



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

April 1, 2025

Dear Governor,

As Secretary Brooke Rollins wrote in her [February 13, 2025](#), letter to government partners that administer USDA's nutrition assistance programs, we have before us a historic opportunity to improve nutrition programs to both better serve individuals who need additional support and to lift millions of Americans out of dependency into hopeful futures. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) serves some of our Nation's most vulnerable families and communities, but many State agencies are not meeting the established benchmarks to provide timely access for them to SNAP benefits. This is unacceptable to me and to the American taxpayer who expect every Federal program to be operated with integrity and accountability. I have committed USDA to take a fresh look at how we deliver SNAP benefits with an emphasis on timely and satisfactory customer service.

Federal law governing SNAP is clear: **SNAP benefits must be provided to eligible people within 30 days of application for most households, and within seven days for those most in need.** Similarly, eligible households re-applying for benefits must receive their benefits on time as outlined in Federal law. Timely processing of SNAP benefits reflects how seriously State agencies take their responsibility to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars, as well as their commitment to supporting families during a difficult time on their path out of dependency and into self-sufficiency.

Data shows poor SNAP application and recertification timeliness has been a persistent challenge for State agencies for over a decade. This is not acceptable. A total of 33 SNAP State agencies are currently out of compliance for application processing timelines, and 20 SNAP State agencies are out of compliance for recertification application timeliness. Addressing this ongoing challenge requires innovative solutions and swift action. I strongly encourage you and your team to think broadly and creatively about the policy and operational steps you will need to take for improvements, and to do so by working collaboratively with me and my technical staff at the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS).

USDA is ready to partner with your State for success. Specifically, I have instructed FNS to immediately:

- Implement a strategic five-step escalation process to address poor SNAP State application and recertification timeliness across the country;
- Partner with State agencies to implement strong, data-driven corrective action steps that effectively address the root causes of poor timeliness;
- Prioritize onsite visits, trainings, and technical assistance for SNAP State agencies throughout the escalation process; and
- Work with SNAP State agencies to implement innovative ideas that improve program integrity and accountability.

These goals are ambitious but needed. I am confident that together we can take immediate action to improve SNAP and better serve families that rely on this safety net across the country and honor the generosity of the American taxpayer.

Thank you for your attention to this USDA priority and your willingness to partner for progress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Walk", is positioned above the typed name.

John Walk
Acting Deputy Under Secretary
Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services