

USDA RULE WILL CUT THE POWER OF SNAP IN WASHINGTON

The latest proposed federal action to cut SNAP (“food stamps” or Basic Food) will make it harder for struggling households to pay their utilities bills and put food on their tables. This time, USDA proposes taking away states’ flexibility to calculate a Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) which is used to estimate utilities costs when calculating a household’s SNAP benefits.

WHAT IS THE STANDARD UTILITY ALLOWANCE?

- It’s a standardized way to estimate a household’s utility costs when applying for SNAP. It simplifies the paperwork for every SNAP application.
- Washington uses the SUA because:
 - Home heating costs vary throughout the year with the seasons.
 - Utilities may be included in the rent or paid by a landlord.
 - Household utilities are billed by different providers.
 - It cuts down administrative costs & red tape for the state.

THE PROBLEM

The proposed SUA calculation method will be less accurate for capturing local utilities costs:

- Home heating and energy costs vary from state to state (e.g., hot weather in the South = higher cooling costs vs. cold, damp weather in the Pacific Northwest = higher heating costs).
- Energy production methods result in different costs.

UTILITY COSTS



ENERGY



COOLING

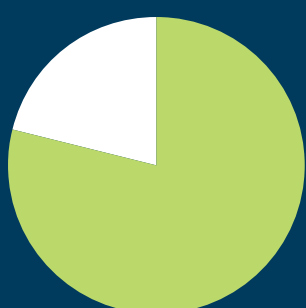


HEATING

IMPACT IN WASHINGTON

Washington’s Standard Utility Allowance is \$430. The proposed national SUA is \$213.

This means that SNAP households in Washington will see a reduction in monthly benefits.



79% of WA’s SNAP households will see a cut to their monthly SNAP benefits.

These households could see on average **a monthly reduction to their SNAP benefits of \$47** (equating to the loss of a week’s worth of food).

\$16.4 million = total loss of SNAP benefits spent in WA.

Every \$1 of SNAP benefits spent generates **\$1.79** in economic activity.

The rule = **a loss of \$29.3 million** to WA’s economy.

HOW TO HELP

Submit your public comment by **December 2**. For more info, visit northwestharvest.org/save-snap.