

Ensure Public Benefit Programs Support Postsecondary Education

Basic needs resources should be modernized to better support today's students. Nearly 20 percent of undergraduate students are parents who face higher non-tuition costs than their peers and roughly 23 percent of students experience food insecurity. The OBBBA increased state cost shares for SNAP administration, and for the first time in program history, will require states to pay a portion of SNAP benefits. These changes will make it more difficult for people to access critical food assistance and consequently may increase student food insecurity. Federal leaders should invest in basic needs support for low income, rural, and parenting students to ensure these students can access and complete college.

Today, 35 percent of all enrolled students are considering stopping out, more than half of whom report they cannot afford to pay their bills. Improving student access to public benefits programs and institutional support can help students cover non-tuition costs and stay in school. However, the complex eligibility rules and administrative burdens of public benefits programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidies make it difficult for students to participate.



Congressional Action

- ➔ **Improve postsecondary access for SNAP participants** by amending the Food and Nutrition Act (Farm Bill) to include postsecondary credentials at an institution of higher education in the definition of "Employment and Training" programs. See sample bill text [here](#).
- ➔ **Strengthen support for parents to pursue postsecondary education** by removing restrictions for Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) subsidies and increasing investment in the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program.
- ➔ **Reduce administrative barriers to accessing basic needs support** by directing federal agencies to simplify eligibility, application, and verification requirements for students participating in public benefits programs, and by improving coordination and data sharing between institutions of higher education and public benefits agencies.
- ➔ **Strengthen institutional capacity to address students' basic needs** by supporting campus-based staffing, partnerships, and data systems that help students access food, housing, childcare, and emergency financial assistance while enrolled.
- ➔ **Address student basic needs insecurity by:**
 - Passing the Enhance Access to SNAP Act (EATS Act) ([S.2512/H.R.4797](#)) which would eliminate the student exemptions making it easier for otherwise eligible students to access food assistance;
 - Reintroducing and passing the Basic Assistance for Students in College Act (BASIC Act) ([S.5091/H.R.9669](#), 118th Congress) which would provide institutions of higher education with grants to address students' non-tuition barriers; and
 - Passing the Understanding Student Parents Outcomes Act ([H.R.3944](#)), which would require institutions to collect data on student parents to inform best practices for supporting student parents throughout college.