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LDF Media
212-965-2200 / media@naacpldf.org

LDF Calls on the Trump Administration to Rescind the New Work Requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) calls upon the Trump Administration to rescind the new work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). On Dec. 4, the Trump administration's Secretary of Agriculture, Sonny Perdue, finalized a rule making it more difficult for individuals experiencing economic hardship to obtain food support. Nearly 700,000 adults will lose their SNAP benefits as a result of the new rule. Secretary Perdue justified the [new work requirements](#) for SNAP by [stating](#), "We need to encourage people by giving them a helping hand but not allowing it to become an indefinitely giving hand." Secretary Perdue's suggestion that a policy that restricts food assistance to no more than three months in a three-year period is an indefinitely giving hand is grossly misguided and unfounded.

The individuals who will be most affected by this new rule are among the most destitute in our society. On average, these individuals earn [18 percent of the poverty line](#). One-[fifth](#) of African American households experience food insecurity, and SNAP has been an important program to help alleviate some of that need. Moreover, while African Americans have among the highest rates of food insecurity, the administration's changes to the program will hurt individuals of all races. The Urban Institute estimates that around 140,000 African Americans and [nearly 300,000 white individuals](#) will lose access to SNAP under the new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rule.

"The USDA must immediately rescind the new work requirements for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)," said Lisa Cylar Barrett, LDF's Director of Policy. "This new rule is unnecessary, and threatens to further exacerbate the economic insecurity of thousands of impoverished Americans. It is egregious that the Trump administration is advancing initiatives that will only more readily entrench food insecurity problems in this country – and not help remedy them."

Sadly, this is just one of many detrimental rule changes expected from this administration. [Two additional rule changes](#) that the administration is threatening will deprive an estimated three million people of food assistance and one million children of free or reduced-price school meals. One of proposed rule change seeks to limit how much can be deducted for utility allowances when assessing a household's eligibility for SNAP, and the other prohibits states from making families "categorically eligible" for SNAP if they receive another government benefit – a change which would result in the aforementioned loss of subsidized school lunches for countless children. In October 2019, [LDF wrote a](#)

[letter](#) asking Congress to exercise its oversight power and engage in all appropriate legislative action to ensure that actions by the USDA will not unfairly deprive children of access to meals they need to thrive.

The prior limitations on food assistance already greatly hampered SNAP's ability to decrease food insecurity among impoverished individuals -- and there is no good reason for the additional restrictions the Trump administration has introduced. Indeed, the new and proposed rule changes regarding SNAP will cause serious harm to children, adults and communities throughout the country. Similar changes were rejected by Congress last year in its reauthorization of the Farm Bill. We call on the administration to rescind the rule regarding work requirements and to cancel the other two proposed rules which would limit access to SNAP.

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Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation's first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF's Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.

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