

The 2025 Government Shutdown: What's at Stake and What's Next for Food, Nutrition, and Public Health Advocates

October 30th, 2025

Philip Kahn-Pauli

Director of Legislative
Affairs, CSPI

Sarah Sorscher, JD, MPH

Director of Regulatory
Affairs, CSPI

Nell Menefee-Libey

Senior Public Policy
Manager, National WIC
Association

Gina Plata-Nino, JD

Interim SNAP Director,
Food Research & Action
Center (FRAC)



Accessibility, Tech, and Logistics

- You can access closed captions at the bottom bar of your screen; AI companion is enabled.
- Please ask questions for the presenters using the Q&A function.
- The webinar recording will be available afterwards.
- Please listen and engage respectfully.

Outline

- **Background on the Current Shutdown**
 - Moderator: Philip Kahn-Pauli, CSPI
- **Impact and Status of SNAP**
 - Gina Plata-Nino, JD, The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)
- **Impact and Status of WIC**
 - Nell Menefee-Libey, National WIC Association (NWA)
- **Food Safety Impacts**
 - Sarah Sorscher, CSPI
- **Audience Questions + Recommended Advocacy Actions**

So...why is the government shutdown?



Image Credit: CSPI Comms Team

Today is day 30 of the 2025 government shutdown.

This is now the second longest shutdown in U.S. History

What happens during a government shutdown?

What happens during a government shutdown?

- Federal Government services are delayed or shutdown.
- Non-essential Federal employees are furloughed while "essential workers" work without pay.
- Projects that depend on federal money are delayed or cancelled.

How is **this** shutdown different from other shutdowns?

- Federal workers being fired and potentially denied back pay.
- No SNAP Benefits in November...



Image Credit: shutterstock.com

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)



<https://frac.org/>

- What is happening with SNAP benefits?
- Why aren't SNAP beneficiaries getting their benefits on Nov 1?
- Why is USDA doing this?
- Can't people just go to food banks instead?
- What about Congress? Is Congress going to do something about SNAP?
 - Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO) has introduced a [bill](#) to pay for SNAP in November. 10 GOP co-sponsors now but leadership has said NO on a floor vote for now.
 - New: Sen. Ben Ray Luján (D-NM) also just introduced a [Democratic](#) counter proposal.
 - The President said what now?
- What else should people know?

The charitable sector can't solve hunger alone.



Image Credit: [Feeding America](#)

SNAP Messaging

- Millions of families rely on SNAP to put food on the table. USDA has the authority to make sure all SNAP benefits go out on time — there's no reason families should go hungry. It's time for action.
- From small towns to big cities, millions of families depend on SNAP. Hunger is preventable, and USDA has the authority to ensure all SNAP benefits continue in a timely manner without interruption.
- SNAP keeps millions fed and communities stable. The authority to sustain the program exists; what is missing is the will to use it. USDA must act now to prevent hunger and deliver all November SNAP benefits on time.
- We are standing with advocates across the country to say that hunger is a policy choice. USDA has the authority to sustain SNAP, just as it has in past shutdowns. Hungry people can't wait.
- USDA can act today to make sure millions of families receive their SNAP benefits on time. Delaying action means children, parents, veterans, people with disabilities, and older adults go without food. There is no reason for families to wait.
- There is no reason November SNAP benefits should be delayed. USDA has the authority to act and prevent hunger. The time to use it is now.
- The Trump administration has found urgency to fund other priorities, but not to protect families' access to food. USDA can and should use its authority to keep SNAP running. Families should not go hungry because of politics.
- Providing nutrition for millions of Americans is not optional. USDA must act immediately to make SNAP a top priority and prevent hunger.

SNAP Messaging

**42 Million
Americans
rely on
SNAP.**

USDA must prevent
benefit delays.

FRAC
Food Research & Action Center

Allowing hunger
to deepen during
a shutdown is
not an
inevitability;
**it is a policy
choice.**

GINA PLATA-NINO, JD, INTERIM DIRECTOR,
SNAP, FOOD RESEARCH & ACTION CENTER

FRAC
Food Research & Action Center

“USDA should utilize its
contingency reserves and
any additional funding
sources to ensure that
benefits are not disrupted.
Time is running out. USDA
must act quickly to
support the power and
promise of SNAP. The
health and strength of our
nation depends on it.”

CRYSTAL FITZSIMONS, PRESIDENT,

FRAC

FRAC
Food Research & Action Center

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

- **Historically, during shutdowns, impacts to WIC have been minimized as much as possible—but this year is more challenging**
- **USDA has used every tool at their disposal to support continued operations:**
 - **\$150m contingency fund**
 - **"Spend forward" funds**
 - **Recovered and reallocated FY25 funds**
 - **\$300m transfer from Sec. 32 ("tariff revenues")**
- **Other funds: infant formula rebates, option to use state funds (reimbursable)**



ThePhoto by PhotoAuthor is licensed under CCYSA.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)



- Haven't yet seen widespread impacts—but WIC urgently needs additional federal resources to prevent further clinic-level disruptions as soon as November 1
 - NWA + partner letter to the White House
- Ultimately, WIC needs to be fully funded for FY26
 - Ensure every eligible individual can be served
 - Protect WIC's evidence-based food package, no cuts
 - NWA Action Alert

For WIC families: check state agency/ WIC clinic website, WIC Shopper app

Food Safety Impacts from the shutdown...



Sarah Sorscher, JD, MPH

Director of Regulatory
Affairs, CSPI

- The two main food safety agencies, FDA and USDA, are both substantially included in the current shutdown and are not funded.
- At USDA, federal meat and poultry inspectors are considered “essential” because animals cannot be slaughtered without an inspector present.
- With 221,620 food facilities and 35,000 produce farms to regulate, a visit from inspectors was already rare prior to the shutdown, and inspectors are not required to be present to produce or process FDA-regulated foods.
 - <https://www.cspi.org/cspi-news/will-food-safety-workers-be-fired-or-lose-pay-during-government-shutdown>

Questions?

Recommended Advocacy Actions

- 1** – Contact your Members of Congress to support critical legislation that funds November SNAP, fully fund WIC, and reverse cuts made to the SNAP program.
- 2** – Tell the Administration that USDA must act immediately to keep SNAP funded through November and protect families from going hungry.
- 3** – Contact your Representatives to return to D.C., work on legislation to extend key ACA tax credits as well as fully funding WIC and other critical nutrition programs that serve millions of Americans.
- 4** – Contact your Senators to extend the expiring Affordable Care Act (ACA) health insurance tax credits and then end the government shutdown.

Advocacy Resources – Take Action!

- **FRAC ACTION NETWORK – <https://frac.org/fan>**
- **NWA ACTION NETWORK – <https://thewichub.org/take-action/>**
- **CSPI ACTION – <https://www.cspi.org/get-involved/take-action>**