

## Standard Demonstration Waiver Request Template



United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service

### STATE DEMONSTRATION REQUEST

Section 17(b) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, as amended (the Act), allows FNS to waive statutory requirements of the Act to conduct pilot projects designed to test program changes to increase the efficiency of SNAP and improve the delivery of SNAP benefits to eligible households. The Act limits the provisions that may be waived. Projects may be approved for a maximum five-year term, maintain cost neutrality, and include an evaluation component.

**Type of Request:** Initial

**Date of Request** 10/8/2025

**State MO**

**Region: MPRO**

**Statutory Citations:** 7 U.S. Code Ch. 51 §2012 (k)

**Regulatory Citations:** 7 CFR 271.2

#### **Proposed Alternative Procedures:**

7 USC Ch. 51 §2012 (k) provides that SNAP recipients may purchase any food or food product for home consumption and seeds and plants to produce food at home. Additionally, there are provisions for certain populations of SNAP recipients to purchase prepared meals from appropriate facilities like senior centers, domestic violence centers, substance misuse centers, and homeless shelters. SNAP recipients are barred from purchasing alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and hot foods or hot food products ready for immediate consumption (unless authorized by specific provisions).

Missouri's proposed alternative procedure makes no changes to the provisions that allow certain populations of SNAP recipients to purchase prepared meals from appropriate facilities like senior centers, domestic violence centers, substance misuse centers, and homeless shelters or to universally banned products.

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Missouri will classify the following food and beverages as restricted SNAP food. Missouri will eliminate the items outlined below as no longer being SNAP allowed.

### Excluded Food Items

“Candy” means a product that involves the preparation of sugar or artificial sweeteners in combination with chocolate, fruits, nuts, caramels, gummies, and hard candies or other ingredients or flavorings in the form of bars, drops, or pieces.

“Prepared Desserts” means a processed, shelf-stable, ready-to-eat, pre-packaged sweet food intended for immediate consumption without any further preparation. This would include foods mostly made out of “chemically” modified substances extracted from foods, along with additives to enhance taste, texture, appearance, and durability, with minimal whole foods.

### Excluded Beverages

Carbonated and noncarbonated soft drinks, including but not limited to colas, ginger ale, near-beer, rootbeer, lemonade, orangeade

All other drinks or punches with natural fruit or vegetable juice which contain 50 percent or less by volume natural fruit or vegetable juice

Beverage mixes and ingredients intended to be made into taxable beverages; liquid or frozen, concentrated or non-concentrated, dehydrated, powdered, granulated, sweetened or unsweetened, seasoned or unseasoned

Concentrates intended to be made into beverages which contain 50% or less by volume natural fruit or vegetable juice

Energy Drinks-Definition of energy drinks is carbonated or non-carbonated beverages containing a stimulant such as fortified caffeine, guarana, D-glucuronolactone, or taurine. They may also include herbal extracts such as ginseng, mineral salts and vitamins, or high doses of organic acids, amino acids, inositol, sugars, or other similar compounds in addition to sweeteners. Juices or natural fruit pulp or concentrates may also be added. Energy drinks are specifically formulated to enhance energy, alertness, or physical performance. Under Missouri's definition, both soft drinks and energy drinks are intended for human consumption and are available in various flavors, formulations, and packaging. However, beverages marketed primarily as sports drinks to increase hydration, like Gatorade or medically unnecessary nutritional products, are not included.

### Justification for Request:

Healthy and nutritionally secure families are critical to supporting a path to self-sufficiency and ultimately a thriving state, and the well-being of Missouri citizens is of paramount importance; and nutrition-sensitive chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer, obesity, diabetes, and dental cavities, particularly in children, are often the result of and exacerbated by unhealthy diets, leading to a significant public health concern in Missouri.

These chronic diseases are a leading cause of death in the state, with heart disease being the number one cause and cancer being the second, and in 2024, heart disease killed 15,376 Missourians while obesity-associated cancer deaths claimed 5,511 lives. The prevalence of chronic diseases is substantial, with 22.2% of Missourians having diabetes or prediabetes and over one-third of adults classified as obese, highlighting the urgent need for initiatives that promote healthier dietary habits.

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With approximately 1.5 billion dollars in annual SNAP benefits issued in Missouri, this waiver will allow Missouri to refocus our SNAP program to maximize nutritional health for low-income families while also supporting the abundant agricultural output of our state.

Missouri is a leading national agricultural producer in a variety of food commodities that provide healthy, sustainable dietary options for Missourians, including 2nd for meat goats, 3rd for beef cattle, 4th for rice, 5th for turkeys, 7th for hogs, and 7th for broiler chickens, among others.

In conjunction with the Missouri Department of Agriculture, we are committed to utilizing and incentivizing the purchase of locally sourced, nutritious agricultural products. Missouri farmers will also play a vital role in the effort to better ensure the health and well-being of those individuals and families on SNAP.

Missouri is also dedicated to enhancing existing healthy food education and access to programs such as "Double Up Food Bucks", which initiate local healthy food purchases as well as incentives for doing so.

To further the purpose of the program to provide low-income households access to nutritious food essential to health and well-being, Missouri is seeking a permission for this pilot to increase the efficiency of SNAP. "7 CFR 271.1(a) Purpose of SNAP. SNAP is designed to promote the general welfare and to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's population by raising the levels of nutrition among low-income households." and "To alleviate hunger and malnutrition, SNAP permits low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet...".

SNAP is inefficient at delivering on purpose of "promoting general welfare and safeguarding health and well-being" and "alleviating malnutrition" because the program does not regulate the types of items that can be purchased with SNAP benefits. The lack of specification means that participants can spend their limited benefit amounts on objectively unhealthy and non-nutritious items like sugar-sweetened beverages and candy items.

### **Caseload Information:**

- a. Percent of caseload expected to be affected by this waiver 100%
- b. Description of population expected to be affected by this waiver  
This demonstration waiver will apply to the entire Missouri SNAP population.

### **Anticipated Impact on Households & State agency operations:**

There is no anticipated impact on State agency operations. Missouri DSS will work with the Missouri Grocers Association and other partners and stakeholders to ensure POS system updates are in place to carry out this waiver.

### **Proposed Evaluation Procedures:**

To evaluate this demonstration waiver, a mixed-methods approach will seek to understand the programmatic impacts, participant shopping patterns and change in health behaviors. Activities would include:

- **Assessment of program implementation:**
  - Track and analyze program participation and benefit usage throughout year

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- **Assessment of participant behavior change and health outcomes:**
  - Conduct an impact study using a stratified sampling method to survey and analyze participant shopping and eating patterns at pre, mid, and post checkpoints. The sample size would include participants in both urban and rural areas of Missouri. Pre would mean surveying before this demonstration goes into effect, mid would mean surveying halfway through this demonstration period, and post would be surveying at the conclusion of the demonstration period.

### **Anticipated Impact on Program Costs:**

There is no anticipated impact on SNAP program costs for the state. There may be additional costs to the state for the evaluation component.

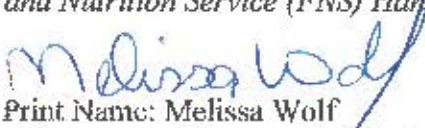
**Anticipated Implementation Date: Implementation would be October 1, 2026.**

### **Anticipated Expiration Date:**

Five years from date of FNS approval.

**Proposed quality control review procedures:** *Cases should be reviewed using standard review procedures contained in the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Handbook 310.*

**Signature of requesting official:**

  
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Title: Deputy Director, Family Support Division

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### **Regional Office Contact**

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