

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE:

Yes 05/24/2022
06/28/2023

VETO MESSAGE:

No

GOVERNOR'S PRESS RELEASE ON SIGNING:

Yes

FOLLOWING WERE PRINTED:

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REPORTS:

No

HEARINGS:

No

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES:

No

CL/JA

P.L. 2023, CHAPTER 145, *approved August 17, 2023*
Assembly, No. 1715 (*Second Reprint*)

1 AN ACT concerning the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition
2 Assistance Program certification period and supplementing Title
3 44 of the Revised Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. a. The Commissioner of Human Services shall establish a
9 standard certification period of ¹not less¹ ²than² 12 months within
10 SNAP, except that the certification period shall be ¹not less than¹
11 24 months if all adult household members are elderly or disabled
12 provided that all certified households shall have contact with a State
13 SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months. ¹These
14 certification periods shall not apply to initial certification periods
15 for expedited benefit issuance ² [. Telephone contact shall be
16 sufficient to comply with the provisions of this subsection] or if a
17 shorter certification period is necessary to align with the
18 certification period of another program or to ensure the proper
19 issuance of benefits ² .¹

20 b. The Commissioner shall apply to the Food and Nutrition
21 Service within the United States Department of Agriculture for any
22 necessary waivers or approvals to implement the provisions of this
23 section.

24 c. As used in this section:

25 “Certification period” means the period for which households
26 shall be eligible to receive SNAP benefits.

27 “Elderly or disabled” means the same as defined in section 3 of
28 the federal “Food and Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246
29 (7 U.S.C. s.2012).

30 “SNAP” means the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition
31 Assistance Program, established pursuant to the federal “Food and
32 Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).

33
34 2. The Commissioner of Human Services shall adopt rules and
35 regulations, pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,”
36 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), as may be necessary to
37 implement the provisions of this act.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:

¹Assembly AHU committee amendments adopted March 10, 2022.

²Senate SBA committee amendments adopted June 20, 2023.

1 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

2

3

4

5

6 Requires standard certification period of 12 and 24 months,
7 under certain circumstances, within SNAP.

ASSEMBLY, No. 1715

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2022 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman SHANIQUE SPEIGHT

District 29 (Essex)

Assemblywoman ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

SYNOPSIS

Requires standard certification period of 12 and 24 months, under certain circumstances, within SNAP.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT concerning the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition
2 Assistance Program certification period and supplementing Title
3 44 of the Revised Statutes.
4

5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:
7

8 1. a. The Commissioner of Human Services shall establish a
9 standard certification period of 12 months within SNAP, except that
10 the certification period shall be 24 months if all adult household
11 members are elderly or disabled provided that all certified
12 households shall have contact with a State SNAP administering
13 agency at least once every 12 months.

14 b. The Commissioner shall apply to the Food and Nutrition
15 Service within the United States Department of Agriculture for any
16 necessary waivers or approvals to implement the provisions of this
17 section.

18 c. As used in this section:

19 "Certification period" means the period for which households
20 shall be eligible to receive SNAP benefits.

21 "Elderly or disabled" means the same as defined in section 3 of
22 the federal "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.110-246 (7
23 U.S.C. s.2012).

24 "SNAP" means the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition
25 Assistance Program, established pursuant to the federal "Food and
26 Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).
27

28 2. The Commissioner of Human Services shall adopt rules and
29 regulations, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act,"
30 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), as may be necessary to
31 implement the provisions of this act.
32

33 3. This act shall take effect immediately.
34
35

36 STATEMENT
37

38 This bill requires a standard certification period of 12 and 24
39 months, under certain circumstances, within the New Jersey
40 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In doing so,
41 this bill provides for the longest certification periods allowed under
42 federal regulation. SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp
43 Program, is a nutrition assistance program that serves as a safety net
44 for low-income households. The certification period is the period
45 for which households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits.
46 Households may receive benefits beyond the certification period;
47 however, the SNAP recipient must first submit certain
48 documentation to a State administering agency to demonstrate

1 eligibility. It is the sponsor's goal that standardizing the
2 certification period to the maximum length allowed will ease some
3 of the administrative burden on SNAP recipients imposed by the
4 certification process.

5 Currently, pursuant to N.J.A.C.10:87-6.20, county welfare
6 agencies (CWAs), the administering agencies for SNAP, are
7 required to certify each eligible household for a definite period of
8 time that cannot exceed 12 month, except for households in which
9 all adult members are elderly or disabled, which are to be certified
10 for up to 24 months with at least one CWA contact every 12
11 months. As such, New Jersey CWAs issue four, six, 12, and 24-
12 month certification periods.

13 Under the bill, the Commissioner of Human Services is directed
14 to establish a standard certification period of 12 months within
15 SNAP, except that the certification period shall be 24 months if all
16 adult household members are elderly or disabled provided that all
17 certified households shall have contact with a State SNAP
18 administering agency at least once every 12 months. As defined
19 under the bill, elderly or disabled means the same as defined in the
20 "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011
21 et seq.), the enabling federal legislation for SNAP. Generally,
22 elderly and disabled includes an individual who is 60 years of age
23 or older; receives supplemental security income benefits or some
24 other federally or State administered supplemental assistance; or
25 receives Social Security disability insurance benefits.

