

March 20, 2020

To: Director Tom Rawlings
Jon Anderson, Chief Deputy Division Director
Kimberlin Donald, SNAP Director
Georgia Department of Family and Children Services
2 Peachtree Street
Atlanta, GA 30303

From: Policy Subcommittee, Food Stamp Work Group
(*members listed at end*)

Re: Georgia SNAP Supports for Pandemic Response

We recognize that Georgia faces a crisis of unknown dimensions due to COVID 19. We are eager to help you extend SNAP benefits to the many Georgians who are expected to need them in the coming weeks and months. Drawing upon the Georgia Food Stamp Work Group's decade-long history of collaboration between state SNAP administrators and nonprofit community partners, the Policy Subcommittee offers the following list of policy options for your consideration. We believe these policy changes, all of which may be utilized immediately by the state, are the most important strategies to reduce the risk of disease transmission and make Georgia's SNAP program fully accessible at the earliest possible opportunity:

- Extend SNAP benefits for all current recipients through June 2020 to stabilize family income and increase access for new SNAP applications.
- Waive the signature requirement so benefits outreach workers can submit applications on behalf of clients.
- Waive the signature requirement directly for all SNAP applications.
- Reinstate eligibility for all people who qualify as ABAWDS.
- Minimize all verification and accept self-attestation wherever possible, including elimination of verification of shelter expenses.
- Apply the streamlined procedures that we are recommending to all cases currently under consideration for renewal.
- Rapidly and comprehensively promote access to SNAP via the DFCS website, and add contact information for community organizations that can assist with screening, assuring that complete applications are submitted with all relevant documentation.

As you know, The Families First Coronavirus Response Act was signed into law on Wednesday. We are glad to see that it:

- Lifts work requirements for the duration the pandemic,
- Supports provision of emergency food benefits to affected families, including additional benefits to replace school meals for eligible children; and
- Allows flexibility on the "issuance methods and reporting requirements" that should permit the state to accept virtual signatures and other remote access solutions.

We know you appreciate the urgent necessity to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID 19 among the state workers, community partners and low income Georgians who will apply for SNAP very soon. It is our understanding that current SNAP regulations do allow all of the flexibilities we are recommending, and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act provides additional assurance of USDA approval for program requests. Community Partners stand ready

to assist with the coming onslaught of applications. Waiving requirements that allow people to easily submit applications will do a tremendous amount to relieve the DFCS workload. We are eager to support you and your team in developing these proposals, sending letters of support if desired, and assisting in any other ways to support Georgians in need.

Policy Subcommittee Members & Signers:

Alicia Johnson, Step Up Savannah

Shelton Latham, Presbyterians for a Better Georgia

Melisa Nichols, Latin American Association

Laura Colbert, Georgians for a Healthy Future

Danah Craft, Georgia Food Bank Association

Alex Camardelle, Georgia Budget and Policy Institute

Chaiwon Kim, Center for Pan Asian Community Services

Charles Bliss, Atlanta Legal Aid

Glenda Cucher, Atlanta Legal Aid

Esteban Gonzalez, Atlanta Community Food Bank

Lauren Waits, Atlanta Community Food Bank