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Policy Brief Series: Projecting the California Impact of H.R. 1

The Poverty Impact of New Federal SNAP Food Assistance Work Requirements in California

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Summary

This brief is the first in a series by the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality analyzing projected California impacts of H.R. 1 of 2025 (the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act") – and of potential state and local policy responses – using the California Poverty Measure (CPM). This brief focuses on H.R. 1 changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, known as CalFresh in California), specifically the expansion of work reporting requirements beginning in June 2026 for certain adults, defined within the SNAP program as Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). New work requirements are expected to cause a share of ABAWDs to lose their SNAP benefits, thus reducing resources available to these individuals and for the other people in their households to meet their basic needs. Using the most recent CPM data, from 2024, we identify an estimated 1,071,000 households – defined here as CPM poverty units – at risk of experiencing a loss of resources as a result of new SNAP work reporting requirements. These poverty units include 3,065,000 Californians. An estimated 42% of these at-risk poverty units include at least one vulnerable individual (i.e., a child, senior, or person with a disability). We also provide estimates of the regional distribution and race/ethnicity of Californians at risk of experiencing a loss of resources within their poverty unit. Next we simulate different scenarios for the SNAP drop-off rate as a result of the new work reporting requirements, assuming that 30%, 70%, or 100% of at-risk ABAWD individuals lose their SNAP benefits. We find that under the middle scenario an estimated 941,000 Californians in CPM poverty units that include individuals who lose benefits move into poverty or experience an increase in depth of poverty, while the at-risk population sees a relative 6% increase in poverty rate (from a poverty rate of 37.4% to 39.6%) and a relative 20% increase in the deep poverty rate (from a deep poverty rate of 9.7% to 11.7%). Results are also presented for more optimistic (30% drop-off) and pessimistic (100% drop-off) scenarios.

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Introduction

Passed by Congress and signed into law in July 2025, H.R. 1 (the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act") represents a landmark change in U.S. federal safety net and tax policy, particularly for programs meeting the needs of individuals with low incomes. H.R. 1 includes major policy changes across key federal programs that address basic needs, including food benefits and health coverage, as well as changes to income taxes and tax credits that are important for low-income families.

California is an important state context for understanding the impact of H.R. 1 because it has a large and diverse population with millions of residents potentially affected by these policy changes. Both state and local policymakers in California can also be expected to consider new policies in response to H.R. 1 to mitigate the effects of reduced federal resources for low-income residents. Understanding who is likely to be affected, where effects may be felt most strongly, and how these policy changes may translate into broader impact on poverty is important for informing potential community and policy responses.

This brief is the first in a series by the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality seeking to analyze projected California impacts of H.R. 1 – and of potential state and local policy responses – using the California Poverty Measure (CPM). The CPM is a state-specific index of poverty, developed by the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality and Public Policy Institute of California, that is modeled on the Census Bureau's Supplemental Poverty Measure. Because the CPM explicitly accounts for a range of cash and non-cash public benefits and tax policies, it serves well as a tool for analyzing the types of policy changes included in H.R. 1.

The current brief focuses on key H.R. 1 changes to the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known as CalFresh in California, which is the largest food assistance program in the U.S. This program plays an important role in reducing poverty in California, cutting poverty by more than any other safety net program besides Social Security.[1] Results presented in this brief provide a broad picture of Californians who could experience the direct and indirect effects of these policy changes, including demographic characteristics of the broadly affected population and effects on poverty and deep poverty.

[1] See the most recent California Poverty Measure fact sheet at Bohn, Sarah, Danielson, Caroline, Kimberlin, Sara, Malagon, Patricia, Tworek, Taisiya, and Wimer, Christopher (2026). *Poverty in California*. Public Policy Institute of California.

