

Basic Needs

MAXIMIZE FEDERAL FOOD AID TO FEED OHIOANS

WILL PETRIK

All Ohioans need access to nutritious food. Every year, the Governor of Ohio has the opportunity to expand the economic security of children, adults, and families by maximizing federal food and nutrition assistance for communities across the state. This brief outlines why food and nutrition assistance is critical for children, adults, and families in Ohio and how the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) time limits work. We find that:

- Time limits prevent people from getting food, leading to more hunger;
- Ohio can strengthen SNAP Employment & Training to help workers secure better jobs;
- Governor DeWine can ensure thousands of Ohioans have access to federal resources to pay for food;
- Maximizing federal food aid benefits Ohio’s economy and Ohioans; and
- Limiting food aid as the Kasich administration did disproportionately excludes urban and black families, leaving the state vulnerable to civil rights litigation.

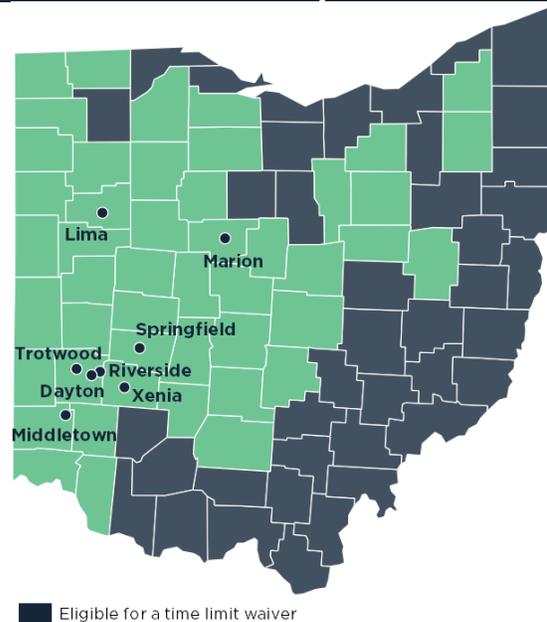
SNAP requires adults between the ages of 18 and 49 who are not disabled and do not have custody of children to work or participate work-related activities for a minimum of 80 hours a month. If people don’t meet the requirement, they can only access SNAP for three months over a three-year period.

Ohio can request that the time limit be waived in jurisdictions with high unemployment. When a waiver is approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), adults who would otherwise be subject to the three-month time limit (and lose access to SNAP after three months) are able to continue receiving SNAP benefits.

Policy Recommendations

Governor DeWine has an opportunity now to ensure that tens of thousands of Ohioans can get nutritious food by requesting a group of cities and counties be waived from the time limits. Based on unemployment rates, 41 counties and 8 cities are eligible for a waiver. We urge the DeWine administration to request a waiver in all eligible cities and counties.

Figure 1
41 counties and 8 cities eligible for a waiver in fiscal year 2020



Source: United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Statistics all Ohio counties and municipalities from Jan 2017 - Dec 2018. <https://www.bls.gov/lau/>