AND UTILITY COSTS INQUIRY 01/26/11 14:12:55
 Operator: Worker: Page 1
 Co Record D Status Case Name Cslid
 22 7866091 0 IMCW MAINT SNAP CLIENT 4505
 Income Month Pymt P/R Share Utility % Co Record Other PA Inc
 02/2011 02
 Mth Bill Amt V
 Lot/Rent/Mortgage Homeless Shelter Allowance
 Taxes V
 Insurance Support Pmt to Non-HH-Mbr(s) 0.00
 ===== Totals =====
 Telephone Shel Costs
 Electric Act Util Std Type H
 Gas Act S/U Std S/U 524.00
 Oil =====
 Water **Heat & Eat Issued: Y**
 Sewerage Responsible for Heat/Cooling? N
 Garbage/Trash Heat/Cooling Billed Sep/Indiv Metered? N
 Util Install Receives LIHEAP? Y Override? N
 Other Non-phone Utility Costs? N
 Use Actual Utility Expenses?
 Next Trans: _____ Parameters: _____ Xmit: _

CAINDL CIS INDIVIDUAL DETAIL INQUIRY 01/26/11 14:13:26
 Operator: Page: 1
 Indiv No V Status **H&E** Dist Cslid Worker PA CAP ID/V Src
Y
 Last Name First M App DOB V Sex SSN V Cit V Src Vet Ed
 SNAP CLIENT
 MS V Vote Race Eth HIB Number TPL LA LA Date Org
 # Benefit Days: TANF: 0000, GA: 0000, Timeout: 0000, Act 35: 0000, ET: 0000

 Sel Co Record C/G C Pg LN DQ Rel El S Retro Elig Beg Elig End
 - 22 7866091 FS 0 00 01 X EM A 01/01/11
 - 22 7866091 FS 0 00 01 X EM I 12/02/10 12/31/10
 -
 F18 - NAME INQ F19 - IEVS DETAIL F20 - NON-FIN ATTRIBUTE
 Next Tran: _____ Parameters: _____ Xmit: _

At the beginning of each LIHEAP period, Heat and Eat indicators will be re-set to “N”. If Heat and Eat is renewed for that LIHEAP season:

- Eligible households will be re-enrolled;
- Heat and Eat benefits will be issued using Reason Code 502;
- “Y” indicators will be entered on CAINDL and CASHEL; and,
- Notice 400/option 2 (option 5 in counties with Client Notice Redesign) will be sent to inform households that they have been enrolled in this initiative.

Frequently Asked Questions

What SNAP households are eligible for Heat and Eat?

All households **except the following** are eligible to be enrolled in the Heat and Eat Initiative:

- Households currently receiving LIHEAP;
- PA CAP households;
- Households receiving nursing home care;
- Households who are homeless (Program Status Code FS41 or FS42);
- Households receiving extended SNAP benefits (Program Status Code FS43);
- Households with a facility code **other than** 17, 18, 19, and 39. (Those with facility codes 17, 18, 19 and 39 are eligible for Heat and Eat).

How will SNAP households be enrolled in this initiative?

Eligible households are automatically enrolled. The SNAP household does not have to do anything to be enrolled.

Does Heat and Eat impact eligibility for SNAP?

Eligibility for Heat and Eat is determined and the HSUA applied prior to the net income test; therefore, some households that appear ineligible at the outset will be eligible due to participation in the Heat and Eat Initiative.

Does the implementation of Heat and Eat impact already existing Heat and Eat cases?

In addition to converting eligible cases, the final Heat and Eat special batch run will also convert existing Heat and Eat cases to the new ongoing format and add the additional Y indicator on CQINDL.

How will SNAP households access their Heat and Eat benefit?

SNAP recipients can access their Heat and Eat benefit at any store that accepts Electronic Benefits Transfer Cards. The recipient will have to enter cash to use their Heat and Eat benefit and it may be used on any item. The Heat and Eat benefit does not follow the same rules as SNAP in regard to items that can be purchased.

What Heat and Eat indicator will non-eligible and disqualified household members have?

When the household is enrolled in Heat and Eat, non-eligible and disqualified members will also have the “Y” Heat and Eat indicator.

When a member of a Heat and Eat household leaves and is opened in a new case, does that individual get another Heat and Eat issuance?

No. The Heat and Eat “Y” indicator is retained and the household is eligible for the HSUA, but Heat and Eat benefits are not re-issued.

If a new member, who has not received Heat and Eat in the past, enters a Heat and Eat enrolled household, is the indicator updated to “Y”?

No

NEXT STEPS

1. Review this information with your staff.
2. Direct any questions to your area manager.
3. This Operations Memorandum will become obsolete when the initiative ends.

SB913_MDCEP_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Schumitz, Kali

Position: FAV

FEBRUARY 18, 2021

‘Heat & Eat Program’ Would Leverage Federal Funding to Support Low-Income Households

Position Statement in support of Senate Bill 913

Given before the Finance Committee


Ensuring that low-income Marylanders receive much needed additional Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits by at least simply taking advantage of the federal dollars that are available, shouldn't even be a question. SB 913 which calls for the Department of Human Services to implement the Heat & Eat Program with SNAP in Maryland would benefit households in need as well as the Maryland economy as a whole. Credible research and evidence from other states shows that the establishment of the Heat and Eat Program can help avoid benefit cuts and preserve hundreds of millions of dollars in food aid. This aid would provide essential benefits to low-income households that are still dealing with the financial effects of the coronavirus pandemic. For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy supports Senate Bill 913.

