

House Bill 947 (COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE)

By: Representatives Momtahan of the 17th, Cannon of the 172nd, Tarvin of the 2nd, Jones of the 25th, Kelley of the 16th, and others

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 a pre-authorization accuracy checklist for all SNAP eligibility determinations; to provide
10 for verification procedures relative to the Department of Public Health and the Department
11 of Corrections; to provide for restrictions on the waiver of work requirements; to provide for
12 jurisdiction; to provide for private rights of action; to provide for reports; to provide for
13 regulation and enforcement of D-SNAP benefits; to provide for automatic repeal; to provide
14 for construction; to provide for related matters; to provide for a short title; to provide for
15 legislative findings; to provide for an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other
16 purposes.

17 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

H. B. 947 (SUB)

SECTION 1.

18

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

SECTION 2.

20

21 The General Assembly finds that:

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

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

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

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

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

SECTION 3.

33

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

37 "49-4-15.1.

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

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

56 **SECTION 4.**

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

58 "49-4-23.

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

62 (b) The department shall not apply gross income standards for SNAP benefits higher than
63 the standards specified on January 1, 2026, in 7 U.S.C. Section 2014(c) or establish
64 allowable financial resource standards higher than the standards specified in 7 U.S.C.
65 Section 2014(g)(1), other than financial resources described in 7 U.S.C. Section
66 2014(g)(2)(D), unless expressly required by federal law. Categorical eligibility and
67 exemptions for households from such gross income standards or allowable financial

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

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

72 (d) By January 1, 2029, the department shall assign certification periods of no greater than
73 four months to households with zero net income, households that include an able-bodied
74 adult without dependents, or other households whose circumstances are determined by the
75 department to be unstable unless otherwise prohibited under federal law for SNAP
76 programs. This subsection shall not apply to households in which all members are elderly
77 or disabled.

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

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

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

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

92 (3) All SNAP verification requirements not completed during expedited service
93 processing shall be submitted and completed before the second month's benefits are
94 issued; provided, however, that the department shall provide the household a specific

195 written notice at least 15 days prior to the end of the 30 day verification period prescribed
196 in paragraph (2) of this subsection identifying the exact documents or information
197 required to complete such verification. The department shall not issue benefits for the
198 second month of the certification period to any household that has failed to provide the
199 necessary documentation to verify all eligibility factors within the period prescribed in
100 paragraph (2) of this subsection after being provided timely notice and an opportunity to
101 submit the required documentation or resolve any verification issues in accordance with
102 federal SNAP requirements.

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

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

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

111 (i)(1) By January 1, 2029, the department shall implement a pre-authorization accuracy
112 checklist for all SNAP eligibility determinations and shall require either a second-party
113 review or an automated system validation of:

114 (A) Gross earned and unearned income;

115 (B) Household composition; and

116 (C) Shelter and utility deductions.

117 (2) No benefit issuance shall be finalized until the items described in subparagraphs (A)
118 through (C) of paragraph (1) of this subsection have been validated.

119 (3) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to delay the issuance of benefits
120 required under federal expedited service time frames.

121 49-4-24.

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

126 (b) On at least a monthly basis, the department shall review information from the
127 Department of Public Health 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, death records.

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

134 (d) On at least a monthly basis, the department shall receive and review information
135 concerning individuals in households enrolled in SNAP that indicates a change in
136 circumstances that may affect eligibility for SNAP, including, but not limited to, potential
137 changes in residency as identified by out-of-state electronic benefit transfer transactions.

138 (e) On at least a quarterly basis, the department shall receive and review information from
139 the centralized employee registry established and maintained pursuant to Code
140 Section 19-11-9.2 concerning individuals in households enrolled in SNAP that indicates
141 a change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for SNAP, including, but not limited
142 to, unreported employment, new sources of income, or changes in wage levels.

143 (f) On at least a monthly basis, the department shall receive and review information from
144 the Department of Corrections concerning individuals in households enrolled in SNAP that
145 indicates a change in circumstances that may affect eligibility for SNAP, including, but not
146 limited to, incarceration status.

147 (g) On at least a monthly basis, the department shall, to assess continued eligibility for
148 SNAP and act on such findings, review and act on the following data from federal sources:

149 (1) Earned income information, death registry information, incarceration records,
150 supplemental security income information, beneficiary records, earnings information, and
151 pension information maintained by the United States Social Security Administration;

152 (2) Income and employment information maintained in the National Directory of New
153 Hires database and child support enforcement data maintained by the United States
154 Department of Health and Human Services;

155 (3) National fleeing felon information maintained by the United States Federal Bureau
156 of Investigation; and

157 (4) Address change information maintained in the United States Postal Service National
158 Change of Address database.

159 (h) The department shall enter into a data-matching agreement with the Georgia Lottery
160 Corporation to identify households with lottery winnings equal to or exceeding the
161 applicable allowable financial resource limit for elderly or disabled households as defined
162 in 7 U.S.C. Section 2014(g)(1) and, to the extent permitted under federal law, shall treat
163 such data as verified upon receipt. When such data may not be treated as verified upon
164 receipt, the department shall refer such cases for further investigation to confirm allowable
165 financial resource eligibility for SNAP.

166 (i)(1) The department shall treat data received from the Department of Public Health
167 concerning death records pursuant to subsection (b) of this Code section and data
168 received from the Department of Corrections concerning incarceration status pursuant
169 subsection (f) of this Code section as verified upon receipt.

170 (2) Upon receipt of the data described in paragraph (1) of this subsection, the department
171 may take appropriate action to suspend, terminate, or adjust benefits in accordance with
172 federal law without requiring additional verification from the household.

173 (3) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to authorize the reduction or termination
174 of benefits based solely on wage or employment data without first providing the
175 household notice and an opportunity to respond as required under federal law.

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

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

182 49-4-25.

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

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

191 49-4-26.

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

193 (1) 'Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program' or 'D-SNAP' means the
194 emergency assistance program, authorized in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 and the
195 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988, that provides
196 temporary food assistance in the form of benefit to low to moderate income households

197 that lost income or that or sustained property damage following a presidentially declared
198 disaster.

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

202 (3) 'Food sales establishment' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section
203 26-2-21.

204 (4) 'Food service establishment' shall have the same meaning as set forth in Code Section
205 26-2-370.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

257 **SECTION 5.**

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

259 **SECTION 6.**

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