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****Spokane Child Care provider Tracy Flowers is available for press interviews****

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More than 1 Million Washingtonians to See a Cut in Food Assistance Beginning Tomorrow

On November 1st, more than 1.1 million people in low-income families in Washington state will see their food assistance benefits cut, when a temporary boost to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) expires.

More than 47 million Americans, including 22 million children, who receive SNAP, known as Basic Food in Washington state, will see their food assistance reduced when a modest boost in benefits to SNAP recipients, included in the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to strengthen the economy and ease hardship, ends. For a family of three in Washington state that cut will amount to \$29 a month. This is a serious loss for families whose benefits, after this cut, will average less than \$1.40 per person per meal.

The majority of households in Washington state receiving Basic Food contain either a child, an elder or persons with disabilities. In Washington state, the cut will impact 256,000 households with children, and 234,000 seniors and people with disabilities. Veterans will also be affected by the cut. [The Center on Budget & Policy Priorities](#) analyzed Census data and determined that 51,600 Washington state veterans depend on the Basic Food Program.

“This small increase in Basic Food benefits has provided an important stepping stone for Washingtonians during the deep economic recession and long recovery, empowering them to keep food on the table as they seek employment and send their children off to school,” stated Tara Lee, Communications Director of the Washington State Budget & Policy Center.

Tracy Flowers sees the impact of hunger every day in her Spokane child care center, A Bright Beginning. Tracy and her staff have about 85 children ages 4 weeks to 12 years. She says signs of hunger are most predominant among the 2- to 5-year-olds.

Children who are hungry **“are unable to focus and less likely to self-regulate their behavior,”** says Flowers. The children in her care **“are confident knowing they won’t go hungry here,”** but nutritious food is harder to obtain for parents in an economic crisis. **“People who make cuts to food stamps don’t realize the extent of the damage they’re doing to children,”** she says.

At 6.1 percent, the number of hungry families in Washington is significantly higher than the national rate. Our state ranks 15th out of all 50 states for hunger. The overall hunger rate is remains virtually unchanged since its peak of 6.2 percent in 2009-2011. The Children’s Alliance estimates that 400,000 children in Washington are at risk of hunger.

In addition to rejecting deeper cuts to Basic Food at the federal level, anti-hunger advocates want Washington state lawmakers to fully restore State Food Assistance (SFA) in the 2014 supplemental budget.

SFA helps thousands of immigrant families put food on the table, yet lawmakers cut it by half in the 2012 legislative session. It is currently set at 25 percent less than the monthly SNAP benefit level.

“No child should go hungry here in Washington state,” says Jon Gould, deputy director of the Children’s Alliance. “With Congress stuck in neutral, we call upon state lawmakers to restore the State Food Assistance Program.”

[The Center on Budget & Policy Priorities analysis on the federal SNAP cuts can be found here.](#)

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Children’s Alliance’s mission is to improve the well-being of children by effecting positive changes in public policies, priorities, and programs. More information can be found at www.childrensalliance.org/

The Washington State Budget & Policy Center is a research organization that advances the prosperity of all Washingtonians. More information can be found at www.budgetandpolicy.org