

SB 611 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 3/25, 4/1

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure establishes the Food for All Oregonians program in the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) to provide nutrition assistance benefits to individuals who would be eligible for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) but for their immigration status. The measure requires ODHS to convene an advisory group to recommend metrics that improve services for benefits program applicants and recipients.

Detailed Summary:

Section 1

- Establishes the Food for All Oregonians Program in ODHS to provide nutrition assistance to residents under age 26 or over age 55 who would qualify for the federal SNAP but for their immigration status.
- Requires ODHS to utilize existing infrastructure and electronic benefits transfer delivery system to unify application processes for state-funded and federally funded nutrition assistance.
- Requires ODHS to use specified rules and processes for the program that are also currently used for SNAP, except for eligibility or verification requirements related to immigration status.
- Prescribes the following provisions for the program to replace benefits for individuals who would receive SNAP benefits but for their immigration status:
 - Requires that benefit amounts provided to recipient households must be equivalent to amounts provided to a household of the same size that is eligible for SNAP.
 - Specifies that benefit amounts for individuals who are who are excluded from SNAP due to their immigration status, but reside in a household that receives SNAP benefits, must be equivalent to the amount that person would receive if they had not been excluded.
 - Requires that the income and resources of a household member who is ineligible for SNAP be disregarded when determining SNAP benefit amounts to the extent permitted by federal law.
 - Specifies that the total benefit amounts from both programs may not exceed the total standard benefit amount that would be distributed to a household under SNAP.

Section 2

- Declares state policy to treat all Oregonians, regardless of language, with respect, fairness, and dignity.
- Directs ODHS, in collaboration with the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement, to convene an advisory group to provide oversight of SNAP and the Food for All Oregonians Program and recommendations on metrics to improve outcomes for applicants and recipients whose primary language is not English.

Section 3

- Allows an applicant or recipient of SNAP benefits to anonymously file a grievance with ODHS.

Section 4

- Modifies provisions for graduate student workers to access the Food for All Oregonians Program and the SNAP farmer's market and roadside stands program.

Section 5

- Modifies requirements for ODHS rules governing SNAP to align with federal requirements for eligibility and creates an exception for those relating to immigration status for purposes of the Food for All Oregonians

Program.

Section 6

- Prohibits an agency or contractor involved in administering the Food for All Oregonians Program from disclosing information about program applicants and recipients for immigration enforcement purposes.

Section 7

- Makes nonsubstantive conforming amendments.

Section 8

- Requires ODHS to coordinate with the Oregon Health Authority to jointly promote engagement with the Food for All Oregonians Program and the Cover All People program by providing technical assistance and guidance to the authority.

Section 9

- Directs ODHS to implement the program and begin accepting applications by January 1, 2027.

Section 10

- Declares emergency, effective on passage.

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Fiscal impact issued

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#), administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) through the [Oregon Department of Human Services \(ODHS\)](#), provides food benefits and education on food preparation and nutrition to low-income households. Benefits are issued on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, also called an Oregon Trail Card, which is used like a debit card to buy certain food items at authorized venues, including grocery stores and farmer's markets. Eligibility is based mostly on monthly household income, which includes earned income from work, as well as unearned income such as social security, disability, child support and more, and certain assets and resources do not count toward eligibility. In Oregon, eligibility is processed and determined through the [ONE system](#) administered by the Oregon Eligibility Partnership at ODHS.

Under federal law, only [certain categories](#) of non-citizens are eligible for SNAP, and an individual with an immigration status that is not explicitly allowed may be denied eligibility ([7 U.S.C. §2015\(f\)](#)). According to the [National Immigration Law Center](#), five states (California, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, and Washington) currently offer state-funded food assistance programs for noncitizens who are ineligible for SNAP. The Oregon legislature previously considered, but did not enact, [Senate Bill 610 \(2023\)](#), which would have established the Food for All Oregonians program to provide food assistance benefits to individuals who would qualify for SNAP but for their immigration status.