



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

Protecting Washington's State Food Assistance Program

What is the Washington State Food Assistance Program?

The State Food Assistance (SFA) program helps put food on the table for nearly 15,000 Washington kids.

SFA mirrors the rules and benefits of the federal food stamp program (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP); with the exception that SFA covers documented immigrants who are barred from the federal program. State Food Assistance Benefits average about \$114 per month.

As a critical part of our public anti-hunger infrastructure, SFA is a form of economic stimulus: Families that buy food are putting money into their local communities. State Food Assistance benefits, like federal Food Stamp benefits, go directly to community grocery stores across the state. Every \$5 in benefits creates \$9 in local economic benefits.

What is happening to the State Food Assistance Program?

The tough economic times are impacting families' budgets and the state's budget as well. Our governor and state legislators have the job of balancing the state budget.

Governor Gregoire has proposed to eliminate all funding for the State Food Assistance program as of February 1, 2011.

Children from every part of Washington, and children who are often left behind, all need access to the fullest opportunities for growth and security. The elimination of SFA is one of several potential decisions that would exclusively impact immigrant children and their families. We stand against all efforts to single out and isolate one group of hungry individuals and stand with all who needs help feeding their families. No child, no matter her circumstances, deserves to go hungry.

Who Will be Affected?

In August 2010, nearly 15,000 kids in Washington lived in households affected by the elimination of SFA. **Because the State Food Assistance program operates just like Food Stamps (SNAP), people may not know which program they are on.**

People who receive SFA generally fall into three categories:

- Documented immigrants in the U.S. for five years or less,
- People who are in a certain immigration status called People Legally Residing Under Color of the Law (PRUCOL), or
- Citizens of countries with compacts of free association with the U.S. that allow residing and working in the U.S. but deny citizenship.

Recipients of SFA come from many countries of origin. As of last spring, the following countries led the list: Mexico, Marshall Islands, Ethiopia, Philippines, Russia and Micronesia.

Strategies to Protect State Food Assistance Program

Anyone who supports protecting food assistance for hungry families can help ensure that our legislators protect State Food Assistance. **You can help by sharing a story of how the program has helped you and your family or by speaking up in support of protecting food assistance for all hungry families in Washington.**

If you think you may receive state food assistance, or for more information, please contact:

Emijah Smith, Community Organizer, at 800.854.5437 ext. 25 or emijah@childrensalliance.org.

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