Summary of H.R. 1 Changes to SNAP Work Reporting Requirements

H.R. 1 mandates several changes to SNAP (with various implementation dates) including partial cost shifts to states, some changes to benefit calculations, new eligibility restrictions for certain immigrants, and a significant expansion of the population of SNAP recipients who must document that they are meeting requirements for weekly hours worked in order to continue receiving benefits. This brief focuses specifically on the H.R. 1 expansion of SNAP work requirements, implemented in California in June 2026, as the most important provision linked to immediate expected loss of SNAP benefits.[2]

Previous research generally finds that imposing work requirements, i.e., requiring that participants document that they have worked a minimum number of hours per week, leads to fewer individuals receiving food assistance through SNAP, without consistent evidence that these requirements lead to more individuals working (e.g., Bauer & East, 2026; Cook & East, 2024; Gray et al., 2023; Wheaton et al., 2021). Individuals losing benefits include those who struggle to complete required documentation of exemptions or hours worked and those with inconsistent work schedules, as well as those working fewer than the mandated number of hours.

H.R. 1 expands SNAP work reporting requirements primarily through changes to which individuals are subject to SNAP rules for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs). Under previous federal law, most adults aged 18-54 without dependents were subject to time-limited SNAP eligibility unless they met work reporting requirements or qualified for an exemption. Individuals subject to these rules who do not document compliance with work requirements are eligible for no more than three months of benefits within a three-year period. H.R. 1 broadens the population subject to these rules by extending the age range subject to documentation of work hours and modifying the exemption rules.

Key changes include:

- Expansion of the age range for ABAWD work requirements from ages 18-54 to 18-64.
- Changes to exemptions related to caregiving responsibilities, imposing new work reporting requirements on parents of children 14 and older.

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[2] See the related California Legislative Analyst's Office report at LAO (2026). *Key Impacts of H.R. 1 on Medi-Cal and CalFresh*. Presented to the Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review February 11, 2026; and the related California Department of Health and Human Services webinar at CalHHS (2025 July). *Navigating Federal Cuts to Health and Human Services in California: A Presentation with CalHHS*.

- Elimination of exemptions for people experiencing homelessness, young adults formerly in foster care, and veterans.
- Changes to area waivers that exempted all participants from work requirements if where they live was considered an area with high unemployment or insufficient jobs. Under prior rules, California had qualified for many years for a statewide waiver of ABAWD work requirements. New criteria limit waivers to areas with unemployment rates greater than 10%.

These changes are expected to increase both the number of SNAP participants required to document qualifying work activities and the administrative complexity associated with eligibility determination and case management.

Identifying Participants Newly Affected by Work Reporting Requirements

Analytical Approach

To estimate the population affected by expanded work requirements under H.R. 1, we combine survey-based demographic and household information from the U.S. Census American Community Survey (ACS) with administrative SNAP participation data from the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) using established methodology from the California Poverty Measure (CPM). We use the most recent available CPM data, representing calendar year 2024, constructed in the ACS public-use microdata available through IPUMS (University of Minnesota, www.ipums-usa.org).[3] For a detailed description of our approach to identifying the affected population see the separate Technical Appendix to this brief.

The analysis identifies individuals receiving SNAP who are likely to become newly subject to ABAWD work requirements under the new federal rules, as well as the individuals indirectly affected by these new rules because they live in households (defined here as CPM poverty units) with directly affected SNAP participants.

[3] Note that the CPM includes an adjustment to account for underreporting of SNAP receipt in Census survey data, so that SNAP receipt in the CPM aligns with county-level administrative tabulations from CDSS. For details of the methodology used to construct the CPM, see the CPM Technical Appendices at https://inequality.stanford.edu/california-poverty-measure-data.

The estimates presented in this brief are intended to approximate the broad population potentially affected by expanded SNAP work requirements under H.R. 1 and should not be interpreted as official SNAP (CalFresh) caseload estimates.[4] The analysis is conducted at the level of CPM poverty units, which differ from SNAP benefit units. Under U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) rules, SNAP benefit units include only people who customarily purchase and prepare meals together, meaning multiple SNAP benefit units may exist within a single CPM poverty unit while still sharing other household resources and expenses, such as housing costs and utilities. The estimates are also based on annual survey data and identify people who received SNAP at any point during the year, rather than a point-in-time monthly caseload, so they are not directly comparable to administrative participation data.

The analysis takes a deliberately broad approach to identifying individuals who could be affected by new work reporting requirements, without attempting to identify who would ultimately be compliant based on work hours. This approach recognizes that employment status, work hours, and exemption documentation can change over time, and that administrative burden and churn may cause eligible individuals to lose benefits even when they satisfy program requirements.