ASSEMBLY HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 1715

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 10, 2022

The Assembly Human Services Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 1715.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires a standard certification period of not less than 12 and not less than 24 months, under certain circumstances, within the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In doing so, this bill provides for the longest certification periods allowed under federal regulation. SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is a nutrition assistance program that serves as a safety net for low-income households. The certification period is the period for which households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Households may receive benefits beyond the certification period; however, the SNAP recipient must first submit certain documentation to a State administering agency to demonstrate eligibility.

Currently, pursuant to N.J.A.C.10:87-6.20, county welfare agencies (CWAs), the administering agencies for SNAP, are required to certify each eligible household for a definite period of time that cannot exceed 12 month, except for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, which are to be certified for up to 24 months with at least one CWA contact every 12 months. As such, New Jersey CWAs issue four, six, 12, and 24-month certification periods.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Human Services is directed to establish a standard certification period of not less than 12 months within SNAP, except that the certification period shall not be less 24 months if all adult household members are elderly or disabled provided that all certified households shall have contact with a State SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months. These certification periods are not to apply to initial certification periods for expedited benefit issuance. Under the bill, telephone contact is sufficient to comply with the provisions regarding contact with a State SNAP administering agency. As defined under the bill, “elderly or disabled” means the same as defined in the “Food and Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.), the enabling federal legislation for SNAP. Generally, “elderly and disabled” includes an individual who is 60

years of age or older; receives supplemental security income benefits or some other federally or State administered supplemental assistance; or receives Social Security disability insurance benefits.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2022-2023 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments specify that the Commissioner of Human Services establish a standard certification period of not less than 12 and not less than 24 months, under certain circumstances and that the certification periods are not to apply to initial certification periods for expedited benefit issuance.

The committee amended the bill to add language expressly providing that telephone contact is sufficient to comply with the provisions regarding contact with a State SNAP administering agency.

ASSEMBLY APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1715

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 18, 2023

The Assembly Appropriations Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 1715 (1R).

This bill requires a standard certification period of not less than 12 and not less than 24 months, under certain circumstances, within the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In doing so, this bill provides for the longest certification periods allowed under federal regulation. SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is a nutrition assistance program that serves as a safety net for low-income households. The certification period is the period for which households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Households may receive benefits beyond the certification period; however, the SNAP recipient must first submit certain documentation to a State administering agency to demonstrate eligibility.

Currently, pursuant to N.J.A.C.10:87-6.20, county welfare agencies (CWAs), the administering agencies for SNAP, are required to certify each eligible household for a definite period of time that cannot exceed 12 month, except for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, which are to be certified for up to 24 months with at least one CWA contact every 12 months. As such, New Jersey CWAs issue four, six, 12, and 24-month certification periods.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Human Services is directed to establish a standard certification period of not less than 12 months within SNAP, except that the certification period shall not be less 24 months if all adult household members are elderly or disabled provided that all certified households shall have contact with a State SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months. These certification periods are not to apply to initial certification periods for expedited benefit issuance. Under the bill, telephone contact is sufficient to comply with the provisions regarding contact with a State SNAP administering agency. As defined under the bill, “elderly or disabled” means the same as defined in the “Food and Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.), the enabling federal legislation for SNAP. Generally, “elderly and disabled” includes an individual who is 60

years of age or older; receives supplemental security income benefits or some other federally or State administered supplemental assistance; or receives Social Security disability insurance benefits.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes that the State and county governments will experience an indeterminate decrease in expenditures under the bill, to the extent that the bill's provisions result in the Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services and CWAs conducting less frequent certifications for certain SNAP enrollees, thereby reducing administrative costs. As the federal government shares all administrative expenses of the program with the State, the bill may also result in a decrease in federal SNAP revenue.

While lengthening certification periods has been demonstrated to increase SNAP participation rates, any increase in SNAP benefits under the bill due to increased caseload numbers would not have any fiscal impact on the State, as SNAP benefits are paid directly from federal funds.

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1715

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 20, 2023

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Assembly Bill No. 1715 (1R).

As amended, this bill requires a standard certification period of not less than 12 and not less than 24 months, under certain circumstances, within the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In doing so, this bill provides for the longest certification periods allowed under federal regulation. SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is a nutrition assistance program that serves as a safety net for low-income households. The certification period is the period for which households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Households may receive benefits beyond the certification period; however, the SNAP recipient must first submit certain documentation to a State administering agency to demonstrate eligibility.

Currently, pursuant to N.J.A.C.10:87-6.20, county welfare agencies (CWAs), the administering agencies for SNAP, are required to certify each eligible household for a definite period of time that cannot exceed 12 month, except for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, which are to be certified for up to 24 months with at least one CWA contact every 12 months. As such, New Jersey CWAs issue four, six, 12, and 24-month certification periods.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Human Services is directed to establish a standard certification period of not less than 12 months within SNAP, except that the certification period may not be less 24 months if all adult household members are elderly or disabled, provided that all certified households have contact with a State SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months. These certification periods do not apply to initial certification periods for expedited benefit issuance or if a shorter certification period is necessary to align with the certification period of another program or to ensure the proper issuance of benefits.

