



Proposed SNAP Sanctions in SB 4 Would Cost Missouri, Harm Families

In addition to causing nearly 40,000 Missouri families to lose critical food assistance, Senate Bill 4 would cost Missouri \$90 million or more to provide work supports required by law.

- Missouri's current employment & training program serves just a small fraction of the people the state would be required to serve under SB 4, increasing costs by about \$72 million.
- While the Department of Social Services has testified that TANF funding could be used to meet increased need, there is insufficient funding to cover the projected cost.
- Moreover, that funding cannot be used for all participants, and does not cover additional supports such as child care, which would add another \$18 million or more each month to the cost of support services.

Across the state, far too many Missourians struggle to put food on the table. Hunger has increased dramatically in Missouri over the past decade, faster than in any other state in the nation.¹

Unfortunately, the components of Senate Bill 4 would make it more difficult for families to access the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food assistance program, our nation's most effective anti-hunger program. Instead, the bill would implement harsh penalties for Missourians who are unable to meet **(or unable to report that they have met)** federal work requirements. These penalties, also known as sanctions, go well beyond what is currently required under Missouri law or federal law:

- In the first occurrence of noncompliance, a family would lose food assistance for three months.
- The third occurrence would result in a family losing access to food assistance permanently.

In the official fiscal note for the bill, the Missouri Department of Social Services (DSS) estimated that 61,501 households who are not currently meeting work requirements would be impacted.

- Of these, DSS anticipates that 39,976 families with 51,739 children will be sanctioned and lose SNAP for at least 3 months, and perhaps permanently.²

Mandated Requirements Would Cost State At Least \$90 Million

Federal law requires all states with mandatory work participation to provide employment and training (E&T) programs and additional support services such as child care, transportation, uniforms, and other items needed to support their work.

In an independent assessment of SB 4, Legal Services of Eastern Missouri (LSEM) found that Missouri's SNAP E&T programs reached just 9,000 individuals in 2016, **a small fraction of the 61,501 individuals the state would be required to provide the services to under SB 4.**³

A review of state budget documents confirms the LSEM findings:

- The recently released Executive Budget for FY 2020 estimates an expense of \$5.875 million in the current year to provide the “SkillUp” SNAP employment and training program serving 5,000 participants.
- Averaged among participants, this translates into a cost of \$1,175 per person.⁴
- **Based on these numbers, expanding the program to an additional 61,501 individuals, would require an increase of \$72 million to support Missouri’s SNAP E&T budget.**

Proposals to Fund the Added Cost Are Insufficient

The Department of Social Services testified before legislative committees that they plan to use existing TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) funding to meet this increased need. However, despite recent increases, the existing funding for the TANF-funded Missouri Work Assistance Program would also fall well below the projected cost of expanded mandatory work requirements.

- As documented in the Department of Social Services budget request for FY 2020, the Missouri Work Assistance Program served 12,048 participants with a \$17.9 million budget in FY 2018.
- Funding for the program was increased to nearly \$41 million in FY 2019. The Governor has requested an additional \$9 million in funding for the FY 2020 budget year, resulting in a combined increase of \$32 million in annual funding for the program.
- Though a significant investment, **this amount is still less than half of what would be required as a result of Senate Bill 4.**⁵

About SNAP

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), previously known as Food Stamps, is our nation’s most effective tool to combat hunger. Though a modest benefit, SNAP is very effective at improving nutrition, resulting in improved health outcomes and lower health care costs, particularly for children.¹⁰

Each month SNAP:¹¹

- Helps nearly 737,000 Missourians in over 342,000 households stretch their budgets to afford a basic diet.
- Provides an average monthly benefit in Missouri of \$258.37 per family and \$120.07 per person, or only around \$1.33 per person per meal.

Moreover, the SkillUp program and the Missouri Work Assistance Program, both of which are nearly entirely funded with federal TANF dollars, could not be used to serve SNAP participants who do not have children, unless state dollars were used to expand those programs.⁶ Moreover, federal TANF funding is currently used in Missouri to fund a variety of critical services for children and families including child welfare, child care, domestic violence and more. **Diverting TANF funding to E&T programs would result in cuts to these services.**

In addition to the E&T programs, under federal law Missouri would be required to provide an array of work supports for families, including child care assistance, while the parent participates in work activities.⁷ Yet, the official fiscal note for SB 4 fails to account for the increased costs for child care assistance when determining the financial impact of the proposal. Although the average age of a child receiving SNAP assistance in Missouri was 7.9 years old in 2017, DSS would be mandated to provide child care assistance to care for these kids while their parents were participating in trainings or work activities (at least during school holidays, before and after school).⁸ Based on the average cost of Missouri’s child care assistance program, this care could cost as much as \$361 per child / month, or \$18.6 million for just one month of child care for the 51,739 children impacted by this proposal.⁹

Notes

1. Anne Cafer, Darren Chapman, Kathlee Freeman, and Sandy Rikoon. “Missouri Hunger Atlas 2016” MU Interdisciplinary Center for Food Security.
2. Committee on Legislative Research, Oversight Division, “Fiscal Note on Senate Bill 4,” January 21, 2019; available at: <http://www.moga.mo.gov/OverSight/Over20191//fispdf/0375-01N.ORG.pdf>
3. Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, “SNAP Work Requirements in Missouri: Preliminary Analysis,” January 29, 2019
4. See the Missouri Budget for Fiscal Year 2020, Department Budget Requests, Department of Social Services, Division of Family Services, available at: <https://oa.mo.gov/budget-planning/budget-information/2020-budget-information/2020-department-budget-requests-governors>
5. Ibid
6. Ibid #3
7. Ibid #3
8. Missouri Department of Social Services, “Family Support Division Annual Data Report Fiscal Year 2017”
9. Based on the average cost of child care assistance in November 2018, see: Missouri Department of Social Services, “Child Care Monthly Management Report,” November 2018
10. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, “SNAP Is Linked with Improved Nutritional Outcomes and Lower Health Care Costs,” January, 2018
11. United States Department of Agriculture, SNAP Monthly State Participation and Benefit Summary – Public Data, Fiscal Year 2018