

HEALTH AND NUTRITION FUNDING

Congress has passed several bills in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to increase funding and access to several health and nutrition programs, including most recently the *American Rescue Plan*. The *American Rescue Plan* provides more funding and benefit increases for these programs. As a result, you and your family may be eligible for SNAP benefits, the WIC program, other nutrition programs, services for seniors and persons with disabilities, and other support services.

*****WHAT IS NEW IN THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN*****

The *American Rescue Plan* includes nutrition assistance, including temporary increases for SNAP and WIC benefits, as well as additional funding for programs that provide aging, disability services, and mental health services.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

There is a **15 percent increase in monthly SNAP benefits** for January through September 2021. The December COVID relief law also extended SNAP eligibility to college students who are eligible for a federal or state work study program or for certain types of federal student aid. If you have received Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, those benefits will not be counted toward household income for SNAP benefits or eligibility for the month of receipt and the following 9 months. Certain SNAP program requirements are also being waived during the pandemic to increase access to benefits.

For more information on accessing SNAP benefits in Hawaii, please visit this [website](#).

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

The *American Rescue Plan* provides funding to temporarily **boost the value of the Cash Value Voucher (CVV) in the WIC program** up to \$35 per month for women and children for a four-month period during the COVID-19 pandemic. Certain program requirements are also being waived during the pandemic to increase access to benefits.

For more information on accessing WIC benefits in Hawaii, please visit this [website](#).

Child Nutrition Programs

The bills have included additional funding and waivers of program requirements for Child Nutrition Programs to ensure children receive meals while school is not in session and to ensure access to nutritious meals and snacks for children enrolled at day care centers, participating in afterschool meal programs, and residing in emergency shelters, as well as older Americans or those living with a disability enrolled in day care facilities.

A new Pandemic EBT program is available to ensure access to emergency food benefits for school children. This program was authorized under the *Families First Coronavirus Response Act* to provide eligible school children with temporary emergency nutrition benefits loaded on EBT cards. Children who would have received free or reduced price meals if their schools were not closed or operating with reduced hours or attendance for at least 5 consecutive days are eligible to receive Pandemic EBT benefits. The *American Rescue Plan* allows the Pandemic EBT program to be

implemented for any school year in which the COVID-19 public health emergency designation is in effect and allows for benefits to be extended through the summer.

The *American Rescue Plan* also temporarily expands the age of eligibility for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) at emergency homeless shelters from 18 to 25 for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic. For more information on Child Nutrition Programs in Hawaii, please visit: [the Hawaii DOE and the Department of Human Services](#).

Food Banks

Additional funding is available for other nutrition programs to ensure that food banks can assist those Americans most in need.

For more information on accessing food from food banks:

- City and County of Honolulu: [Hawaii Food Bank](#)
- Maui County: [Maui Food Bank](#)
- Kauai County: [Hawaii Food Bank – Kauai](#)
- Hawaii County: [The Food Basket](#)

Programs for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities

If you are a senior or person with disability, you may be eligible for aging and disability services programs, including supportive services, nutrition services, home-delivered and pre-packaged meals, disease prevention and health promotion services, support services for family caregivers:

For information on accessing senior services in your local area, please contact your county office on aging, or the [Hawaii Aging and Disability Resource Center](#):

- Honolulu: (808)768-7705, www.elderlyaffairs.com
- Hawaii: (808)961-8600, www.hcoahawaii.org
- Maui/Molokai/Lanai: (808)270-7774, <http://www.co.maui.hi.us/departments/Housing/aging.htm>
- Kauai: (808)241-4470, www.kauai.gov/elderly

Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program

If you are living with HIV/AIDS, you may be eligible for services under Ryan White HIV/AIDS programs.

For more information:

- Hawaii Island: [Hawai'i Island HIV/AIDS Foundation](#)
- Maui County: [Maui AIDS Foundation](#)
- Oahu: [Hawai'i Health and Harm Reduction Center](#)
- Kauai: [Malama-Pono Health Services](#)

Mental Health Programs

The COVID-19 legislation provides significant funding to increase access to mental health services, substance use disorder services, and suicide prevention programs.

**If you or a loved one is feeling anxious, experiencing a crisis, thinking of suicide, or need access to mental health or substance use treatment, help is available 24/7:
Hawaii CARES – 832-3100 or 1-800-753-6879.**

Additional Information

Visit Senator Schatz's [coronavirus webpage](#) for additional information on related topics, including:

- [child care/early childhood organizations](#);
- [non-profits](#);
- [seniors](#);
- [financial assistance for health care providers](#);
- [telehealth](#); and
- [health resources](#).