The Heat & Eat Program is an existing federal program that allows low-income residents who are eligible for SNAP and energy assistance to receive additional SNAP dollars from the federal government. The program is well established and is has been successfully and impactfully implemented in over a dozen other states. Maryland has so far not taken advantage of the program, meaning that low-income Marylanders are missing out on much-needed federal assistance.

The Heat and Eat Program functions by providing a Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (known in Maryland as the Maryland Energy Assistance Program) benefit to eligible households who pay their utility costs through their rent. This benefit would qualify recipients to receive an allowance based on the average of the state's utility cost, called the "standard utility allowance." This increases the probability that low-income households would qualify for increased shelter deductions and as a result, increased SNAP benefits. While existing federal dollars are there to be used, state money can also be used to increase the funds that are available. While a state contribution would be a beneficial investment of state dollars, Maryland at the very least needs to take advantage of the federal LIHEAP funds that have been unutilized and wasted for years.

With the use of just a few million dollars in federal LIHEAP funds, other states have been able to preserve hundreds of millions of dollars in food aid for low-income households. This can be the case in Maryland too. In 2016, the Maryland Department of Human Resources analyzed the effect of implementing the Heat and Eat Program, estimating that 32,000 Marylanders would receive an average of \$59 a month of additional SNAP benefits. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic these figures have more than likely increased.

If we want to foster broadly shared prosperity across our state, we should make sure that low-income residents are receiving the maximum amount of federal assistance that is available to them. This is especially vital considering the fact that we are in the middle of a pandemic that will continue to create financial hardship for years to come.



The Heat and Eat program is a program that should have been implemented years ago, but just because this available federal funding has not been utilized in the past, does not mean that it should not be maximized now. There simply is no reason not to implement this program as it will provide additional economic stability for low-income Marylanders for years to come.

For these reasons, the Maryland Center on Economic Policy respectfully requests that the Finance Committee make a favorable report on Senate Bill 913.

Equity Impact Analysis: Senate Bill 913

Bill Summary

Senate Bill 913 would require the state to enroll in the federal “Heat and Eat Program,” a federal program that allows low-income residents who are eligible for SNAP and energy assistance to receive additional SNAP dollars from the federal government.

Equity Implications

Policies in the past have led to a system of unequal opportunities for marginalized groups within Maryland. Although the most obvious racially discriminatory policies have long been overturned or mitigated, the impact of these policies continue to persist in both society and public policy, and have led to significant racial and health disparities. People of color experience much higher rates of economic insecurity and poverty, and are more likely to use SNAP to afford enough to eat and are more likely to have trouble affording utility bills.

Research shows that increasing economic security for households through programs like SNAP and LIHEAP can help reduce overall poverty, child poverty, and racial and ethnic inequitiesⁱ.

Impact

Senate Bill 913 would **likely improve racial and economic equity** in Maryland.

ⁱ Danilo Trisi and Matt Saenz, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “Economic Security Programs Reduce Overall Poverty, Racial and Ethnic Inequities,” January 2021. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/economic-security-programs-reduce-overall-poverty-racial-and-ethnic>

SB913_DHS_LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Graziano, Lauren

Position: INFO

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 913**COMMITTEE:** Finance**BILL TITLE:** Human Services – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Heat and Eat Program**DHS POSITION:** Letter of Information

The Department of Human Services (DHS) respectfully offers this letter of information regarding Senate Bill 913 (SB913). SB913 would require the Department of Human Services to institute a “Heat & Eat” Program and promulgate the regulations necessary to carry out the program.

“Heat & Eat” refers to the practice of providing a minimal Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) benefit to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients in order to qualify the household for the Standard Utility Allowance and therefore a higher SNAP benefit. This deduction is already granted to a Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP) recipient applying for SNAP. All households responsible for their heating costs in any way, including those with their heat included in their rent, are eligible to receive MEAP benefits, but not all SNAP recipients apply for energy assistance through the Office of Home Energy Programs.

Fifteen states and the District of Columbia have Heat & Eat initiatives. Although a state could implement Heat & Eat through approval of the SNAP and LIHEAP state plans, most states have statutes authorizing and guiding the initiative. The District of Columbia does not use LIHEAP funds for their Heat & Eat initiative, but rather general funds.

There are budget implications to institute this initiative. Roughly \$8,821,865 in LIHEAP/MEAP funds would have to be set aside and specifically dedicated for the additional Heat & Eat benefit. This impact would have to be factored into the calculation of MEAP benefits, and may result in lower benefits for sole MEAP recipients.

Additionally, implementation of a Heat and Eat program would require IT systems upgrades. As part of the Department’s current IT modernization project, MD Think, the OHEP data management system will be fully integrated into the new Enrollment and Eligibility (E&E) system by July 1, 2022. This systems integration will allow for administrative streamlining across the Department’s range of benefit programs. Specifically, it will allow for easier portability of customer information between OHEP and SNAP programs. To implement a Heat and Eat program prior to this systems integration, a one time upgrade to the legacy OHEP system would be needed. This upgrade would cost approximately \$200,000 in general funds. As such, the Department recommends the committee to consider a delayed implementation date for this bill, especially considering that Heat & Eat would have no effect on the recipient’s benefit amount during the COVID-19 pandemic period. SNAP customers will continue to receive the maximum household benefit allotment until the state of emergency declaration is lifted.

Implementation of a Heat & Eat program would need to be approved by the United States Department of Agriculture, Federal Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) and the United States Department of Health and Human Service (HHS). The Department would need to amend and resubmit the State’s LIHEAP and SNAP plans for approval by our federal partners.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to share the aforementioned information regarding SB913 and



respectfully requests that this information be considered during the Committee's deliberations.