As defined under the bill, “elderly or disabled” means the same as

defined in the “Food and Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.), the enabling federal legislation for SNAP. Generally, “elderly and disabled” includes an individual who is 60 years of age or older; receives supplemental security income benefits or some other federally or State administered supplemental assistance; or receives Social Security disability insurance benefits.

As reported by the committee with amendments, Assembly Bill No. 1715 (1R) is identical to Senate Bill No. 1713 (1R), which was also reported by the committee on this date.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments add language providing that the standard certification periods established under the bill may not apply if a shorter certification period is needed to align with the certification period of another program or to ensure the proper issuance of benefits.

The committee amendments remove a provision indicating that telephone contact is sufficient to meet the requirement that households enrolled in SNAP have contact with the State SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months.

The committee amendments make a technical change to add a missing “than” to the phrase “not less than” when referring to certain time periods under the bill.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Fiscal information for this bill is currently unavailable.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1715

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: MARCH 21, 2022

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Requires standard certification period of 12 and 24 months, under certain circumstances, within SNAP.
- Type of Impact:** State expenditure and revenue decrease. County expenditure decrease.
- Agencies Affected:** Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services; County welfare agencies.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>One-Time</u>
State Expenditure Decrease	Indeterminate
County Expenditure Decrease	Indeterminate
State Revenue Decrease	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes the State and county governments will experience an indeterminate decrease in expenditures under the bill, to the extent that the bill's provisions result in the Division of Family Development (DFD) in the Department of Human Services (DHS) and county welfare agencies (CWAs) conducting less frequent certifications for certain SNAP enrollees, thereby reducing administrative costs. As the federal government shares all administrative expenses of the program with the State, the bill may also result in a decrease in federal SNAP revenue.
- While lengthening certification periods has been demonstrated to increase SNAP participation rates, any increase in SNAP benefits under the bill due to increased caseload numbers would not have any fiscal impact on the State, as SNAP benefits are paid directly from federal funds.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to establish a standard certification period of not less than 12 months within SNAP. The bill provides an exception for adult-only

households in which all members are elderly or disabled. Under this scenario, the department is to establish a certification period of not less than 24 months, provided that such households are to have contact with a State SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months. These certification periods are not to apply to initial certification periods or expedited benefit issuance.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The CWAs in New Jersey, under the supervision of the DFD, administer SNAP. Therefore, the OLS concludes the State and county governments will experience an indeterminate decrease in expenditures under the bill, to the extent that the bill's provisions result in the DFD and CWAs conducting less frequent certifications for certain SNAP enrollees, thereby reducing administrative costs. As the federal government shares all administrative expenses of the program with the State, the bill may also result in a decrease in federal SNAP revenue.

Currently, pursuant to New Jersey Administrative Code, CWAs are required to certify each eligible household for a definite period of time that cannot exceed 12 month, except for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, which are to be certified for up to 24 months with at least one CWA contact every 12 months. As such, New Jersey CWAs issue four, six, 12, and 24-month certification periods. The certification period is the period for which households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Households may receive benefits beyond the certification period; however, the SNAP recipient must first submit certain documentation to a State administering agency to demonstrate eligibility.

As this bill would lengthen the certification period for certain non-elderly, non-disabled households, CWAs and the department will be required to process fewer applications for certification. This estimate assumes that the resulting cost savings under the bill will likely be minimal and derived from materials and services, such as paper, postage, and technology support, rather than reductions to staff. The OLS cannot determine the number of non-elderly, non-disabled SNAP beneficiaries who currently are certified at a more frequent interval than 12-months, but notes that in January 2022, of all 902,452 SNAP enrollees, 508,789, or 56 percent, were non-elderly and non-disabled.

While lengthening certification periods has been demonstrated to increase SNAP participation rates, any increase in SNAP benefits under the bill due to increased caseload numbers would not have any fiscal impact on the State, as SNAP benefits are paid directly from federal funds.

Section: Human Services

Analyst: Sarah Schmidt
Senior Research Analyst

Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[Second Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1715

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JUNE 28, 2023

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Requires standard certification period of 12 and 24 months, under certain circumstances, within SNAP.
- Type of Impact:** Countervailing impact on State and county expenditures and revenue.
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Human Services; County welfare agencies.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Cost Impact	Indeterminate
County Cost Impact	Indeterminate
State Revenue Impact	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes the State and county governments will experience an indeterminate decrease in expenditures under the bill, to the extent that the bill's provisions result in the Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services and county welfare agencies conducting less frequent certifications for certain Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollees, thereby reducing administrative costs.
- Conversely, the department may realize an indeterminate increase in administrative costs under the bill due to growth in the payments paid to the electronic benefits transfer card vendor as a function of certain SNAP enrollees maintaining benefits under the longer certification periods, instead of losing benefits absent the bill.
- As the federal government shares all administrative expenses of the program with the State, both of these impacts will have identical impacts on State revenue in the form of federal SNAP administrative cost-sharing.

