

Governor Phil Murphy

# Governor Murphy Signs Bill to Ensure Households Receive SNAP Benefits for Maximum Time Allowed Before Needing to Reapply

08/17/2023

**TRENTON** – To help combat food insecurity in New Jersey, Governor Phil Murphy today signed a bill (A-1715/S-1713) to ensure every household receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits is able to receive those benefits for the longest allowable period of time before needing to apply for recertification.

New Jersey is already a leader in advancing food security and improving access to NJ SNAP, including allowing the longest recertification periods permitted under federal rules. Under this new law, New Jersey is making these certification periods permanent so that NJ SNAP enrollees are able to maintain their benefits for no less than 12 months or a period of no less than 24 months for households in which every adult is elderly and/or disabled – the maximum amount of time permitted under federal regulations.

“By ensuring every eligible household receives their SNAP benefits for the maximum time allowed before needing to have their benefits recertified, we will make it easier for low-income families to access and retain the food assistance they need,” **said Governor Murphy.** “Cutting down on the frequency with which households must reapply for their benefits, we will make life easier for many residents already

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struggling to make ends meet and help them continue to put food on the table for their families.”

“No one should go hungry. But access to affordable and nutritious food continues to be challenging for many. That is why the Governor, Legislature and Human Services continue taking every step to expand the availability of SNAP food assistance benefits so they go farther and reach more people,” **said Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman.** “With today’s bill signing we are making the process easier so individuals can keep and rely on needed assistance for as long as possible.”

“I continue to be incredibly grateful and inspired by the leadership of Governor Murphy and our partners in the Legislature in the efforts to build a more food secure New Jersey. Benefit recertification is no small feat for families experiencing food insecurity and its many challenges, such as lack of safe, stable, and humane housing,” **said Mark Dinglasan, Executive Director of the NJ Office of the Food Security Advocate.** “Gathering necessary documents, getting access to a computer or a phone, and even getting access to your mail all require more time and support when you are food insecure. Every opportunity and every chance we can provide families to have time to catch their breath, think long-term, and plan is critical and matters so much. At a time when food insecurity is rising in New Jersey, legislation like this matters more than ever.”

The Commissioner will apply for any federal waivers or approvals and adopt any rules and regulations necessary to implement the new law. Exceptions will be permitted for situations in which shorter certification periods are necessary for other programs or for the expedited issuance of initial benefits.

SNAP enrollees will only have to complete the interim report mid-way through their certification period to update their information and/or report any changes. These mid-way checks help make sure the department has the most up-to-date household information to ensure families receive the maximum benefit for which they are eligible.

This legislation builds on the Administration’s ongoing efforts to address food insecurity throughout the state, including a bill the Governor signed earlier this year to ensure every SNAP household in New Jersey would continue to receive at least \$95 in monthly benefits once the federal government’s emergency allotments came to an end.

Sponsors of the legislation include Senator Nellie Pou and Assemblywoman Shanique Speight, as well as Senate Majority Leader Teresa Ruiz and Assembly members Angela McKnight, Reginald Atkins, and Annette Quijano.

“No one’s first and biggest challenge on any given day should be how to feed

themselves and their family,” **said Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin.** “Today's action will ease the burden for families and seniors who rely on SNAP and comes a few months after we took action to raise the minimum monthly SNAP benefits. SNAP is proven to reduce food insecurity, and by supporting this critical program, we are making a difference for many in our state.”

“More than 800,000 New Jerseyans -- including 20 percent of households in Passaic County -- rely on SNAP benefits to help put food on the table,” **said Senator Pou.** “This law extends certification periods, which will help ease one burden on low-income families that include children, the elderly and those with disabilities, and allow them to apply for and receive these benefits in a more reasonable timeframe.”

“The current SNAP certification process places a significant administrative burden on New Jersey families,” **said Assemblywoman Speight.** “With this law, we are standardizing and streamlining the process so SNAP recipients know they will be able to put food on the table.”

“Unfortunately, for many families with irregular income the constant need to reapply for SNAP and the frustration of going in and out of the program can make it unreliable,” **said Senate Majority Leader Ruiz.** “By extending the recertification period we can streamline things and ease food security concerns for low-income households around the state.”

“With this law, we are providing the longest certification period allowed under federal regulation to SNAP recipients in New Jersey,” **said Assemblywoman McKnight.** “This means families and senior residents who rely on the SNAP program to meet their nutritional needs will not have to submit paperwork every few months in order to remain certified.”

“This year we've increased SNAP benefits and are now making it easier for families and others to take advantage of this important program,” **said Assemblyman Atkins.** “This law shows our commitment to helping those who rely on SNAP to meet their nutritional needs.”

“We need to do everything we can to ensure families and seniors who rely on SNAP benefits are able to receive them in a timely manner,” **said Assemblywoman Quijano.** “Removing the burden of filling out paperwork every few months will be a big benefit for those SNAP recipients.”

“With the signing of this latest food security measure the Governor and the Legislature have made additional progress in their ongoing quest to ameliorate hunger in New Jersey,” **said Dena Mottola Jaborska, Executive Director of New Jersey Citizen Action.** “Inflated food prices are making it more difficult for seniors,

people with disabilities, and other New Jersey residents with low incomes to feed their families healthy and nutritious foods. This is an important solution and we applaud Assemblywoman Speight, Senator Pou, our Legislative leaders and the Governor for advancing this bill into law.”

“Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have high levels of food insecurity due to numerous barriers. By maximizing the federal benefit and establishing the longest certification period allowed under federal regulation, the Murphy Administration and the New Jersey Legislature will have effectively reduced the effect physical and transportation barriers have on people’s ability to access food,” **said Catherine Chin, Executive Director of the Alliance for the Betterment of Citizens with Disabilities (ABCD).** “We thank Governor Murphy, the Murphy Administration and the NJ Legislature for this and the recent assurance of a minimum of \$95 per month for every household receiving SNAP benefits, included the FY24 State Budget, which move us forward in our efforts to reduce inequity and expand opportunities.”

“We appreciate the administration's commitment to improving access to SNAP and support any efforts that make it easier for households dealing with food insecurity to obtain and retain SNAP benefits,” **said Lisa Pitz, Director of Hunger Free New Jersey, a statewide advocacy program of the Center for Food Action.** “The Garden State continues to lead the nation in addressing hunger and food insecurity, and Governor Murphy has been a great champion in this fight.”

## Governor Phil Murphy

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