



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Economic Services Administration
Community Services Division
Post Office Box 45440, Olympia, Washington 98504-5440

January 16, 2019

Dear Stakeholders and Community Partners,

I am writing to provide updates on how the federal government shutdown is impacting our largest public assistance program, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also referred to as Basic Food. You may get questions from customers you work with who may be worried about their benefits. I ask that you please help us communicate this important information.

On January 8, 2019, the Department was directed by USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to issue February SNAP benefits by January 20, 2019.

For most people, February Basic Food benefits will be issued early, on January 20, 2019. It's important to understand that people receiving an early issuance will not receive another issuance in February and at this time we do not know what will happen in the event of a prolonged government shutdown. We are sending out a mailer (see attached) to all Basic Food customers to inform them of the possible early issuance.

As you know, healthy food is foundational to our well-being and without it we struggle to fully contribute to our communities. In Washington, Basic Food provides monthly food benefits to over 900,000 children and adults. Seventy-five percent of the people receiving Basic Food benefits in Washington do not receive any other type of cash benefit. The average daily benefit for a household receiving Basic Food is \$7.30 per day.

For additional information and updates, please visit our website at www.dshs.wa.gov/esa. If people have questions about their benefits, please direct them to call the Constituent Service Contact Center at 1-877-501-2233.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Babs Roberts, Director
Community Services Division