



Advisory Council on Child Poverty and Strengthening Families

Policy changes to the Federal SNAP program and their impact on Vermont programs

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Hello. My name is Mary Woodruff and I'm the State Unit on Aging Operations Team Leader at the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living. I manage nutrition and food programs that serve older adults and individuals with disabilities. My community partners in this work include the Area Agencies on Aging, Vermont Center for Independent Living, Vermont Foodbank and Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont.

The current 3SVT caseload is nearly 50% older Vermonters and people with disabilities. The proposed change will impact an estimated 2,385 households with at least one-member age 60 or over or disabled or an estimated 5,009 individuals.

The average monthly benefit for households with a person who has a disability is \$186; households with at least one recipient age 60 or older \$146; and for older Vermonters living alone it's \$141. The loss of this benefit will impact older Vermonters and people with disabilities' ability to have enough food to eat, money to pay for medicine, heat, rent, transportation and other necessities. This will ripple through their lives impacting their ability to maintain their health, manage their chronic disease and live independently. In turn this will affect our economy, healthcare system and communities.

Given the growing number of grandparents raising grandchildren in Vermont, these families will be hit especially hard - the loss of 3SVT benefits plus the loss of school meals. These families already face

significant financial challenges with raising children on limited retirement income and this will only further exacerbate the problem.

For consumers of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation the proposed change will add to the number of barriers to employment they must overcome. Vocational Rehabilitation has expanded its focus in recent years to support students who are transitioning from high school to work. Losing free or reduced priced meals through the school lunch and breakfast programs will place additional barriers to obtaining successful employment for these students.

The loss of 3SVT benefits will further stress our programs and services that support older Vermonters and individuals with disabilities. These programs and services, such as congregate and home delivered meals and case management will not be able to fill the gap and meet the needs that will be created by the proposed rule changes to 3SVT.