



NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Tim Clark

Chairman

402-471-9398

ncaaa.contact@nebraska.gov

NCAAA Statement on SNAP and State Communication from Governor Jim Pillen and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services

Regarding recent SNAP communications from Governor Jim Pillen's Office and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), the Nebraska Commission on African American Affairs emphasizes the importance of clear, accurate, and timely information pertaining to public benefit programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP directly affects many Nebraska households, including those in the African American community, making it essential that all public communications remain nonpartisan, accurate, and focused on service.

The Commission has reviewed the recent statement published on the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services website and attributed directly to Governor Jim Pillen. The statement reads:

"Due to a failure by Democrats in the U.S. Senate to pass a clean funding bill, resulting in a government shutdown, SNAP benefits that many Nebraska families and kids depend on are now unavailable in November. Sadly, there is a wealth of misinformation coming from Senate Democrats. This shutdown was absolutely preventable. We urge members to approve a clean funding bill and stop using Nebraska's most vulnerable people for political leverage."

[Source: Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services — SNAP Notice, dhhs.ne.gov/SNAP]

As the Governor provides executive oversight of DHHS, the responsibility for ensuring impartial and factual messaging ultimately rests with the Office of the Governor. While the urgency of notifying families about potential interruptions in benefits is fully understood, the tone and framing of this communication introduce political attribution that is not appropriate for an official state message.

SNAP beneficiaries, like all Nebraskans, represent a diverse range of political perspectives and ethnic affiliations. Current data indicate that SNAP participants in Nebraska include approximately 37 percent White individuals, 26 percent African American individuals, and 16 percent Hispanic individuals. Asian participants comprise about 3 to 4 percent of recipients, while Native American participants account for approximately 1 to 2 percent.

Communications that imply fault or preference toward one political side risk presuming bias within a population that exercises political freedom without prejudice or assumption. Such framing may unintentionally alienate those served by the program and weaken confidence in the neutrality of state communication.

Accordingly, the Commission respectfully recommends:

1. Revision of the existing statement to reflect factual, nonpartisan information regarding SNAP benefits.
2. A public clarification reaffirming the Governor's and DHHS's commitment to neutral, service-centered communication.
3. Implementation of a communication review process to ensure that all future state announcements maintain clarity, consistency, and neutrality.

Moreover, on October 28, 2025, the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced that the issuance of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for November had been paused at the direction of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) due to the ongoing federal government shutdown.

As of today, November 3, 2025, the federal administration has indicated that it will partially fund SNAP benefits for November in accordance with recent court rulings. However, it remains uncertain how much assistance recipients will receive or when those funds will be distributed. This uncertainty places thousands of Nebraska families, seniors, and individuals already facing economic hardship at serious risk of food insecurity.

The Nebraska Commission on African American Affairs respectfully recommends that your administration take immediate action to safeguard our most vulnerable residents by:

- Deploying state emergency funds to provide immediate assistance to households impacted by the suspension and delay of SNAP benefits; and
- Establishing temporary relief programs to ensure continued access to food and basic necessities until full federal SNAP operations are fully restored.

The Nebraska Commission on African American Affairs remains committed to working collaboratively with the Governor's Office and DHHS to strengthen public confidence through communication that reflects fairness, accuracy, and respect for all Nebraskans.