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## NEW REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE ILLINOISANS LIKELY TO LOSE FOOD ASSISTANCE IN 2018

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or food stamps) is an effective and efficient anti-hunger program. Not only does SNAP reduce hunger and poverty, it improves opportunity by leading to better health, education, and long-term well-being outcomes. However, **over 200,000 Illinoisans are at risk of losing this food assistance in 2018 and going hungry.** A new report, released today, looks at who exactly these individuals are, the barriers they would face in order to receive food assistance, and how this loss can easily be prevented if Governor Rauner makes a simple request to ensure that childless adults in Illinois can continue to access SNAP and put food on their table. In [Data Matters: Who are the Illinoisans Likely to Lose Food Assistance in 2018?](#), Heartland Alliance's Social IMPACT Research Center analyzes Census and survey data to learn more about the group of men and women currently receiving SNAP to better understand who will be impacted, what they will be up against in 2018, and what can be done to help.

The report found that:

- **There are big changes coming to SNAP in Illinois.** On December 31st, certain SNAP recipients will only be able to receive food assistance for a total of three months within a 36 month period, whether or not they are experiencing hunger, if they are not working at least 20 hours per week.
- Currently, Illinois is able to provide food assistance to able-bodied adults without dependents, or ABAWDs, for as long as they are experiencing hunger because **the state is receiving a time limit waiver from the federal government.** Time limit waivers are available to states that are experiencing high rates of unemployment.
- **The people most at risk are individuals who face structural racism, are in precarious financial situations, and have significant barriers to employment.** A majority of people at risk of losing SNAP and experiencing hunger are people of color. Most are under the age of 30 and 64% have only a high school degree or less. Two in five have more than 50% of their household income going to rent.
- There are 203,740 ABAWDs working less than 20 hours a week who will likely lose SNAP in 2018. Of those individuals, the vast majority are underemployed and many have significant barriers to employment such as poor health, a criminal background, or disparate access to resources, which will make meeting the 20 hour a week requirement difficult. **The time limit puts them in danger of losing food assistance and going hungry.**
- **Terminating the SNAP benefits of over 200,000 recipients would cost Illinois' economy more than \$322 million annually** and severely impact local economies and businesses throughout Illinois.

SNAP is the nation's most important anti-hunger program. SNAP benefits are 100% federally funded and it is a vital safety net designed to ensure that people do not starve.

"SNAP is critically important to ensuring that no one in this nation of plenty goes hungry," said Katie Buitrago, report author and Director of the Social IMPACT Research Center. "It's within our power to ensure that hundreds of thousands of Illinoisans don't fall through the cracks—and that we don't drain hundreds of millions of dollars from Illinois's economy. We need to ensure that people who need food assistance can get it while also investing in programs that help people be successful at work."

In addition to analyzing the SNAP recipients who would be impacted by the time limit waiver, this report also recommends a number of solutions to help ensure that hundreds of thousands in Illinois can access food assistance:

- The Governor should **seek a SNAP time limit waiver from the federal government** in 2018 to prevent over 200,000 Illinoisans from going hungry.
- State policymakers must **support proven programs and policies that address the most common barriers to work**, promote full employment, and level the playing field to create true opportunity for people of color.
- **Reduce the collateral consequences of criminal records**—like statutory bars to employment, education, and housing—that impede successful reentry for people with criminal records.
- **Ensure fair and equitable access to quality jobs** by investing in pathways to employment for everyone out of work through high quality employment & training programs, subsidized and transitional jobs, on-the-job training, and adult basic education.

*Data Matters: Who are the Illinoisans Likely to Lose Food Assistance in 2018?*, is available for download at <http://bit.ly/ABAWD17>. All data images are to be credited to The Social IMPACT Research Center. Contact IMPACT for assistance accessing and interpreting data.

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**Heartland Alliance's Social IMPACT Research Center** conducts research that helps leaders create change and advance real-world solutions to poverty. Follow IMPACT on twitter at [twitter.com/impactheartland](https://twitter.com/impactheartland). For more info, visit [www.heartlandalliance.org/research/](http://www.heartlandalliance.org/research/)