

The House Committee on Agriculture and Consumer Affairs offers the following substitute to HB 947:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 1 of Chapter 4 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to general provisions of public assistance, so as to provide for requirements for the
3 federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); to provide for restrictions on
4 broad based categorical eligibility, gross income standards, and allowable financial resource
5 standards; to provide for certification periods for certain households; to provide for
6 verification requirements for expedited service applications; to require verification of all
7 eligibility criteria within 30 days of application; to prohibit the issuance of benefits for a
8 second month of the certification period prior to the completion of verifications; to provide
9 for data-matching agreements and automated verification procedures; to provide for
10 restrictions on the waiver of work requirements; to provide for jurisdiction; to provide for
11 private rights of action; to provide for reports; to provide for regulation and enforcement of
12 D-SNAP benefits; to provide for automatic repeal; to provide for construction; to provide for
13 related matters; to provide for a short title; to provide for legislative findings; to provide for
14 an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

15 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

H. B. 947 (SUB)

SECTION 1.

16

17 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Georgia SNAP Integrity Act of 2026."

SECTION 2.

18

19 The General Assembly finds that:

20 (1) The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally funded program
21 administered in partnership with the states;

22 (2) States are responsible for program administration, integrity, and fraud prevention;

23 (3) Federal law reserves retailer authorization and sanction authority to the United States
24 Department of Agriculture;

25 (4) Nothing in federal law preempts the state from establishing mechanisms to monitor
26 program performance, investigate complaints, and refer violations to federal authorities;
27 and

28 (5) A centralized state body is necessary to ensure effective oversight of SNAP waiver
29 implementation, reduce error rates, improve program integrity, and provide a formal
30 referral pathway to federal enforcement authorities.

SECTION 3.

31

32 Article 1 of Chapter 4 of Title 49 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
33 general provisions of public assistance, is amended by revising Code Section 49-4-15.1,
34 relating to examination of financial records in instances of alleged fraud, as follows:

35 "49-4-15.1.

36 The department may examine any documents, books, papers, or memoranda, electronic
37 material, financial records, or business records relating to recipients, applicants, authorized
38 representatives, household members, federally authorized retailers, or state contractors
39 ~~reflecting the income of, or financial records bearing upon the determination of the~~
40 ~~eligibility of, recipients~~ in instances of alleged fraud ~~by recipients~~ of food stamps and

41 public assistance. ~~This process~~ Such examination may be implemented by means of a
42 subpoena which may be issued by the commissioner of human services, upon the advice
43 of the State Department of Law. In order to consider the issuance of such subpoenas, ~~the~~
44 ~~director of the department's office of fraud and abuse must~~ inspector general shall
45 personally make application in writing to the commissioner of human services specifying
46 why such information is necessary. If issued, such subpoenas shall compel the production
47 of relevant documents. Subpoenas shall be served in the same manner as if issued by a
48 superior court. If any person fails to obey a subpoena issued and served under this Code
49 section with respect to any matter germane to the department's investigation, on application
50 of the department, through the commissioner of human services or the commissioner's duly
51 authorized representative, the superior court of the county in which the documents were
52 required to be produced may issue an order requiring the person to comply with the
53 subpoena and to produce the relevant documents."

54

SECTION 4.

55 Said article is further amended by adding new Code sections to read as follows:

56 "49-4-23.

57 (a) In no case shall categorical eligibility under 7 U.S.C. Section 2014(a) or 7 C.F.R.
58 Section 273.2(j)(2)(ii) be granted for any noncash, in-kind, or other benefit unless expressly
59 required by the federal law for the SNAP program.

60 (b) The department shall not apply gross income standards for SNAP benefits higher than
61 the standards specified on January 1, 2026, in 7 U.S.C. Section 2014(c) or establish
62 allowable financial resource standards higher than the standards specified in 7 U.S.C.
63 Section 2014(g)(1), other than financial resources described in 7 U.S.C. Section
64 2014(g)(2)(D), unless expressly required by federal law. Categorical eligibility and
65 exemptions for households from such gross income standards or allowable financial

66 resource standards shall not be granted for any noncash, in-kind, or other benefit unless
67 expressly required by federal law for the SNAP program.

68 (c) The department may apply alternate vehicle allowance standards as authorized
69 by 7 U.S.C. Section 2014(g)(2)(D).

70 (d) By January 1, 2029, the department shall assign certification periods of no greater than
71 four months to households with zero net income, households that include an able-bodied
72 adult without dependents, or other households whose circumstances are determined by the
73 department to be unstable unless otherwise prohibited under federal law for SNAP
74 programs.