- While lengthening certification periods has been demonstrated to increase SNAP participation rates, any increase in SNAP benefits under the bill due to increased caseload numbers would not have any fiscal impact on the State, as SNAP benefits are paid directly from federal funds.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires the Department of Human Services to establish a standard certification period of not less than 12 months within SNAP. The bill provides an exception for adult-only households in which all members are elderly or disabled. Under this scenario, the department is to establish a certification period of not less than 24 months, provided that such households are to have contact with a State SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months. These certification periods are not to apply to initial certification periods for expedited benefit issuance or if a shorter certification period is necessary to align with the certification periods of another program or to ensure the proper issuance of benefits.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS concludes the State and county governments will experience an indeterminate decrease in expenditures under the bill, to the extent that the bill's provisions result in the Division of Family Development and county welfare agencies conducting less frequent certifications for certain SNAP enrollees, thereby reducing administrative costs. Conversely, the department may realize an indeterminate increase in administrative costs under the bill due to growth in the payments paid to the electronic benefits transfer card vendor as a function of certain SNAP enrollees maintaining benefits under the longer certification periods, instead of losing benefits absent the bill. As the federal government shares all administrative expenses of the program with the State, both of these impacts will have identical impacts on State revenue in the form of federal SNAP administrative cost-sharing.

Currently, pursuant to the New Jersey Administrative Code, county welfare agencies are required to certify each eligible household for a definite period of time that cannot exceed 12 months, except for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, which are to be certified for up to 24 months with at least one county welfare agency contact every 12 months. As such, New Jersey county welfare agencies issue four, six, 12, and 24-month certification periods. The certification period is the period for which households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Households may receive benefits beyond the certification period; however, the SNAP recipient must first submit certain documentation to a State administering agency to demonstrate eligibility.

As this bill would lengthen the certification period for certain non-elderly, non-disabled households, county welfare agencies and the department will be required to process fewer applications for certification. This estimate assumes that the resulting cost savings under the bill will likely be minimal and derived from materials and services, such as paper, postage, and

technology support, rather than reductions to staff. The OLS cannot determine the number of non-elderly, non-disabled SNAP beneficiaries who currently are certified at a more frequent interval than 12-months, but notes that in March 2023, of all 833,744 SNAP enrollees, 450,577, or 54 percent, were non-elderly and non-disabled.

Conversely, the OLS estimates that the department may experience an increase in administrative costs in the form of capitation payments made to the State's existing vendor, Conduent State and Local Solutions, for administering the electronic benefit transfer card that each SNAP beneficiary is issued to access benefits. As of September 2020, the most recent data available, the State paid Conduent \$0.65 per SNAP beneficiary per month for these services. Under the bill, these capitation payments would increase for those SNAP beneficiaries that would be disenrolled under the existing more frequent certification periods and who under the bill would be able to continue receiving benefits until recertification occurred. While this impact is unknown, the OLS estimates that the cost incurred by the department for 10,000 beneficiaries for a month under this impact would be \$6,500, with the federal government providing funds for half, or \$3,250, of this cost.

While lengthening certification periods has been demonstrated to increase SNAP participation rates, any increase in SNAP benefits under the bill due to increased caseload numbers would not have any fiscal impact on the State, as SNAP benefits are paid directly from federal funds.

Section: Human Services

*Analyst: Sarah Schmidt
Lead Research Analyst*

*Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

SENATE, No. 1713

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 28, 2022

Sponsored by:

Senator NELLIE POU

District 35 (Bergen and Passaic)

Senator M. TERESA RUIZ

District 29 (Essex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires standard certification period of 12 and 24 months, under certain circumstances, within SNAP.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 2/28/2022)

1 AN ACT concerning the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition
2 Assistance Program certification period and supplementing Title
3 44 of the Revised Statutes.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

7
8 1. a. The Commissioner of Human Services shall establish a
9 standard certification period of 12 months within SNAP, except that
10 the certification period shall be 24 months if all adult household
11 members are elderly or disabled provided that all certified
12 households shall have contact with a State SNAP administering
13 agency at least once every 12 months. Telephone contact shall be
14 sufficient to comply with the provisions of this subsection.

15 b. The Commissioner shall apply to the Food and Nutrition
16 Service within the United States Department of Agriculture for any
17 necessary waivers or approvals to implement the provisions of this
18 section.

19 c. As used in this section:

20 “Certification period” means the period for which households
21 shall be eligible to receive SNAP benefits.

22 “Elderly or disabled” means the same as defined in section 3 of
23 the federal “Food and Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7
24 U.S.C. s.2012).

25 “SNAP” means the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition
26 Assistance Program, established pursuant to the federal “Food and
27 Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.).

28
29 2. The Commissioner of Human Services shall adopt rules and
30 regulations, pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,”
31 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), as may be necessary to
32 implement the provisions of this act.

33
34 3. This act shall take effect immediately.

35

36

37

STATEMENT

38
39 This bill requires a standard certification period of 12 and 24
40 months, under certain circumstances, within the New Jersey
41 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In doing so,
42 this bill provides for the longest certification periods allowed under
43 federal regulation. SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp
44 Program, is a nutrition assistance program that serves as a safety net
45 for low-income households. The certification period is the period for
46 which households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Households
47 may receive benefits beyond the certification period; however, the
48 SNAP recipient must first submit certain documentation to a State

S1713 POU, RUIZ

1 administering agency to demonstrate eligibility. It is the sponsor's
2 goal that standardizing the certification period to the maximum
3 length allowed will ease some of the administrative burden on SNAP
4 recipients imposed by the certification process.