Overall, results presented in this brief are designed to provide a broader picture of Californians who could experience the effects of these policy changes, beyond the individuals impacted most directly.

The simulation framework estimates:

- Individuals subject to ABAWD work reporting requirements;
- All members of poverty units affected by decreased SNAP food assistance to any member of the poverty unit;
- Demographic breakdown of affected Californians; and
- Geographic concentration of affected Californians.

Because California previously qualified for a statewide waiver of ABAWD work requirements continuously since prior to the implementation of the CPM, this analysis cannot directly compare pre- and post-policy outcomes using observed work requirement implementation in

[4] The best available estimate of the monthly number of adults subject to time limits, from the California Department of Social Services, is about 800,000. See CDSS (2026). "Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)." *Local Assistance Estimate Methodologies: 2026 May Revision* (197).

California. Instead, this analysis relies on simulated eligibility exposure under the H.R. 1 framework using SNAP participation and demographic characteristics as of 2024, the most recent CPM data and the most recent full year prior to passage of H.R. 1.

Defining the Affected Population

Individuals are classified as affected by new work reporting requirements if they:

- Currently receive SNAP benefits;
- Fall within the expanded age range under H.R. 1;
- Do not report having a disability or receive public supports tied to disability status;
- Do not have children in their home under the age of 14;
- Are not categorically exempt from work registration; and
- Would likely become subject to ABAWD work requirements under the various implementation scenarios modeled in this brief.

Participants who meet the above criteria and are not known to qualify for an exemption from work requirements, referred to in this brief as “at-risk ABAWDs,” are the individuals at risk of losing SNAP benefits when work reporting requirements are imposed. The full population at risk of experiencing a reduction in family resources includes both these at-risk ABAWD individuals as well as the other people in their CPM poverty units. Table 1 shows the number of poverty units estimated to be impacted by the expanded work reporting requirements and their key characteristics. Table 2 provides more detail on demographics of people in those poverty units and the regional concentrations of those at risk.

Table 1: Characteristics of Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD Participants

	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Share (%)
Total Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD	1,071,000	1,043,000	1,099,000	100.0%
With Children	237,000	224,000	249,000	22.1%
With Seniors	205,000	195,000	214,000	19.1%
With People with Disabilities	195,000	184,000	207,000	18.2%
With Any Vulnerable Californian (with any child, senior, or person with disability)	450,000	433,000	466,000	42.0%
With Any Noncitizen	237,000	224,000	249,000	22.1%

Source: Author calculations from 2024 CPM.

Notes: Lower and upper bounds define the range for a 99% confidence interval. Estimates based on a sample of less than 500 are suppressed. * sample size 500-999. All estimates are subject to uncertainty due to sampling variability. The uncertainty is greater for smaller sample sizes. Sample sizes available upon request.

Table 2: Geographic and Demographic Breakdown of People in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD Participants

	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Share (%)
Total People in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD	3,065,000	2,951,000	3,178,000	100.0%
Total Adults in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD	2,637,000	2,545,000	2,730,000	86.0%
Total Children in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD	427,000	395,000	460,000	13.9%
By Region				
Northern Region	79,000*	65,000	94,000	2.6%*
Sacramento Area	186,000	159,000	212,000	6.1%
San Francisco Bay Area (10-County)	373,000	335,000	411,000	12.2%
Central Valley and Sierra	477,000	434,000	519,000	15.6%
Central Coast Region	124,000	99,000	149,000	4.0%
Inland Empire	460,000	414,000	505,000	15.0%
Los Angeles County	940,000	879,000	1,000,000	30.7%
Orange County	216,000	184,000	247,000	7.0%
San Diego County	210,000	184,000	237,000	6.9%

Table 2 (cont'd)

	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Share (%)
By Race and Ethnicity				
White	569,000	527,000	610,000	18.6%
Black	263,000	237,000	289,000	8.6%
Hispanic	1,527,000	1,440,000	1,615,000	49.8%
Asian/Pacific Islander	541,000	496,000	587,000	17.7%
Other	164,000	143,000	185,000	5.4%

Source: Author calculations from 2024 CPM.

