

GNAP (Georgia Nutrition Assistance Program) Talking Points

GENERAL TALKING POINTS

- The GNAP program has operated for the past sixteen fiscal years under the Georgia Dept of Human Services (DHS) in contractual agreement with the Atlanta Community Food Bank. The Chattanooga Area Food Bank has partnered with the Atlanta Community Food Bank (ACFB) as a subcontractor for GNAP since 2016.
- GNAP funds are used to help all Georgia Food Banks purchase nutritious food to provide to eligible families with children. Since 2016, the Chattanooga Area Food Bank has distributed 2.24 million pounds of food (equating to over 1.8 million meals) to families with children across all nine counties in our NWGA service area. About half (49%) of this food is distributed through school-based programs and the rest through community and mobile food pantries.
- In June 2022, DHS notified the Georgia Food Banks of a 2020 TANF rule change that would require the food banks and our Community Partners to collect specific information, including social security numbers and process them through the Income Eligibility Verification System (IEVS), to be in compliance. **These requirements are problematic and unrealistic.**

DETAILED TALKING POINTS

- 90% of our pantries are volunteer-based organizations and could not realistically enforce required tracking, income verification, time limits or any of these proposed changes.
- It is very concerning that volunteers would have access to thousands of client social security numbers.
- Rising inflation is causing record high demand at CAFB & our Community Partners. These proposed changes to GNAP would have a devastating impact on the communities we serve and to the children & their families that reside in them.
- These changes would add a huge administrative burden onto nonprofits, that are already strapped and serving more than they can handle, that distribute GNAP foods.
- One benefit of GNAP is to provide emergency food assistance. Anytime a child or a family with children do not have enough to eat to live and thrive IS AN EMERGENCY. **It is our position that time limits and tracking will be detrimental to the health of our children.**
- The implications of these proposed changes will be felt statewide and **every child and their family that needs food assistance will suffer.**

CALL TO ACTION – PLEASE CONTACT YOUR INFLUENCERS

The rule finalized June 2020 requires TANF programs that provide both "assistance" and any other type of benefits (like the GNAP Program) to use the federal government's IEVS Income Eligibility Verification System IF the program restricts eligibility to a certain income. In the past, only "assistance" required IEVS.

***The GA DHS position at this time is that food banks will have to demonstrate that we are IEVS Compliant.

ASK THEM TO SUPPORT OUR PROPOSAL – We request that GA DHS remove the income limits on GNAP to solve this problem. Any household with children suffering an acute emergency needing emergency food assistance would be eligible for GNAP foods.

- **Eliminate the income and income verification requirement**
- **Eliminate the requirement to collect social security numbers**

This contract is set to end September 30th and will leave an estimated \$60M gap in annual hunger relief efforts across Georgia that the eight food banks cannot fill.