



**COLORADO**  
Department of Human Services

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## **Federal proposal could remove 33,000 Coloradans from food assistance**

*The result of the USDA's suggested rule change would be increased food insecurity and detrimental health outcomes in Colorado*

**DENVER (July 26, 2019)** – On Monday, July 22, USDA released proposed rules in the Federal Register which would change eligibility guidelines in Food Assistance programs across the nation. Colorado has reviewed the proposed rules and analyzed data to determine the potential impact to Coloradans.

Currently, Colorado serves over 456,000 individuals in Food Assistance (FA) on a yearly basis including impoverished families, elderly, disabled, veterans, children, and people facing crisis. FA has demonstrated strong outcomes in supporting the positive health and well-being of people and has a strong return on investment in local economies. Enacting the proposed rule changes would alter Colorado eligibility guidelines and decrease the number of families served through this program each month. The following table demonstrates the impacts if this policy was enacted for June 2019.

**Coloradans over the 130% of Federal Poverty Line for Gross Income Demonstrated in One Month (June 2019)**

Age 60+, without children in the household :	7,371
Age 18-59, without children in the household :	6,442
All ages, with children in the household :	19,701
<b>Total:</b>	<b>33,514</b>

Review of the data alongside the proposal indicates that the elderly population would experience impacts to eligibility. While the elderly population would not be subject to a change in the gross income test, a net income test and asset limit would now be applied. This has the ability to impact roughly 7,000 elderly persons monthly.

Persons age 18-59 without children in the household who are earning between 130% and 200% of the federal poverty line (between \$16k and \$24k for a household of one) would be eliminated from the program. This would impact roughly 6,500 Coloradans each month.

Families with children in the household earning between 130% and 200% of the federal poverty line (between \$27k and \$42k for a family of three annually) would also be eliminated from the program if the State was unable to provide families at least \$50 of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits on a monthly basis. It is unclear at this time that Colorado has the ability to address this funding and, therefore, these families with children could be eliminated. This equates to roughly 20,000 individuals impacted, 11,000 of which are children.

In total, the rule changes could eliminate roughly 33,000 Coloradans (17,000+ households) on a monthly basis.

Ensuring access to healthy food through SNAP has demonstrated increased high school graduation rates, improved health outcomes resulting in decreased healthcare expenditures, and an effective work support. This change would reduce these positive impacts for thousands of Coloradans. This change would also increase the likelihood of these individuals experiencing further crisis and needing to access other, more costly emergency assistance programs.

Finally, SNAP supports local businesses like grocers, ranches and farms; this reduction in benefits would have an \$1.75 million dollar negative impact on Colorado economies on a monthly basis (17,872 households x \$57.98 average benefit X 1.7 return on investment) and \$21 million annually.

The public has 60 days to comment on the proposed rule change; the deadline for public comment submission is Sept. 23, 2019. You can comment by visiting [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov).

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