5 Currently, pursuant to N.J.A.C.10:87-6.20, county welfare
6 agencies (CWAs), the administering agencies for SNAP, are required
7 to certify each eligible household for a definite period of time that
8 cannot exceed 12 month, except for households in which all adult
9 members are elderly or disabled, which are to be certified for up to
10 24 months with at least one CWA contact every 12 months. As such,
11 New Jersey CWAs issue four, six, 12, and 24-month certification
12 periods.

13 Under the bill, the Commissioner of Human Services is directed
14 to establish a standard certification period of 12 months within
15 SNAP, except that the certification period shall be 24 months if all
16 adult household members are elderly or disabled provided that all
17 certified households shall have contact with a State SNAP
18 administering agency at least once every 12 months. The bill clarifies
19 that telephone contact is sufficient to comply with this provision. As
20 defined under the bill, elderly or disabled means the same as defined
21 in the "Food and Nutrition Act of 2008," Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C.
22 s.2011 et seq.), the enabling federal legislation for SNAP. Generally,
23 elderly and disabled includes an individual who is 60 years of age or
24 older; receives supplemental security income benefits or some other
25 federally or State administered supplemental assistance; or receives
26 Social Security disability insurance benefits.

SENATE HEALTH, HUMAN SERVICES AND SENIOR
CITIZENS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO
SENATE, No. 1713

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 12, 2022

The Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 1713.

As amended by the committee, this bill requires a standard certification period of not less than 12 and not less than 24 months, under certain circumstances, within the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In doing so, this bill provides for the longest certification periods allowed under federal regulation. SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is a nutrition assistance program that serves as a safety net for low-income households. The certification period is the period for which households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Households may receive benefits beyond the certification period; however, the SNAP recipient is required to first submit certain documentation to a State administering agency to demonstrate eligibility.

Currently, pursuant to N.J.A.C.10:87-6.20, county welfare agencies (CWAs), the administering agencies for SNAP, are required to certify each eligible household for a definite period of time that cannot exceed 12 months, except for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, which are to be certified for up to 24 months with at least one CWA contact every 12 months. As such, New Jersey CWAs issue four, six, 12, and 24-month certification periods.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Human Services is directed to establish a standard certification period of not less than 12 months within SNAP, except that the certification period will be not less than 24 months if all adult household members are elderly or disabled provided that all certified households have contact with a State SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months. As amended, these certification periods are not to apply to initial certification periods for expedited benefit issuance. Under the bill, telephone contact is sufficient to comply with the provisions regarding contact with a State SNAP administering agency. As defined under the bill, “elderly or disabled” means the same as that

term is defined in the “Food and Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.), the enabling federal legislation for SNAP. Generally, elderly and disabled includes an individual who is 60 years of age or older; receives supplemental security income benefits or some other federally or State administered supplemental assistance; or receives Social Security disability insurance benefits.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments specify that the Commissioner of Human Services is to establish standard certification periods of not less than 12 months and not less than 24 months, under certain circumstances, and that these certification periods are not to apply to initial certification periods for expedited benefit issuance.

SENATE BUDGET AND APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 1713

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 20, 2023

The Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 1713 (1R).

As amended, this bill requires a standard certification period of not less than 12 and not less than 24 months, under certain circumstances, within the New Jersey Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In doing so, this bill provides for the longest certification periods allowed under federal regulation. SNAP, formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, is a nutrition assistance program that serves as a safety net for low-income households. The certification period is the period for which households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Households may receive benefits beyond the certification period; however, the SNAP recipient must first submit certain documentation to a State administering agency to demonstrate eligibility.

Currently, pursuant to N.J.A.C.10:87-6.20, county welfare agencies (CWAs), the administering agencies for SNAP, are required to certify each eligible household for a definite period of time that cannot exceed 12 month, except for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, which are to be certified for up to 24 months with at least one CWA contact every 12 months. As such, New Jersey CWAs issue four, six, 12, and 24-month certification periods.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Human Services is directed to establish a standard certification period of not less than 12 months within SNAP, except that the certification period may not be less 24 months if all adult household members are elderly or disabled, provided that all certified households have contact with a State SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months. These certification periods do not apply to initial certification periods for expedited benefit issuance or if a shorter certification period is necessary to align with the certification period of another program or to ensure the proper issuance of benefits.

As defined under the bill, “elderly or disabled” means the same as

defined in the “Food and Nutrition Act of 2008,” Pub.L.110-246 (7 U.S.C. s.2011 et seq.), the enabling federal legislation for SNAP. Generally, “elderly and disabled” includes an individual who is 60 years of age or older; receives supplemental security income benefits or some other federally or State administered supplemental assistance; or receives Social Security disability insurance benefits.

As reported by the committee with amendments, Senate Bill No. 1713 (1R) is identical to Assembly Bill No. 1715 (1R), which was also reported by the committee on this date, with amendments.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments add language providing that the standard certification periods established under the bill may not apply if a shorter certification period is needed to align with the certification period of another program or to ensure the proper issuance of benefits.

