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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Food and Nutrition Administration

[FNA-2026-XXXXX]

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: State of South Carolina SNAP Demonstration Project

AGENCY: Food and Nutrition Administration, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

ACTION: Notice of approval to implement Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program demonstration project.

SUMMARY: On September 15, 2026, the Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA) posted Federal Register Number 2026-18896, which invited public comment on the State of South Carolina's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) demonstration project authorized under section 17(b) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008. The comment period closed October 15, 2026. FNA has considered all comments received and is announcing its decision to proceed with approval of South Carolina's request to implement its SNAP demonstration project.

DATES: The project is effective November 1, 2026.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Shiela Corley, Acting FNA Administrator, at SM.FN.RPMDHQ-WEB@usda.gov with subject line of **''SC SNAP Demonstration Project''.**

SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION: Section 17(b) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, 7 U.S.C. 2026(b), authorizes FNA to approve demonstration projects to test changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that may increase programmatic efficiency and improve the delivery of SNAP benefits to raise levels of nutrition among eligible

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households. This demonstration project is implemented by the State, and FNA will carefully review the results of the project based on the State's evaluation data. All relevant documents, including the State's demonstration project request(s) and FNA approval(s), can be found in the supporting document section. Additionally, to support implementation and ensure transparency, FNA created a central webpage on May 21, 2025, to post State agencies' project requests and approvals and provide exact implementation timelines. That webpage is accessible at the following address: https://www.fna.usda.gov/snap/waivers/foodrestriction.

DISCUSSION OF DEMONSTRATION PROJECT:

State of South Carolina Demonstration Project Request

The State of South Carolina requested to conduct a demonstration project to amend the SNAP definition of food for purchase to exclude "candy, energy drinks, soft drinks, and sweetened beverages." The State formally requested to conduct this project on September 23, 2025. On July 23, 2026, the State requested to modify the initial project request to further amend the definition of "soft drink". The State requested to implement the project on August 31, 2026. Subsequently, in consultation with FNA, the State revised its planned implementation date to November 1, 2026. The State's project request and the subsequent modification request can be found in the supporting document section and on the FNA website at the following address: *https://www.fna.usda.gov/snap/waivers/foodrestriction/southcarolina*.

USDA Approval of Initial Demonstration Project Request

FNA approved the State's initial demonstration project request on December 10, 2025. The approval can be found in the supporting document section and at the following address: https://www.fna.usda.gov/snap/waivers/foodrestriction/southcarolina.

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DISCUSSION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS:

FNA received 47 comments on South Carolina's demonstration project request. Most commenters opposed the project, citing concerns about potential health and nutrition impacts, limits on participant choice, added burden on SNAP households, retailer and consumer confusion, and the project's evaluation measures. Supporters stated that the project advances SNAP's nutrition objectives, could improve public health outcomes, and would promote responsible use of taxpayer-funded benefits.

FNA carefully considered all comments and determined that none of the comments received were significant. FNA has decided to allow South Carolina's revised project request to proceed without modification, effective November 1, 2026. SNAP's statutory purpose is to improve nutrition among low-income households, and FNA believes the project is consistent with that purpose and represents an appropriate policy intervention to address diet-related disease and obesity. FNA has monitored the State's efforts to prepare retailers and provide notice to SNAP households. FNA also notes that SNAP benefits are supplemental and do not restrict participants from purchasing excluded items with non-SNAP funds. FNA has determined that approval is authorized under section 17(b) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and that South Carolina is prepared to implement the project successfully.

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Shiela Corley,
Acting Administrator,
Food and Nutrition Administration, USDA.