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## **Wolf Administration Submits Waiver Request to Support Food Security, SNAP Access for College Students and Their Families**

**Harrisburg, PA** – The Wolf Administration today submitted a waiver to the Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to waive the student eligibility criteria for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

“College students did not expect a global pandemic to determine the remainder of their semester, and like all Pennsylvanians, they, too, are feeling its effects,” said First Lady Frances Wolf. “But for students in need of food, this time can be especially daunting, as they cannot properly prepare for the future without having their most basic needs met. The federal government’s approval of this waiver would ensure our students are continuing to be fed and lessen the burden of this unprecedented public health emergency.”

“Students should not have to worry about where their next meal will come from even though many colleges and universities are closed. The Wolf Administration wants to ensure that college students’ and their families’ access to food is not hindered if resources are limited,” said DHS Secretary Teresa Miller. “We are urging the federal government to approve this waiver so our college students can have food and be safe during COVID-19 mitigation efforts.”

Federal regulations state that an individual who is enrolled at least half-time in an institution of higher education shall be ineligible to participate in SNAP unless they qualify for an exemption or are employed for a minimum of 20 hours per week. The Wolf Administration’s waiver request seeks to give the Department of Human Services (DHS) the ability to waive these regulations and deem students eligible for SNAP benefits until COVID-19 health emergency has ended.

Current federal regulations also state that students not meeting additional eligibility criteria are not included in their household’s SNAP eligibility. For example, in a household of three where one member is a student, the household would only receive SNAP benefits for two of the members. Now that students are home, these families may not have the resources, either monetarily or in food supply, to support the additional person now residing with them. The waiver will allow for low-income households with a student who is attending an institution of higher education to receive additional SNAP benefits to feed the whole family during the COVID-19 emergency.

A Government Accountability Office report released in January 2019 found that at least one in three college students do not always have enough to eat. Many of these students come from families working in public service type jobs, which are also seeing a reduction in hours or closure due to the COVID-19 mitigation efforts.

“Disruptions in normal daily life due to COVID-19 are creating burdens on people and families across Pennsylvania,” said Secretary Miller, “We are committed to doing everything possible to help Pennsylvanians during this time, and we hope the federal government will support us in this effort.”

The Wolf Administration is taking steps to ensure access to food does not stop in spite of the COVID-19 mitigation efforts. Details of those efforts, as well as food assistance resources, are available [here](#).

DHS is continuing to process applications for SNAP and encourages people and families who need assistance to apply online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us). Pennsylvanians who need help feeding themselves or their family should find and contact their local food bank or pantry through [Feeding Pennsylvania](#) and [Hunger-Free Pennsylvania](#).

Visit [pa.gov](http://pa.gov) for a [“Responding to COVID-19” guide](#) or the Pennsylvania Department of Health’s dedicated coronavirus webpage for the most up-to-date information regarding COVID-19.