

**CONTACT:**

Mike Healey, 401-808-9856

mhealey@economicprogressri.org

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PRESS RELEASE

As Federal Crisis Threatens Food Security, How Many Rhode Islanders Depend on SNAP?

PROVIDENCE, RI: More than 90,000 Rhode Island households — about 144,000 people — rely on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to afford food each month. During the ongoing federal shutdown, the Trump administration initially refused to fund November benefits until a federal judge in Rhode Island ordered it to comply. Yesterday, the administration said it would resume payments at only half the normal amount, and today President Trump suggested he might ignore the court's order — before the White House again reversed course, promising partial payments.

“Rhode Islanders shouldn’t have to rely on court orders or emergency food drives to access the nutrition Congress has already guaranteed them,” **said Weayonnoh Nelson-Davies, Executive Director of the Economic Progress Institute.** “The Trump administration’s cruel handling of SNAP has turned a basic necessity into a political weapon, creating fear and uncertainty for families who are simply trying to eat. Our state and local leaders are doing what they can to fill in the gaps, but it shouldn’t come to that. We will continue to fight for policies that protect Rhode Islanders from hunger and ensure that federal programs like SNAP are not held hostage to politics.”

Nelson-Davies noted that the “needless turmoil” that SNAP recipients are undergoing comes on top of “extremely harsh cuts” to SNAP that were included in H.R. 1, AKA the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), signed by Trump this summer. OBBBA slashes expenditures on SNAP by \$187 billion through 2034, according to estimates from the Congressional Budget Office.

“No one should have to wonder day to day whether they’ll be able to put food on the table,” **Nelson-Davies said.** “This administration’s strategy of governing by chaos is inflicting more suffering on those who are already struggling to eat.”

In this context, the Economic Progress Institute (EPI) today is releasing SNAP participation data by county and by state legislative district. From Census Bureau and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) sources, the data have been compiled by EPI’s national partner, [the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities \(CBPP\)](#), a nonpartisan research and policy institute that advances federal and state policies to help build a nation where everyone — regardless of income, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, ZIP code, immigration status, or disability status — has the resources they need to thrive and share in the nation’s prosperity.

EPI shares the data with Rhode Island policymakers and the general public to help everyone understand that the crisis over halted SNAP benefits is a serious problem for Rhode Islanders across the state. EPI also shares the data to emphasize to legislators and policymakers in the Governor's office and state agencies that responses on the state level can help soften the blow for Rhode Islanders. As the impacts of the shutdown and the federal legislation enacted over the summer become increasingly clear, including increasing health insurance premiums and the loss of coverage for many Rhode Islanders, policymakers require relevant information, and EPI aims to provide data, context, and policy options as needed.

Here are the SNAP household data for Rhode Island's five counties:

County	Total Households (ACS)	Estimated Number of Households That Participated in SNAP in Average Month (USDA, ACS, CBPP)	Percent of Households receiving SNAP in Average Month (USDA, ACS, CBPP)
Bristol County	19,000	1,700	9
Kent County	73,000	13,400	18
Newport County	36,000	4,600	13
Providence County	257,000	65,600	26
Washington County	52,000	4,800	9

[Click here for the SNAP household data for 60 of Rhode Island's 75 State House districts and for all 38 State Senate Districts.](#)

Research shows SNAP reduces food insecurity by as much as 30 percent, with especially strong results for children and families facing severe hunger. It is also one of the most effective anti-poverty tools in the country, lifting roughly 6.6 million people — including 3 million children — above the poverty line each year. Nearly 39% of recipients are children and adolescents under 18, according to USDA, which administers the program. About 1 in 8 U.S. residents get an average of \$187 a month per person in SNAP.

Beyond helping families put food on the table, SNAP strengthens the broader economy. Benefits are spent quickly and locally, supporting supermarkets, small grocers, and farmers. The program also helps workers with low and inconsistent pay bridge gaps in income, ensuring they can continue feeding their families through periods of unemployment or reduced hours. Low-income Rhode Islanders receive an average of \$29 million a month in SNAP benefits.

For more information about SNAP, including how to apply or use benefits online, visit the Rhode Island Department of Human Services' [SNAP EBT Resource Guide](#).

EPI envisions and fights for a Rhode Island where concrete and consistent investments are made in people. A state where we all have healthcare when we're sick, a safe place to live, childcare that doesn't break the bank, nutritious food to eat, and access to opportunity regardless of race, gender, disability, age, or zip code. To learn more about us, visit www.economicprogressri.org or scan the accompanying QR code.