The committee amendments remove a provision indicating that telephone contact is sufficient to meet the requirement that households enrolled in SNAP have contact with the State SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes the State and county governments may experience an indeterminate decrease in expenditures under the bill, as amended, to the extent that the bill’s provisions result in the Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services and county welfare agencies conducting less frequent certifications for certain Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollees, thereby reducing administrative costs. Conversely, the department may realize an indeterminate increase in administrative costs, under the amended bill, due to growth in the payments paid to the electronic benefits transfer card vendor as a function of certain SNAP enrollees maintaining benefits under the longer certification periods, instead of losing benefits absent the bill. As the federal government shares all administrative expenses of the program with the State, both of these impacts will have identical impacts on federal SNAP revenue. The OLS notes that while lengthening certification periods has been demonstrated to increase SNAP participation rates, any increase in SNAP benefits under the bill due to increased caseload numbers would not have any fiscal impact on the State, as SNAP benefits are paid directly from federal funds.

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[First Reprint]

SENATE, No. 1713 STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: MAY 24, 2022

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Requires standard certification period of 12 and 24 months, under certain circumstances, within SNAP.
- Type of Impact:** State expenditure and revenue decrease. County expenditure decrease.
- Agencies Affected:** Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services; County welfare agencies.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>One-Time</u>
State Expenditure Decrease	Indeterminate
County Expenditure Decrease	Indeterminate
State Revenue Decrease	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes the State and county governments will experience an indeterminate decrease in expenditures under the bill, to the extent that the bill's provisions result in the Division of Family Development (DFD) in the Department of Human Services (DHS) and county welfare agencies (CWAs) conducting less frequent certifications for certain SNAP enrollees, thereby reducing administrative costs. As the federal government shares all administrative expenses of the program with the State, the bill may also result in a decrease in federal SNAP revenue.
- While lengthening certification periods has been demonstrated to increase SNAP participation rates, any increase in SNAP benefits under the bill due to increased caseload numbers would not have any fiscal impact on the State, as SNAP benefits are paid directly from federal funds.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires the Commissioner of Human Services to establish a standard certification period of not less than 12 months within SNAP. The bill provides an exception for adult-only

households in which all members are elderly or disabled. Under this scenario, the department is to establish a certification period of not less than 24 months, provided that such households are to have contact with a State SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months. These certification periods are not to apply to initial certification periods or expedited benefit issuance.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The CWAs in New Jersey, under the supervision of the DFD, administer SNAP. Therefore, the OLS concludes the State and county governments will experience an indeterminate decrease in expenditures under the bill, to the extent that the bill's provisions result in the DFD and CWAs conducting less frequent certifications for certain SNAP enrollees, thereby reducing administrative costs. As the federal government shares all administrative expenses of the program with the State, the bill may also result in a decrease in federal SNAP revenue.

Currently, pursuant to New Jersey Administrative Code, CWAs are required to certify each eligible household for a definite period of time that cannot exceed 12 month, except for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, which are to be certified for up to 24 months with at least one CWA contact every 12 months. As such, New Jersey CWAs issue four, six, 12, and 24-month certification periods. The certification period is the period for which households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Households may receive benefits beyond the certification period; however, the SNAP recipient must first submit certain documentation to a State administering agency to demonstrate eligibility.

As this bill would lengthen the certification period for certain non-elderly, non-disabled households, CWAs and the department will be required to process fewer applications for certification. This estimate assumes that the resulting cost savings under the bill will likely be minimal and derived from materials and services, such as paper, postage, and technology support, rather than reductions to staff. The OLS cannot determine the number of non-elderly, non-disabled SNAP beneficiaries who currently are certified at a more frequent interval than 12-months, but notes that in February 2022, of all 888,892 SNAP enrollees, 499,488, or 56 percent, were non-elderly and non-disabled.

While lengthening certification periods has been demonstrated to increase SNAP participation rates, any increase in SNAP benefits under the bill due to increased caseload numbers would not have any fiscal impact on the State, as SNAP benefits are paid directly from federal funds.

Section: Human Services

Analyst: Sarah Schmidt
Senior Research Analyst

Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

LEGISLATIVE FISCAL ESTIMATE

[Second Reprint]

SENATE, No. 1713

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 220th LEGISLATURE

DATED: JUNE 28, 2023

SUMMARY

- Synopsis:** Requires standard certification period of 12 and 24 months, under certain circumstances, within SNAP.
- Type of Impact:** Countervailing impact on State and county expenditures and revenue.
- Agencies Affected:** Department of Human Services; County welfare agencies.

Office of Legislative Services Estimate

Fiscal Impact	<u>Annual</u>
State Cost Impact	Indeterminate
County Cost Impact	Indeterminate
State Revenue Impact	Indeterminate

- The Office of Legislative Services (OLS) concludes the State and county governments will experience an indeterminate decrease in expenditures under the bill, to the extent that the bill's provisions result in the Division of Family Development in the Department of Human Services and county welfare agencies conducting less frequent certifications for certain Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) enrollees, thereby reducing administrative costs.
- Conversely, the department may realize an indeterminate increase in administrative costs under the bill due to growth in the payments paid to the electronic benefits transfer card vendor as a function of certain SNAP enrollees maintaining benefits under the longer certification periods, instead of losing benefits absent the bill.
- As the federal government shares all administrative expenses of the program with the State, both of these impacts will have identical impacts on State revenue in the form of federal SNAP administrative cost-sharing.

