

Nutrition Assistance and the Farm Bill

Marianne Comfort; Institute Justice Team

Congress is struggling to renew a mammoth piece of legislation known as the Farm Bill, which, among other things, supports agriculture programs and funds nutrition assistance.

The House of Representatives on April 30th passed its version, officially known as the Farm, Food and National Security Act of 2026. Unfortunately, legislators failed to include a restoration of nutrition benefits severely cut last year. Advocates are now calling on the U.S. Senate to draft a bill that includes reversing cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the nation's largest anti-hunger program.

A year ago, Catholic sisters and partners around the country united in opposition to proposed cuts to federal food and healthcare programs. Despite large-scale advocacy with legislators and [public witness outside the U.S. Capitol](#) and numerous other locales, Congress passed H.R. 1. This bill, officially known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act, included a historic \$187 billion in cuts to SNAP.

[SNAP](#) is a federal program that distributes grocery money to persons who meet certain criteria, including job earnings and immigration status. Benefits vary by household size and income.

After the passage of H.R. 1, between July 2025 and January 2026, participation in SNAP fell by more than 3 million people, the largest reduction in 30 years, according to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#). States are anticipating billions of dollars in lost federal funds, and some are already making it harder for people to enroll or renew their benefits.

The [Farm Bill](#), which is renewed every few years, traditionally has supported agriculture programs and funded nutrition assistance, often for working Americans unable to pay expenses with one or more jobs.

The most recently enacted Farm Bill, the Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018, initially expired in 2023 and has been extended multiple times following stalled negotiations in Congress. The current extension runs through September 30, 2026.