Notes: Lower and upper bounds define the range for a 99% confidence interval. Estimates based on a sample of less than 500 are suppressed. * sample size 500-999. All estimates are subject to uncertainty due to sampling variability. The uncertainty is greater for smaller sample sizes. Sample sizes available upon request.

Responses to Work Requirements Policy

A substantial body of research (e.g., Bauer & East 2026; Cook & East 2024; Gray et al. 2023; Wheaton et al. 2021) has examined the effects of SNAP work reporting requirements on employment outcomes and program participation. Existing evidence generally finds that work requirements lead to reductions in SNAP participation, but produce limited or inconsistent evidence of sustained employment gains.

Older studies on SNAP work requirements generally relied on publicly available data, whereas more recent studies have used more precise administrative data. Using CPM methodology, we are able to combine both publicly available data and administrative data to more precisely model various work requirement exemptions within the California context.

Modeling Participation Decline Scenarios

Research on prior ABAWD work reporting requirement implementation periods suggests that many individuals lost benefits due to procedural barriers, unstable employment, or difficulties documenting compliance, with limited evidence of increases in long-term earnings or labor force participation. State and local policymakers may also seek to reduce loss of benefits by increasing resources for identifying exempt individuals or assisting individuals in navigating the new requirements. Given uncertainty regarding implementation practices and participant behavior, this brief models a range of potential participation outcomes rather than a single estimate.

The simulation scenarios assume SNAP participation losses among ABAWD participants without a known exemption (at-risk ABAWDs) with drop-off rates between 30% and 100%. These scenarios provide optimistic and pessimistic counterfactuals relative to the 70% drop-rate that has been projected by the California Department of Social Services.[5] For these models, we assume that the affected at-risk ABAWDS lose their entire SNAP benefits received during the 2024 calendar year. With at-risk ABAWDS' benefit allotment zeroed out, we sum up SNAP benefits received by all program participants within each CPM poverty unit to arrive at the updated SNAP resources available within the CPM poverty unit. In our companion Technical Appendix, we also provide another estimation that assumes participants only lose SNAP benefits after participating in the program for up to three months; these alternative estimates serve as a lower bound for our benefit loss modeling.

For each scenario, we estimate:

- Total number of Californians in poverty units that include an at-risk ABAWD;
- Number of people in those poverty units who are pushed into poverty or whose poverty gap increases as a result of their total household resources declining when ABAWD family members lose SNAP benefits; and
- Share of people moving into poverty or with an increase in depth of poverty within the at-risk population of family members in poverty units that include an at-risk ABAWD; and
- Poverty rate and deep poverty rate (i.e., resources equal to less than 50% of the poverty threshold) before and after ABAWD family members lose SNAP benefits, within the at-risk population.

[5] See California Department of Social Services (2026). "Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)." *Local Assistance Estimate Methodologies: 2026 May Revision* (197).

Table 3: Increase in Depth of Poverty for Californians in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWDs

	Estimate	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Share of Californians in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD (%)
All Californians in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWDs	3,065,000	2,951,000	3,178,000	100.0%
Scenario 1: 100% of At-Risk ABAWDs Lose SNAP				
Californians Moved into Poverty or Whose Poverty Gap Increases	1,250,000	1,181,000	1,320,000	40.8%
Scenario 2: 70% of At-Risk ABAWDs Lose SNAP				
Californians Moved into Poverty or Whose Poverty Gap Increases	941,000	881,000	1,002,000	30.7%
Scenario 3: 30% of At-Risk ABAWDs Lose SNAP				
Californians Moved into Poverty or Whose Poverty Gap Increases	460,000	415,000	505,000	15.0%

Source: Author calculations from 2024 CPM.

Notes: Lower and upper bounds define the range for a 99% confidence interval. Estimates based on a sample of less than 500 are suppressed. * sample size 500-999. All estimates are subject to uncertainty due to sampling variability. The uncertainty is greater for smaller sample sizes. Sample sizes available upon request.

