

SB 610 -5 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Human Services

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Sub-Referral To: Joint Committee On Ways and Means

Meeting Dates: 2/27, 4/3

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Establishes Food for All Oregonians Program (the program) in the Department of Human Services (DHS). Integrates program into the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program application process. Directs DHS to conduct statewide outreach, education and engagement on the program and coordinate outreach with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Directs DHS to fund organizations and community-based groups to deliver culturally specific and targeted outreach, application assistance, and navigation. Directs DHS to convene an advisory group consisting of members of communities whose primary language is not English and representing community-based organizations. Directs advisory group to oversee Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and recommend metrics to DHS. Directs DHS to apply said metrics quarterly and make results available on department's website. Permits advisory group members to be compensated and reimbursed for expenses related to advisory group duties. Permits applicants or recipients of public assistance to file a grievance anonymously with DHS for alleges discourteous, unfair, or undignified treatment, specifies requirements for grievances that are not anonymous. Prohibits DHS to apply eligibility restrictions based on immigration status. Prohibits government or private agencies that contracts with DHS to disclose applicant and recipient information. Appropriates an unspecified amount to DHS to administer the Food for All Oregonians Program and convene an advisory group. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- 62,000 individuals excluded from food assistance based on immigration status
- Families in need of food assistance and rates of food insecurity in Oregon
- Impacts of food insecurities on minorities, BIPOC communities, and immigrants
- USDA study on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) spending and community support

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-5 Adds Compacts of Free Association (COFA) citizens as eligible to participate in the Food for All Oregonians Program (the program) in the Department of Human Services (DHS). Removes requirement to integrate program into the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application process. Removes requirement for DHS to conduct statewide outreach, education and engagement on the program and coordinate outreach with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Removes requirement for DHS to fund organizations and community-based groups to deliver culturally specific and targeted outreach, application assistance, and navigation. Directs DHS to create one application process for federally funded and state-funded nutrition assistance by using the existing SNAP infrastructure and electronic benefit transfer delivery system. Makes benefit amounts from program equal to SNAP benefits and based on household size. Permits eligible individuals who are excluded from receiving SNAP when they are a part of a household that is receiving SNAP to receive the amount that would have been their share of the household's SNAP benefit. Excludes the individual's income, resources and deductible expenses when determining the amount of SNAP benefits for the other members of the household who qualify for SNAP. Specifies eligibility, reporting, verification, and application requirements for the Food for All Oregonians Program. Caps total assistance received by Food for All Oregonians for a household to not exceed the SNAP benefit amount

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if all members qualify for SNAP. Prohibits government or private agencies that administer the Food for All Oregonians program to disclose applicant information for immigration enforcement purposes. Assigns responsibility to OHA for statewide outreach, education, and engagement strategies for the Food for All Oregonians Program and directs OHA to collaborate with a work group to evaluate and implement strategies. Directs OHA to shall develop and administer a grant program to fund organizations and community-based groups to deliver culturally specific and targeted outreach, application assistance, and navigation for the Food for All Oregonians Program. Directs DHS to provide guidance and technical assistance to OHA to administer the Food for All Oregonians Program. Directs DHS to begin accepting applications and issuing benefits for the Food for All Oregonians Program by January 1, 2025. Permits DHS to prioritize the rollout of the program if necessary to not exceed funds appropriated for the Food for All Oregonians Program and requires notification to OHA for purposes of outreach, education, and engagement.

BACKGROUND:

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides food benefits and education on food preparation and nutrition to low-income households. Benefits are issued on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, also called an Oregon Trail Card. It can be used like a debit card to buy eligible food in authorized retail food stores. Eligibility is based mostly on monthly income. That includes earned income from work, as well as unearned income such as social security, disability, child support and more. For most Oregonians, resources such as a house, car, or money in the bank do **not** count against eligibility. Oregon residents may be able to get SNAP if they are working, receiving unemployment, or attending school. To be eligible for this benefit program, applicants must be a resident of the state of Oregon and meet one of the following requirements: 1) have a current bank balance (savings and checking combined) under \$2,001, or 2) have a current bank balance (savings and checking combined) under \$3,001 who share their household with one of the following: a person or persons age 60 and over or a person with a disability (a child, your spouse, a parent, or themselves). There are a few groups of people that have additional considerations when applying for SNAP. Immigration status affects [SNAP eligibility](#). Currently six states (California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, Minnesota, and Washington) offer state food assistance programs to certain noncitizens who are ineligible for SNAP. These states use the existing SNAP infrastructure to deliver a SNAP-like benefit to immigrants, which is provided by and administered with state funds according to [a Food Research & Action Center report \(2021\)](#).

Senate Bill 610 creates a state-funded program that eliminates exclusions to SNAP based on immigrant status and create a culturally responsive application process.