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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 24, 2025

AG Kaul and Coalition Seek Answers from Trump Administration on SNAP Funding Due to Lapse in One Week

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul and 22 other attorneys general today sent a [letter](#) to the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Acting Associate Administrator for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) seeking additional information on how USDA plans to proceed after it alerted states that SNAP funding may lapse amid the ongoing federal government shutdown. The letter also details the serious harm that could result for children, seniors, and veterans who rely on food assistance.

On October 10, 2025, USDA issued a letter to all state agencies and state agency directors that administer the SNAP program. The letter indicated that “if the current lapse in appropriations continues, there will be insufficient funds to pay full November SNAP benefits for approximately 42 million individuals across the Nation.” The letter also “direct[ed] States to hold their November issuance files and delay transmission to State [benefit] vendors until further notice,” including “on-going SNAP benefits and daily files.”

In other words, USDA prohibited states like Wisconsin from sending already calculated November allotments to benefit vendors for processing. USDA does have some authority to reduce SNAP benefits or even suspend or cancel them under certain circumstances. However, USDA’s October 10 letter does not indicate that any of the legal requirements to do so have been met.

In addition, USDA appears to have at least \$6 billion in SNAP contingency reserve funds that Congress appropriated for emergency situations like this. The attorneys general argue the federal government should use those funds to continue providing SNAP benefits rather than direct states to suspend already-calculated allotments.

Furthermore, USDA has access to Section 32 funds that could also be used to provide SNAP benefits during the ongoing shutdown.

The attorneys general further argue that if carried out, USDA's October 10 directive will harm millions of Americans and could cause significant hardship for the 42 million Americans who depend on SNAP to feed themselves and their families. Even a temporary delay, which now appears inevitable, will have devastating effects on the American public and the national economy.

Nationwide, nearly 40% of SNAP recipients in FY 2023 were children ages 0-17, and adults ages 60 and older made up another nearly 20%.

In Wisconsin, nearly 19,000 veterans in Wisconsin have relied on SNAP benefits in recent years. About 1 in 8 Wisconsin residents received SNAP food assistance in 2024. Nearly 60% percent of SNAP participants in Wisconsin are in families with children, more than 36% are in families with members who are older adults or are disabled, and nearly 45% are in working families.

The letter sent by the attorneys general asks USDA to answer the following critical questions by October 27, 2025:

- Does USDA/FNS have contingency funds left over from prior Congressional appropriations? If so, what is the total of those contingency funds?
- Does USDA/FNS have access to any other sources of available funds to pay benefits and administrative costs associated with issuing those benefits?
- Does USDA/FNS intend to use such funds to furnish SNAP benefits, even at a reduced level? If not, why not? And if so, how does the agency intend to execute that plan, and when would States be expected to send their benefit issuance files?
- Assuming USDA/FNS has contingency funds, on what grounds did the agency direct States to "hold" November files, rather than reducing allotments consistent with available funds?
- Should States treat the October 10 letter as a "suspension" of benefits or a "cancellation" of benefits under 7 C.F.R. § 271.7, or neither?

Attorney General Kaul was joined in sending this letter by the attorneys general of Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawai'i, Connecticut, Illinois, Delaware, Maine, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Mexico, Michigan, New York, Minnesota, North Carolina, Nevada, Oregon, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Washington.