



Testimony Re: S-3312- Retail SNAP Incentive Program
Senate Finance Committee
May 26, 2026
Stephanie Geller, Deputy Director

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its support for Senate Resolution 3312. This resolution would provide funding to continue the Eat Well, Be Well retail SNAP incentive program beyond its pilot phase, providing SNAP beneficiaries across the state with a 50% discount on fresh fruits and vegetables when they shop at retail grocery locations. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to thank Senate President Lawson for sponsoring this resolution.


Food Insecurity for Rhode Island Children:

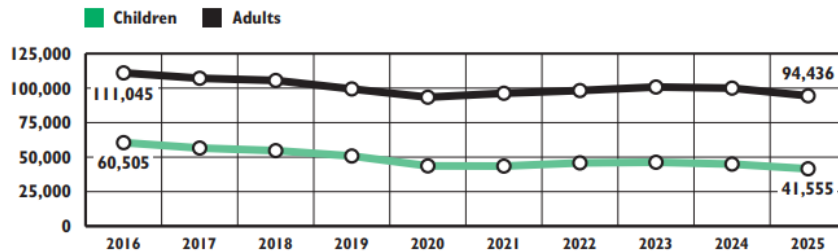
Hunger and lack of regular access to sufficient food are linked to serious physical, psychological, emotional, and academic problems in children and can interfere with their growth and development. According to 2025 survey data from the RI Life Index, 34% of households in Rhode Island reported not being able to meet their basic food needs. There were large disparities by race and ethnicity with the highest rates among Latino households, 58% of which were not able to meet their basic food needs.

Benefits of SNAP Incentive programs

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps low-income individuals and families obtain better nutrition through monthly benefits they can use to purchase food at retail stores and some farmers markets.

In 2025, 41,555 children were enrolled in SNAP, 33% of which were under the age of six. Child food insecurity has been shown to decrease by almost one-third after families receive SNAP benefits for six months. However, the amount of SNAP benefits families receive is not adequate to meet a family’s nutritional needs.


**Participation in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program,
 Children and Adults, Rhode Island, 2016-2025**



Source: Rhode Island Department of Human Services, RI Bridges Database, 2016-2025. Data represent children under age 18 and adults who participated in SNAP during the month of October.

The cost of raising a healthy family continues to increase, and for many Rhode Island households, fresh fruits and vegetables remain among the most difficult items to consistently afford. The Eat Well, Be Well program helps address this challenge in a practical way by increasing the purchasing power of SNAP benefits when families purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. The program's automatic enrollment and immediate rewards make it accessible and easy for families to use, reducing barriers at a time when every dollar matters.

Children deserve regular access to nutritious food, regardless of their family's income or circumstances. Any effort that helps make healthy eating easier for Rhode Island families deserves continued investment.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT strongly urges the Committee to support continued funding for the Eat Well, Be Well program. Thank you for your leadership on this issue and for the opportunity to testify.