2023 SNAC Policy Agenda

The Safety Net Advocacy Coalition (SNAC) works to defend and strengthen Florida’s safety net programs.

This policy agenda outlines administrative and legislative policies that SNAC will prioritize in 2023. The policy agenda summarizes key policies and serves as a living document that may evolve as the safety net policy landscape in Florida evolves.

Federal Policy Agenda

Below is federal legislation that impacts safety net programs.

1. **Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 (the Omnibus Bill)**
   SNAC will monitor the state level impact of provisions included in the Omnibus Bill for safety net programs including relief for SNAP skimming, the authorization of a permanent Summer-EBT program beginning in 2024, and more.

2. **Farm Bill**
   SNAC will monitor and, when appropriate, engage in advocacy around the 2023 Farm Bill, which gives Congress the opportunity to increase SNAP benefit levels and improve access. Some important issues that have arisen include restrictions on food choice, benefit amounts, work requirements, streamlining excess medical deductions, and the eligibility of college students, certain immigrants, and people with felony drug convictions.

State Policy Agenda

Administrative Advocacy

Administrative advocacy focuses on making changes to how safety net program policies are implemented by appealing to the state agencies responsible for administering them.

1. **SNAP Pre-Release Application Program for Returning Citizens**
   SNAC supports establishing a pilot program to allow Floridians to apply for SNAP while incarcerated so that benefits will start upon release. If the state is unwilling to administer a pilot program, partners may consider efforts to work with institutions to help ensure that people are ready to apply and be certified for benefits as soon as possible after their release.

updated April 2023
2. **Ensure Minimal Loss to Health Care Coverage Through the Unwind of the PHE**
   During the federal public health emergency (PHE), Medicaid enrollees received continuous coverage. The Omnibus Bill established the date for states to begin redetermining Medicaid eligibility as April 1, 2023. The Department of Children and Families released their plan for redetermining Medicaid eligibility through the unwind of the PHE. SNAC advocates for minimizing coverage loss and supports efforts to educate consumers on their rights before and after the PHE ends.

3. **Increase Access to SNAP, TANF, WIC, and NSLP for Immigrants**
   On the state level, Florida should make a concerted effort to clarify public charge rules, which have been eased under the Biden administration. Advocates may want to get the word out to their communities about public charge to ease fears, particularly for people who would benefit from SNAP, TANF, WIC, and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

**Legislative**

Below are key bills with an active role for SNAC members to lead or support.

1. **Remove the Lifetime SNAP/TANF Ban Placed on Returning Citizens**
   Florida law prohibits returning citizens with certain drug trafficking offenses from receiving SNAP and TANF, which could provide crucial support for meeting basic needs. Lifting the ban would provide a smoother transition for returning citizens and reduce chances of reincarceration.

2. **Expand Fresh Access Bucks**
   SNAC supports securing appropriations from the state to further fund Fresh Access Bucks through Senate App. Request 2622 and House App. Request 2190.

3. **Food Assistance for College Students**
   SNAC supports anti-hunger bills that focus on college students such as the Hunger-Free Campus Pilot Program (CS/SB 1172 and HB 1555) which, among other things, would require the school to designate staff to assist students in applying for SNAP and provide options for students to use SNAP at campus stores.

4. **Oppose Efforts to Restrict Food Choice in SNAP**
   All households should have the power to make decisions about what is best for their family and budget. Research shows there is no difference in purchasing decisions between SNAP participants and people without SNAP.
   - SNAC opposes SM 814 and HB 581, which ask Congress to place restrictions on the SNAP program by limiting the purchase of soft drinks or study the purchasing habits of SNAP participants. (See report and one-pager on Recommendations for Healthy Eating SNAP Pilot Projects to learn more about SNAP participant recommendations to improve SNAP.)

5. **Increase KidCare Eligibility Levels**
   SNAC supports CS/CS/HB 121 and SB 246, which raise the income eligibility limit from 215 percent of the Federal Poverty level to 300 percent and add more tiered premium payment levels for those who pay for their children’s health insurance.
Long-Term Initiatives

Long-term initiatives require multi-year strategic efforts. Progress can be achieved during the current legislative session by raising awareness among partners and community members; convincing legislators to raise the issue via future legislation and/or other means; working with state agencies to find administrative solutions; or garnering media attention on the issue.

1. **Increase TANF Maximum Payment**
   TANF payments have not increased in Florida since 1992. Increasing TANF payments is crucial to helping families afford the rising costs of necessities like food and housing.

2. **Improve Safety Net Program Alignment and Reduce Churn**
   Eligible Floridians lose benefits when they face barriers during the recertification process for safety net programs. Cross-program alignment and simplification of recertification policies in SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid will reduce barriers and prevent participation churn.

3. **Expand Medicaid**
   Florida needs to expand Medicaid via ballot or legislation to provide better access to affordable health care. Health Care for Florida provides direction on actions for Medicaid expansion.

Other Policy Agendas

This section highlights policy agendas from other organizations and/or coalitions that are of interest to SNAC. These policy agendas include policies that are related to safety net programs and/or impact safety net participants. Although we will not take an active role in every policy, we will monitor and keep SNAC members informed of relevant information and/or strategic opportunities.

1. **Florida Policy Institute (FPI)**
   The 2023 Legislative Agenda is organized by goals set forth in FPI’s Roadmap to Shared Prosperity, with categories for healthy communities, a thriving and resilient economy, shared prosperity, and an equitable tax code.

2. **Bread for the World**
   The Farm Bill Policy Platform outlines policies to prioritize in the categories of nutrition, equity, and sustainability. Bread for the World also provides resources for Farm Bill advocacy, including sample letters to Congress, one-pagers, and social media posts.

3. **Florida Voices for Health**
   The 2022-2023 Policy Platform provides information on what policies health care advocates are supporting around Medicaid, oral health, disabilities services, and health insurance protection.

4. **Food Research & Action Center (FRAC)**
   FRAC lists the bills they are supporting in the categories of child nutrition, school-based, out-of-school time, SNAP, additional anti-poverty priorities, equity, and budget/appropriations.
5. **MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger**

MAZON’s Farm Bill Policy Priorities breaks down specific asks in the bill “to strengthen federal nutrition programs, ensuring equity and access for overlooked populations” including Native Americans, single mothers, LGBTQ+ older adults, active military service members and their families, and veterans.

6. **United Way of Florida**

The [2023 Consensus Legislative Agenda](#) outlines policy priorities in financial stability, affordable housing, and expanding access to health care for Florida's ALICE population (individuals who are asset limited, income constrained, and employed).

Contact Amber Nixon at nixon@floridapolicy.org for more information about contributing to the SNAC policy agenda.