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January 2026



Preparing for Changes to SNAP

How OFS Is Planning to Support Families

Last fall, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Plan (SNAP) benefit freeze, compounded by the federal government shutdown, placed **millions of people in the bi-state region** under unexpected financial strain. This year, **significant changes to SNAP** are expected to **increase food insecurity across Missouri and Illinois** at a time when families are still struggling with rising food costs and economic uncertainty. At Operation Food Search, we are preparing now to **meet the surge in need** and ensure our neighbors continue to have access to nutritious food.

Expanded SNAP work requirements went into effect in Missouri in November, requiring many adults to work, volunteer or participate in job training for at least 80 hours per month to maintain benefits.

- Longstanding exemptions for **veterans, youth aging out of foster care, people experiencing homelessness, and caregivers with children over age 14** were either removed or limited.
- It's estimated that **150,000 Missourians** will lose some of their SNAP benefits as a result.
- Illinois will face similar changes starting in February, with nearly **472,000 residents** projected to lose benefits.

Given widespread food insecurity and **food prices that have risen by 30%** over the past five years, these policy changes hit struggling individuals and families especially hard. Most SNAP households include **at least one working family member**—often in low wage jobs—and 80% of the households include a **child, senior citizen, or person with a disability**.

“When there are stalls, shifting rules, and confusing communications, it is **working families who feel it first**. This is why **OFS advocates for systems that work for people**, not against them. When more people **understand the issues**, we gain more allies, and stronger allies mean **a stronger and more connected community**. And it's why we keep focused on **moving food no matter what**.”

—*Darcella Craven, OFS Director of Government & Community Relations*

SNAP reductions have a **profound impact on the local economy**, as well. In Missouri alone, the state could **lose hundreds of millions of dollars** in SNAP funding as early as this year, with ripple effects for **grocery stores, farmers, truck drivers, and local jobs**.

At OFS, we're watching closely for signs of **increased pressure on food pantry partners**. We're maintaining clear lines of communication with them, as well as keeping community members informed about where to

turn. We're also **increasing food sourcing and planning for higher demand**. Our recent facility expansion, **year-round MetroMarket operations**, and experience adapting our programs to surges in need enable us to **respond quickly as the situation evolves**. There are more changes to SNAP coming in the months ahead.

How You Can Help Right Now

In addition to **financial donations**, we rely on donations of shelf-stable food, which can be dropped off 24/7 at our warehouse. [Learn more here](#) about how to **host your own food drive**.

You can also **advocate for stronger SNAP benefits** and let elected officials know you're concerned about how SNAP cuts are affecting families. **Reach out to your elected officials** via [congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov). Don't forget to mention that SNAP cuts increase pressure on food banks and pantries, making it harder for people to put food on the table.

We are truly grateful for your support, and we'll continue to keep you informed as things change.

DONATE NOW



(Left to right: Shelby Akos, Randy Carthans, Neal Donohue, Kimberly Stumpf)

Welcoming New Leaders to the Operation Food Search Board of Directors

Operation Food Search recently welcomed four new members to our Executive Board of Directors. Each brings valuable expertise and a strong

connection to the St. Louis region. We are grateful for their time and crucial contributions to strengthening our work, as well as for their commitment to ensuring everyone has equitable access to the food they need to live healthy lives.

Shelby Akos, Associate Marketing Director, FanDuel Sports Network

Shelby Akos brings more than a decade of experience in sports marketing, brand strategy, and community engagement. She oversees marketing across multiple regions and works closely with professional and collegiate sports teams. As a former member of the OFS Friends Board, Shelby has a long-standing dedication to OFS's mission.

"To me, food has always been about more than meals," said Shelby. "It represents security, nourishment for both body and mind, and the power to build meaningful relationships. I truly believe food should never be a luxury."

Randy Carthans, Philanthropist, Formerly Operation Food Search Staff

Randy Carthans served nearly 19 years at OFS in operational and leadership roles, including Warehouse Manager. His deep institutional knowledge and firsthand experience moving food through our system provide an invaluable operational perspective on the Board.

Neal Donohue, Director of Finance, World Wide Technology

Neal Donohue brings more than 20 years of finance leadership experience, specializing in data-driven decision-making and organizational growth. His financial and strategic expertise will support OFS's long-term sustainability.

Kimberly Stumpf, Vice President, International Tax, Reinsurance Group of America

Kimberly Stumpf has more than 20 years of tax experience, including extensive work in international tax and public accounting. Her expertise will strengthen governance, financial oversight, and strategic planning at OFS.

"Food and nutrition are basic human needs, and I'm passionate about reducing food insecurity for families and children," said Kim. "I joined Operation Food Search to lend my time and skills and share in their mission to heal hunger for our community."

Thank You to Our Outgoing Board Members

We are grateful to Jessica Stephan, Steve Spratt, and Nik Brym for their dedicated service on the Operation Food Search Board of Directors. Their leadership helped guide OFS during a period of growing need and lasting impact. We thank them for their passionate support of our work and their commitment to serving the community.

For a full list of our Executive Board Members, please visit [our website](#).

Ways To Give



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Give Us a Like

Spread the word about OFS and our mission
to end hunger in the St. Louis region.

Committed to Excellence

Operation Food Search is certified and accredited for its accountability, transparency and adherence to strong and comprehensive industry standards.



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