

# WISCONSIN PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL

*Assure safe and healthy people by monitoring progress on the state health plan  
and on the readiness for public health emergencies.*



November 11, 2025

## Public Health Council Statement on Food Security Support in the State Budget

The Wisconsin Public Health Council is **writing to emphasize to our state legislators the critical importance of food security**, specifically access to Federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) / FoodShare benefits, in Wisconsin.

The **Wisconsin Public Health Council (PHC) was created in 2003 by the State Legislature for the purpose of advising the Department of Health Services, the Governor, the Legislature, and the public on key public health issues**. The 23-member PHC is made up of Governor-appointed representatives from across the state, including people working in public health and healthcare, not for profits, and other sectors. The PHC is charged with monitoring and providing guidance on progress in implementing Wisconsin's State Health Plan and coordination of responses to public health emergencies. Part of the Council's work includes identifying key issues that impact health outcomes and then objectively advising related to health impacts of State policy and budget decisions.

**Access to adequate food is a major public health concern and a key component of the [Wisconsin State Health Plan](#)**. Recent [research from the Harvard School of Public Health](#) shows that **FoodShare/SNAP reduces food insecurity by 30%**. This means low-income families are better able to afford healthy, nutritious foods, improving diet quality and leading to better overall health outcomes.

**When households lose FoodShare/SNAP benefits, they often must buy cheaper, less nutritious foods, skip meals, or forgo essential medications to pay for groceries**. For example, consider a patient with diabetes who depends on FoodShare/SNAP to purchase food. Without this support, they may lose access to fresh produce and lean proteins which are essential for managing blood sugar and may struggle to afford their medications.

**Cuts to FoodShare/SNAP lead directly to worsening chronic conditions** such as diabetes, increased emergency room visits, and higher healthcare costs. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has found that [reducing food assistance programs results in poorer health outcomes and greater healthcare spending overall](#).<sup>1</sup>

Losing FoodShare/SNAP benefits also **places additional burdens on clinics that serve low-income populations**, which must provide more nutrition counseling, emergency food referrals, and social work support. This can widen health inequities, especially since millions of children and expectant mothers rely on FoodShare/SNAP for their nutritional needs.

**FoodShare/SNAP is a cost-effective public health investment**. It prevents nutritional deficiencies, reduces hospitalizations, and allows households to meet other essential needs like paying for medications

<sup>1</sup> Steven Carlson and Joseph Llobera. (December 14, 2022). Food Assistance. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. [SNAP Is Linked With Improved Health Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs | Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)

and housing. Cutting FoodShare/SNAP ultimately shifts costs onto hospitals, schools, and community organizations to manage crises that arise because food is less accessible.

With the recent temporary pause in FoodShare/SNAP benefits, **up to 700,000 Wisconsin residents—including 420,000 adults and 270,000 children—have been facing increased hardship.** In total, that’s **12% of the Wisconsin state population**, which translates to one in eight adults and one in six children across our state. In Wisconsin, nearly **50% of those enrolled in FoodShare/SNAP are elderly, blind, or disabled.**<sup>23</sup>

Based on the above evidence, the **Public Health Council advises the state legislature to prioritize investments in food security** for all Wisconsinites, ensuring that lapses in Federal support do not impact the health and wellbeing of vulnerable people across our great state of Wisconsin.

Thank you for your consideration,

[The Wisconsin Public Health Council](#)

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<sup>2</sup> *FoodShare: At a glance dashboard - individual summary.* Wisconsin Department of Health Services. (2025, September 23). <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/foodshare/case-summary.htm>

<sup>3</sup> State of Wisconsin Department of Health Services Tony Evers, governor. (2025, April 8). <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p02735-23.pdf>