75 (e) By January 1, 2029, the department shall assign certification periods of one to two
76 months to households that the department determines will become ineligible for the SNAP
77 within 30 days of such determination, unless otherwise prohibited under federal law for the
78 SNAP program.

79 (f) By January 1, 2029, the department shall verify the eligibility of households applying
80 for SNAP benefits in accordance with the following requirements:

81 (1) Regarding applications for expedited service, the department shall make all
82 reasonable efforts to verify all eligibility criteria, including, but not limited to, identity,
83 residency, and income, within the seven-day expedited processing period required by
84 federal law;

85 (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Code section, the department shall verify
86 all eligibility criteria for the applicant and all household members, including, but not
87 limited to, income, residency, and citizenship or immigration status, within 30 days of the
88 date of application; and

89 (3) All SNAP verification requirements not completed during expedited service
90 processing shall be submitted and completed before the second month's benefits are
91 issued. The department shall not issue benefits for the second month of the certification
92 period to any household that has failed to provide the necessary documentation to verify

93 all eligibility factors within the period prescribed in paragraph (2) of this subsection after
94 being provided timely notice and an opportunity to submit the required documentation
95 or resolve any verification issues in accordance with federal SNAP requirements.

96 (g) No private right of action shall arise from any violation of this Code section by the
97 department.

98 (h)(1) Beginning July 1, 2027, and every six months thereafter until January 1, 2029, the
99 department shall submit a status report to the chairpersons of the House Committee on
100 Appropriations, the Senate Appropriations Committee, the House Committee on Public
101 and Community Health, and the Senate Health and Human Services Committee regarding
102 progress in the implementation of subsections (d), (e), and (f) of this Code section.

103 (2) This subsection shall stand repealed by operation of law on January 1, 2029.

104 49-4-24.

105 (a) The department shall establish and maintain data-matching agreements and automated
106 verification procedures to identify changes in circumstances affecting eligibility for the
107 federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). As used in this Code section,
108 the term 'SNAP' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section 49-4-26.

109 (b) On at least a monthly basis, the department shall review information from the
110 Department of Public Health concerning individuals in households enrolled in SNAP that
111 indicates a change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for SNAP, including, but not
112 limited to, death records.

113 (c) On at least a quarterly basis, the department shall receive and review information from
114 the Department of Labor concerning individuals in households enrolled in SNAP that
115 indicates a change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for SNAP, including, but not
116 limited to, changes in employment or wages.

117 (d) On at least a monthly basis, the department shall receive and review information
118 concerning individuals in households enrolled in SNAP that indicates a change in

119 circumstances that may affect eligibility for SNAP, including, but not limited to, potential
120 changes in residency as identified by out-of-state electronic benefit transfer transactions.
121 (e) On at least a quarterly basis, the department shall receive and review information from
122 the centralized employee registry established and maintained pursuant to Code
123 Section 19-11-9.2 concerning individuals in households enrolled in SNAP that indicates
124 a change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for SNAP, including, but not limited
125 to, unreported employment, new sources of income, or changes in wage levels.
126 (f) On at least a monthly basis, the department shall receive and review information from
127 the Department of Corrections concerning individuals in households enrolled in SNAP that
128 indicates a change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for SNAP, including, but not
129 limited to, incarceration status.
130 (g) On at least a monthly basis, the department shall, to assess continued eligibility for
131 SNAP and act on such findings, review and act on the following data from federal sources:
132 (1) Earned income information, death registry information, incarceration records,
133 supplemental security income information, beneficiary records, earnings information, and
134 pension information maintained by the United States Social Security Administration;
135 (2) Income and employment information maintained in the National Directory of New
136 Hires database and child support enforcement data maintained by the United States
137 Department of Health and Human Services;
138 (3) National fleeing felon information maintained by the United States Federal Bureau
139 of Investigation; and
140 (4) Address change information maintained in the United States Postal Service National
141 Change of Address database.
142 (h) The department shall enter into a data-matching agreement with the Georgia Lottery
143 Corporation to identify households with lottery winnings equal to or exceeding the
144 applicable allowable financial resource limit for elderly or disabled households as defined
145 in 7 U.S.C. Section 2014(g)(1) and, to the extent permitted under federal law, shall treat

146 such data as verified upon receipt. When such data may not be treated as verified upon
147 receipt, the department shall refer such cases for further investigation to confirm allowable
148 financial resource eligibility for SNAP.

149 (i) The department is authorized to execute memorandums of understanding or
150 data-sharing agreements with any other department, agency, or division of this state or any
151 federal agency for the purpose of obtaining or sharing the information required to carry out
152 the provisions of this Code section.