- While lengthening certification periods has been demonstrated to increase SNAP participation rates, any increase in SNAP benefits under the bill due to increased caseload numbers would not have any fiscal impact on the State, as SNAP benefits are paid directly from federal funds.

BILL DESCRIPTION

This bill requires the Department of Human Services to establish a standard certification period of not less than 12 months within SNAP. The bill provides an exception for adult-only households in which all members are elderly or disabled. Under this scenario, the department is to establish a certification period of not less than 24 months, provided that such households are to have contact with a State SNAP administering agency at least once every 12 months. These certification periods are not to apply to initial certification periods for expedited benefit issuance or if a shorter certification period is necessary to align with the certification periods of another program or to ensure the proper issuance of benefits.

FISCAL ANALYSIS

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

None received.

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES

The OLS concludes the State and county governments will experience an indeterminate decrease in expenditures under the bill, to the extent that the bill's provisions result in the Division of Family Development and county welfare agencies conducting less frequent certifications for certain SNAP enrollees, thereby reducing administrative costs. Conversely, the department may realize an indeterminate increase in administrative costs under the bill due to growth in the payments paid to the electronic benefits transfer card vendor as a function of certain SNAP enrollees maintaining benefits under the longer certification periods, instead of losing benefits absent the bill. As the federal government shares all administrative expenses of the program with the State, both of these impacts will have identical impacts on State revenue in the form of federal SNAP administrative cost-sharing.

Currently, pursuant to the New Jersey Administrative Code, county welfare agencies are required to certify each eligible household for a definite period of time that cannot exceed 12 months, except for households in which all adult members are elderly or disabled, which are to be certified for up to 24 months with at least one county welfare agency contact every 12 months. As such, New Jersey county welfare agencies issue four, six, 12, and 24-month certification periods. The certification period is the period for which households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. Households may receive benefits beyond the certification period; however, the SNAP recipient must first submit certain documentation to a State administering agency to demonstrate eligibility.

As this bill would lengthen the certification period for certain non-elderly, non-disabled households, county welfare agencies and the department will be required to process fewer applications for certification. This estimate assumes that the resulting cost savings under the bill will likely be minimal and derived from materials and services, such as paper, postage, and technology support, rather than reductions to staff. The OLS cannot determine the number of non-

elderly, non-disabled SNAP beneficiaries who currently are certified at a more frequent interval than 12-months, but notes that in March 2023, of all 833,744 SNAP enrollees, 450,577, or 54 percent, were non-elderly and non-disabled.

Conversely, the OLS estimates that the department may experience an increase in administrative costs in the form of capitation payments made to the State's existing vendor, Conduent State and Local Solutions, for administering the electronic benefit transfer card that each SNAP beneficiary is issued to access benefits. As of September 2020, the most recent data available, the State paid Conduent \$0.65 per SNAP beneficiary per month for these services. Under the bill, these capitation payments would increase for those SNAP beneficiaries that would be disenrolled under the existing more frequent certification periods and who under the bill would be able to continue receiving benefits until recertification occurred. While this impact is unknown, the OLS estimates that the cost incurred by the department for 10,000 beneficiaries for a month under this impact would be \$6,500, with the federal government providing funds for half, or \$3,250, of this cost.

While lengthening certification periods has been demonstrated to increase SNAP participation rates, any increase in SNAP benefits under the bill due to increased caseload numbers would not have any fiscal impact on the State, as SNAP benefits are paid directly from federal funds.

Section: Human Services

*Analyst: Sarah Schmidt
Lead Research Analyst*

*Approved: Thomas Koenig
Legislative Budget and Finance Officer*

This legislative fiscal estimate has been produced by the Office of Legislative Services due to the failure of the Executive Branch to respond to our request for a fiscal note.

This fiscal estimate has been prepared pursuant to P.L.1980, c.67 (C.52:13B-6 et seq.).

Governor Murphy Signs Bill to Ensure Households Receive SNAP Benefits for Maximum Time Allowed Before Needing to Reapply

08/17/2023

TRENTON – To help combat food insecurity in New Jersey, Governor Phil Murphy today signed a bill (A-1715/S-1713) to ensure every household receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits is able to receive those benefits for the longest allowable period of time before needing to apply for recertification.

New Jersey is already a leader in advancing food security and improving access to NJ SNAP, including allowing the longest recertification periods permitted under federal rules. Under this new law, New Jersey is making these certification periods permanent so that NJ SNAP enrollees are able to maintain their benefits for no less than 12 months or a period of no more than 24 months for households in which every adult is elderly and/or disabled – the maximum amount of time permitted under federal regulations.

“By ensuring every eligible household receives their SNAP benefits for the maximum time allowed before needing to have their benefits recertified, we will make it easier for low-income families to access and retain the food assistance they need,” **said Governor Murphy**. “Cutting down on the frequency with which households must reapply for their benefits, we will make life easier for many residents already struggling to make ends meet and help them continue to put food on the table for their families.”

