

WisDems: WPR - 1 month after child tax credits expanded to more families, food insecurity drops 24 percent

Posted on Tuesday, Aug 24, 2021

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MADISON, Wis. — Yesterday, Wisconsin Public Radio reported that after just one month of President Biden's expanded middle-class tax cuts – made possible by Democrats' American Rescue Plan – food insecurity dropped by 24 percent.

The expanded Child Tax Credit also drove [\\$328 million](#) into Wisconsin's economy and [\\$262 million](#) into families' pockets, and provided critical relief to Wisconsin families bouncing back from this pandemic.

Read the full article [here](#):

Wisconsin Public Radio: [1 Month After Child Tax Credits Expanded To More Families, Food Insecurity Drops 24 Percent](#)

In the month since families began receiving the expanded child tax credit, national data from the U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey showed a drop in the number of households with children that reported insufficient food or trouble paying bills.

The Census surveyed families just before and just after the first payments arrived, and found a 3 percentage point decline in food insufficiency and a 2.5 percentage point decline in difficulty paying bills.

[...]

“That’s a great thing in just the first month, I’m guessing that those numbers are going to improve,” said Timothy Smeeding, a University of Wisconsin-Madison economist and child tax credit expert. “The word’s getting out, so I expect it’ll even be better soon for people who really need it.”

[...]

About 47 percent of families who received the expanded child tax credit reported spending it on food, and about 10 percent put it toward child care.

[...]

Federal coronavirus relief programs also increased the amount of money families can receive through FoodShare, Wisconsin’s federal food assistance program, and the pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) program that transferred money to families to put toward food.

“At the onset of the pandemic, we saw huge increases in child food insecurity and child hunger as parents lost jobs, as parents had to curb their income, and as the food supply chain was really inhibited,” said Courtney Smith, managing director of No Kid Hungry’s Center for Best Practices. “(These programs) are just all going to be absolutely critical, not in only addressing the elevated food insecurity that we’ve seen during the pandemic, but in moving forward — these provide a lot of good long-term policy options for us as a country.”

Smith said the combination of various food safety net policies has made it easier for families to meet their needs. But she said making the child tax credit permanent should be the first priority if the U.S. wants to cement those gains for low-income Americans. Estimates show that if the credit is made permanent, it could help lift about 46,000 Wisconsin kids above the poverty line.

“We know that poverty and food insecurity takes a huge toll on our health care and our education system, so we know this is not only beneficial for kids and families, it’s smart policy,” she said. “It ensures that kids are fed and able to learn, it ensures that health care expenditures are down.”