153 (j) Nothing in this Code section shall prohibit the department from contracting with one
154 or more independent vendors to provide additional data or information which may indicate
155 a change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for SNAP.

156 (k) Other departments and agencies of the state shall cooperate in a timely and responsive
157 manner to requests from the department to provide information required for a
158 determination of eligibility for participation in SNAP.

159 49-4-25.

160 (a) The department shall not seek, apply for, accept, or renew any waiver of work
161 requirements under 7 U.S.C. Section 2015(o)(4) without first obtaining specific
162 authorization from the General Assembly. Such authorization shall be provided in a duly
163 enacted statute.

164 (b) The department shall not exercise the state's option to provide any exemptions from
165 the work requirement under 7 U.S.C. Section 2015(o)(6)(F). This subsection shall not be
166 construed to limit the application of good cause exemptions for temporary absence from
167 employment as provided in 7 C.F.R. Section 273.24(b)(2).

168 49-4-26.

169 (a) As used in this Code section, the term:

170 (1) 'Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program' or 'D-SNAP' means the
171 emergency assistance program, authorized in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and the
172 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988, that provides
173 temporary food assistance in the form of benefit to low to moderate income households
174 that lost income or that or sustained property damage following a presidentially declared
175 disaster.

176 (2) 'EBT card' means an embedded, encrypted chip card requiring a four-digit personal
177 identification number for in-person use in a computer based electronic benefit transfer
178 system approved by the United States Department of Agriculture to obtain food benefits.

179 (3) 'Food sales establishment' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section
180 26-2-21.

181 (4) 'Food service establishment' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section
182 26-2-370.

183 (b) All EBT cards issued in Georgia shall display:

184 (1) The full legal name of the SNAP participant;

185 (2) A printed statement citing applicable Georgia or federal law prohibiting the sale,
186 trade, or transfer of EBT cards for unlawful purposes; and

187 (3) The SNAP fraud-reporting hotline number for the United States Department of
188 Agriculture and instructions for reporting suspected fraudulent use.

189 (c) Nothing contained in subsection (h) of Code section 49-4-24 shall limit the ability of
190 any legally authorized individual to use the EBT card consistent with federal law and
191 regulations.

192 (d) No individual or family may receive SNAP benefits in this state unless such individual
193 or family:

194 (1) Verifies United States citizenship at application and recertification, consistent with
195 federal law; and

196 (2) Meets all federal SNAP work requirements applicable to such person's household
197 category.

198 (e) Beginning January 1, 2027, SNAP recipients shall recertify their eligibility in
199 accordance with 7 C.F.R. Part 273.

200 (f) The Georgia Department of Agriculture, in coordination with the Division of Family
201 and Children Services, may:

202 (1) Identify and pursue all federal grants, pilot programs, and technical assistance
203 opportunities offered by the United States Department of Agriculture to support and
204 expand the use of SNAP at local farmers markets;

205 (2) Provide training and assistance for farmers markets and agricultural vendors seeking
206 SNAP authorization;

207 (3) Promote participation by vendors offering fruits, vegetables, and meats that comply
208 with this Code section; and

209 (4) Expand state-wide access to SNAP eligible agricultural vendors.

210 (g) The Division of Family and Children Services shall jointly with the Department of
211 Human Services submit an annual report to the General Assembly by December 31 of each
212 year summarizing:

213 (1) Vendor participation in farmers market SNAP programs;

214 (2) Any implementation issues or unintended consequences; and

215 (3) Recommendations for improvements or additional pilot programs.

216 (h) SNAP benefits shall not be used to purchase:

217 (1) Foods or beverages in a food service establishment; or

218 (2) Beverages customized on-site for immediate and individual consumption at the time
219 of purchase, including those that are:

220 (A) Hot beverages which are prepared, mixed, or blended in a food sales establishment

221 or

222 (B) Cold beverages which are prepared, mixed, or blended in a food sales
223 establishment.

224 (i) The Division of Family and Children Services may issue guidance to authorized SNAP
225 retailers clarifying that SNAP benefits shall not be accepted for any items listed in
226 subsection (h) of this Code section.

227 (j) The Division of Family and Children Services shall require affected retailers to
228 implement point-of-sale controls that ensure benefits shall not be used for any items listed
229 in subsection (h) of this Code section.

230 (k) Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, the enforcement of this Code section shall
231 remain the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States Department of Agriculture.

232 (l) Nothing in this Code section shall be construed to limit or otherwise regulate D-SNAP
233 or emergency circumstances that are the same or similar to those governed by D-SNAP."

234 **SECTION 5.**

235 This Act shall become effective on January 1, 2027.

236 **SECTION 6.**

237 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.