

FRAC WEEKLY NEWS DIGEST

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Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

[Bill Would Lift Savings Limit For Food Stamp Recipients](#) – WFYI, March 15, 2017

A bill moving through the Indiana House would raise the asset limit for people applying for SNAP benefits to \$10,000. The federal government sets the asset limit so that only households with assets less than \$2,250 can receive SNAP, although states can opt out and 35 states and D.C. do not have asset limits at all. “Logically, if we want Hoosiers to become economically sufficient, we cannot penalize them for saving funds and forcing them to spend down savings retirement accounts or assets just to become eligible,” said Kathleen Lara, policy director for Prosperity Indiana.

  

[Deportation Fears Prompt Immigrants To Cancel Food Stamps](#) – NPR, March 28, 2017

The current administration’s tough stance on immigration is causing many lawful permanent residents to cancel their SNAP benefits. “Which is really frightening because these are families that are often working minimum-wage jobs, trying to raise children ... and with the help of these benefits are getting by,” said Jim Wengler, director of benefits access at Hunger Free New York City. “But without them, [they] will be in a really desperate situation.” Matthew Lopas, an attorney with the National Immigration Law Center, said the enormous amount of misinformation being circulated is causing immigrants a great deal of anxiety.

  

[What We Get Wrong When We Talk About Food Stamps And Immigrants](#) – The Huffington Post, March 28, 2017

Only about 56 percent of eligible immigrants receive SNAP benefits, compared to the overall 72 percent participation rate, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Language and culture present barriers to eligible immigrants receiving benefits. In addition to lack of awareness about the program, there is anxiety that accepting assistance will hurt chances to become naturalized citizens. Adding to these concerns is the anti-immigration rhetoric coming from Washington, noted Shannon Maynard, executive director of the Congressional Hunger Center.

  

[Church ready to help seniors get the food aid they need](#) – Catholic Philly, March 22, 2017

Catholic Health Care Services (CHCS) of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia will be offering seniors assistance with applying for SNAP benefits, through a grant from the Walmart

Foundation. Many seniors find it difficult to apply for SNAP because they are not able to travel to a location or they do not have a computer to apply online, while others feel there is a stigma attached to receiving food assistance, said Karen Becker, director of in-home support and special projects for CHCS.



School Meals

[Bill would ensure students get fed, regardless of parents' past-due fees](#) – Santa Fe New Mexican, March 27, 2017

Senate Bill 374 approved by the New Mexico Legislature would make sure all public school students — even those whose parents are behind in meal payments — are provided school meals, and requires districts to make sure eligible students are signed up for free or reduced-price lunch. Federal law mandates that all schools have plans to deal with unpaid school lunch fees, said Crystal FitzSimons, director of school and out-of-school programs for FRAC, and this legislation, on Gov. Martinez's desk for approval, goes further by taking unpaid debt off the shoulders of students.



[Philadelphia's school district finds creative ways to ensure kids eat breakfast](#) – Newsworks.org, March 12, 2017

Since moving school breakfast into the classroom, Philadelphia's H.A. Brown School has seen participation increase from 30 percent of students to more than 70 percent of students. Wayne Grasela, the school district's senior vice president for food services, said the district has set a goal of 70 percent participation for its 220 schools. "We're looking for alternative models to provide access to breakfast," said Grasela.



[Invest in school breakfast program](#) – Lancaster Online, March 19, 2017

"[F]ood is a basic school supply, just like textbooks and pencils," writes Bill Simonson, school breakfast outreach coordinator for the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank in this letter to the editor. Although a significant number of children qualifying for school breakfast do not participate, "[b]y simply making breakfast a part of the school day in schools, we can change everything." Simonson also notes that Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf proposed, in his 2017–18 budget address, \$2 million to help the state's schools launch and expand school breakfast programs.



From FRAC Chat

[Ending Hunger is a Gender Equity Issue](#) – FRAC Chat, March 30, 2017

Strengthening federal nutrition programs, closing the wage gap, and supporting paid leave policies are three ways advocates and policymakers can reduce food insecurity among women. About 10 million households with children in the U.S. are headed by a single mother, and 28.2 percent of these families live below the poverty line, compared to 14.9 percent of single fathers. According to USDA's most recent report, single-parent, female-headed households are also significantly more likely to be food-insecure than single-parent, male-headed households (30.3 to 22.4 percent).



[Remembering Dr. George Blackburn — A Tireless Public Health Advocate](#) – FRAC Chat,

March 28, 2017

An influential scholar and revered figure in the fields of obesity and nutrition, longtime FRAC Board Member Dr. George Blackburn passed away last month. Through his multidisciplinary efforts to prevent and treat obesity and obesity-related diseases, Dr. Blackburn changed the way surgeons and researchers alike thought about the relationship between food and medicine. "George was a warm, thoughtful, loyal, insightful, and supportive presence on the Board, and a passionate advocate for FRAC and its work in the medical and public health communities," said Jim Weill, FRAC's President. "We will miss him greatly."