Table 4: Increase in Poverty Rate and Deep Poverty Rate for Californians in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWDs

	No work require-ments	H.R. 1 work require-ments	Percentage point increase in poverty rate	Relative percent increase in poverty rate
Scenario 1: 100% of At-Risk ABAWDs Lose SNAP				
Poverty Rate Among Californians in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD	37.4%	40.8%	3.4%	9%
Deep Poverty Rate Among Californians in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD	9.7%	12.4%	2.7%	28%

Table 4 (cont'd)

	No work require-ments	H.R. 1 work require-ments	Percentage point increase in poverty rate	Relative percent increase in poverty rate
Scenario 2: 70% of At-Risk ABAWDs Lose SNAP				
Poverty Rate Among Californians in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD	37.4%	39.6%	2.2%	6%
Deep Poverty Rate Among Californians in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD	9.7%	11.7%	2.0%	20%
Scenario 3: 30% of At-Risk ABAWDs Lose SNAP				
Poverty Rate Among Californians in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD	37.4%	38.3%	0.9%	2%
Deep Poverty Rate Among Californians in Poverty Units with At-Risk ABAWD	9.7%	10.6%	0.9%	9%

Source: Author calculations from 2024 CPM.

Notes: "Deep poverty" is defined as resources equal to less than 50% of the CPM poverty threshold. All estimates are subject to uncertainty due to sampling variability. The uncertainty is greater for smaller sample sizes. Sample sizes available upon request.

Other considerations

As noted above, this analysis does not attempt to identify which SNAP recipients subject to new work reporting requirements would ultimately be compliant with the requirements based on hours worked. This approach recognizes the dynamic nature of employment status and work hours over a 12-month time period, as well as the expected loss of benefits among individuals who are working the required hours but do not successfully document their work status. Detailed investigation of pre-existing employment patterns among individuals likely to be affected by the new work requirements is thus outside the scope of this brief, but would provide complementary data for understanding to what extent SNAP participation drop-off could potentially be reduced through interventions to connect unemployed individuals to work opportunities or to assist employed individuals in navigating documentation requirements.[6]

Another issue outside the scope of this brief is the role of broader “chilling effects” as drivers of SNAP participation drop-off. Prior research suggests that policy changes affecting public benefits may produce broader participation declines beyond those directly targeted by statutory eligibility changes. Recent administrative projections of the SNAP (CalFresh) caseload from the California Department of Social Services[7] indicate that participants began disenrolling from the program even before the various eligibility provisions of H.R. 1 had begun to be implemented, with CDSS connecting this caseload decline to chilling effects, which may disproportionately affect mixed-status households, immigrant communities, and households with limited English proficiency. The current brief does not directly model these types of behavioral responses associated with fear, confusion, anticipation of future restrictions, or perceived immigration-related risk stemming from H.R. 1 implementation. A subsequent brief in this series will focus on the potential magnitude of immigration-eligiblity restrictions introduced by H.R. 1 and chilling effects on program participation under alternative assumptions.

Conclusion

The federal SNAP food assistance program is a key component of the safety net for Californians, second only to Social Security in reducing poverty in California. New SNAP work reporting requirements imposed by H.R. 1 are expected to cause a decline in SNAP receipt among individuals required to meet these new rules. Individuals at risk of a reduction in resources from SNAP to meet basic needs include both those who are working fewer than the mandated hours as well as individuals who are working the required number of hours but struggle to navigate the reporting process, along with the children, seniors, and other adults who live in households with individuals who lose their SNAP benefits.

Results of our simulation show that hundreds of thousands of Californians are projected to move into poverty or see an increase in depth of poverty as a result of the new SNAP work reporting requirements, with a noteworthy relative increase in the poverty rate and deep poverty rate among individuals subject to the new rules and the members of their households

[6] A recent report and policy brief by the Public Policy Institute of California explores this issue using recent administrative data. See Danielson, Caroline, Thorman, Tess, & Malagon, Patricia (2026). *CalFresh Work and Workforce Training: Navigating New Federal Requirements*. PPIC.

[7] See the CalFresh caseload projections from the California Department of Social Services at CDSS (2026). *Local Assistance Caseload: 2026 May Revision* (15).

(i.e., poverty units). State and local policies that may help mitigate these effects include intensifying efforts to identify individuals who qualify for exemptions from the new requirements, increasing resources to assist individuals in navigating the reporting process, expanding availability of other food assistance, and enhancing support to connect participants with stable employment opportunities.

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Appendix A: Additional San Francisco Bay Area Estimates

Appendix B: Technical Appendix