

November arrives in MN, along with cuts to SNAP

Written by John Michaelson, Minnesota News Connection
Monday, 18 November 2013 15:00



Reductions in food assistance impact nearly 540,000 statewide

The month of November has arrived in Minnesota, and along with it, an automatic reduction in funding for many families in the state who struggle to put food on the table. During the recession, there was a temporary increase in SNAP or food stamp benefits, but Colleen Moriarty, executive director of Hunger Solutions Minnesota, declared that that stimulus program is now officially over.

"A family of four living under \$22,000 a year, it means losing at least \$36 a month - which is you know, milk and chicken breasts, fresh fruits and vegetables - and it is very significant," she said.

More than a half-million Minnesotans receive SNAP benefits. About one-fourth of the recipients are elderly or disabled adults and one-third are children.

The reductions come as Congress is considering cuts to SNAP as part of a new Farm Bill. The Senate has proposed \$4 billion in cuts, while the House wants to slash the program by up to \$40 billion over ten years.

According to Moriarty, that has many families who are struggling financially, and groups like hers, on edge.

"People who are calling our help line, because we operate the Minnesota Food Helpline, people are calling. They're very concerned, They're upset. They're very worried about what this is going to mean for them moving forward," she said. "And we need to be aware of the fact that this has a disastrous effect on people at a time when they're just trying to get back on their feet."

Among the conferees working on the Farm Bill in Washington are three members of Minnesota's delegation, Senator Amy Klobuchar and Congressmen Collin Peterson and Tim Walz.

The Minnesota Food Helpline is 888-711-1151.

More information on SNAP reductions is at bit.ly/15gnWhF.