“No one should go hungry. But access to affordable and nutritious food continues to be challenging for many. That is why the Governor, Legislature and Human Services continue to take every step to expand the availability of SNAP food assistance benefits so they go farther and reach more people,” **said Human Services Commissioner Sarah Adelman**. “With today’s signing we are making the process easier so individuals can keep and rely on needed assistance for as long as possible.”

“I continue to be incredibly grateful and inspired by the leadership of Governor Murphy and our partners in the Legislature in the efforts to build a more food secure New Jersey. Being able to recertify is no small feat for families experiencing food insecurity and its many challenges, such as lack of safe, stable, and humane housing,” **said Mark Dinglasan, Executive Director of the NJ Office of the Food Security Advocate**. “Gathering necessary documents, getting access to a computer or a phone, and even getting access to your mail all require more time and support when you are food insecure. Every opportunity and every chance we can provide families to have time to catch their breath, think long-term, and plan is critical and matters so much. At a time when food insecurity is rising in New Jersey, legislation like this matters more than ever.”

The Commissioner will apply for any federal waivers or approvals and adopt any rules and regulations necessary to implement the new law. Exceptions will be permitted for situations in which shorter certification periods are necessary for other programs or for the expedited issuance of initial benefits.

SNAP enrollees will only have to complete the interim report mid-way through their certification period to update their information and/or report any changes. These mid-way checks will help make sure the department has the most up-to-date household information to ensure families receive the maximum benefit for which they are eligible.

This legislation builds on the Administration’s ongoing efforts to address food insecurity throughout the state, including a bill the Governor signed earlier this year to ensure every household in New Jersey would continue to receive at least \$95 in monthly benefits once the federal government’s emergency allotments came to an end.

Sponsors of the legislation include Senator Nellie Pou and Assemblywoman Shanique Speight, as well as Senate Majority Leader Teresa Ruiz and Assembly members Angela McKim, Reginald Atkins, and Annette Quijano.

“No one’s first and biggest challenge on any given day should be how to feed themselves and their family,” **said Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin**. “Today’s action will ease the burden for families and seniors who rely on SNAP and comes a few months after we took action to raise the minimum monthly SNAP benefits. SNAP is proven to reduce food insecurity, and supporting this critical program, we are making a difference for many in our state.”

“More than 800,000 New Jerseyans – including 20 percent of households in Passaic County – rely on SNAP benefits to help put food on the table,” **said Senator Pou**. “This law extends certification periods, which will help ease one burden on low-income families that include children, the elderly and those with disabilities, and allow them to apply for and receive their benefits in a more reasonable timeframe.”

“The current SNAP certification process places a significant administrative burden on New Jersey families,” **said Assemblywoman Speight**. “With this law, we are streamlining and standardizing the process so SNAP recipients know they will be able to put food on the table.”

“Unfortunately, for many families with irregular income the constant need to reapply for SNAP and the frustration of going in and out of the program can make it unreliable,” **said Senate Majority Leader Ruiz**. “By extending the recertification period we can streamline things and ease food security concerns for low-income households around the state.”

“With this law, we are providing the longest certification period allowed under federal regulation to SNAP recipients in New Jersey,” **said Assemblywoman McKnight**. “This means families and senior residents who rely on the SNAP program to meet their nutritional needs will not have to submit paperwork every few months in order to remain certified.”

“This year we’ve increased SNAP benefits and are now making it easier for families and others to take advantage of this important program,” **said Assemblyman Atkins**. “This law shows our commitment to helping those who rely on SNAP to meet their nutritional needs.”

“We need to do everything we can to ensure families and seniors who rely on SNAP benefits are able to receive them in a timely manner,” **said Assemblywoman Quijano**. “Removing the burden of filling out paperwork every few months will be a big benefit for those SNAP recipients.”

“With the signing of this latest food security measure the Governor and the Legislature have made additional progress in their ongoing quest to ameliorate hunger in New Jersey,” **said Dena Mottola Jaborska, Executive Director of New Jersey Citizen Action**. “Inflated food prices are making it more difficult for seniors, people with disabilities, and other New Jersey residents with low incomes to feed their families healthy and nutritious foods. This is an important solution and we applaud Assemblywoman Speight, Senator Pou, our Legislative leaders and the Governor for advancing this bill into law.”

“Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities have high levels of food insecurity due to numerous barriers. By maximizing the federal benefit and establishing the longest certification period allowed under federal regulation, the Murphy Administration and the New Jersey Legislature will have effectively reduced the effect physical and transportation barriers have on people’s ability to access food,” **said Catherine Chin, Executive Director of the Alliance for the Betterment of Citizens with Disabilities (ABCD)**. “We thank Governor Murphy, the Murphy Administration and the NJ Legislature for this and the recent assurance of a minimum of \$95 per month for every household receiving SNAP benefits, included in the FY24 State Budget, which move us forward in our efforts to reduce inequity and expand opportunities.”

“We appreciate the administration’s commitment to improving access to SNAP and support any efforts that make it easier for households dealing with food insecurity to obtain and retain SNAP benefits,” **said Lisa Pitz, Director of Hunger Free New Jersey, a statewide advocacy program of the Center for Food Action**. “The Garden State continues to lead the nation in addressing hunger and food insecurity, and Governor Murphy has been a great champion in this fight.”