

# Dept. of Health Services: Federal government ends extra FoodShare benefits for Wisconsin households in February 2023

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The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, passed by Congress in late December, ends a federal program that has been providing additional benefits to households enrolled in Wisconsin's FoodShare program. FoodShare households have been receiving the maximum amount for their household size or \$95, whichever is more. In recent months, an average of approximately \$80 million has been distributed monthly to help almost 400,000 households across our state struggling to afford food. This also indirectly supports Wisconsinites involved in food production and retail like farmers, truckers, and grocers. February 2023 will be the last month families will receive the extra benefits. Regular FoodShare benefits will continue.

"The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that funds FoodShare is a crucial federal support to individuals and families, particularly in times like these when higher food prices are straining everyone's budgets, but especially those of our most vulnerable," said Department of Health Services Deputy Secretary Deb Standridge. "These additional funds provided to eligible Wisconsinites because of COVID-19 have made a real difference. With Congress deciding to end these federal funds, community support for local resources like food pantries and food banks will be more important than ever."

During the last two years, there have been historic federal cost of living increases to the maximum allotment amounts for households based on their size. Maximum allotment amounts have gone up approximately 34% from pre-pandemic levels.

“We expect the end of these extra benefits will impact not only individuals and families, but also retailers and farmers who accept benefits,” said Stephanie Jung Dorfman, executive director of Feeding Wisconsin, a statewide association of six Feeding America food banks that serve the state’s 72 counties. “During tough times, such as the pandemic and high inflation, FoodShare has been key to mitigating food insecurity. Regional food banks and local food distribution organizations will work to fill the gap, despite greater demand. Our network food banks and pantries are now gearing up to source and distribute enough food to ensure Wisconsinites have resources to turn to as they try to make ends meet.”

FoodShare members will receive a letter later this month alerting them to this change. Households with emails on file will also be notified by email. Members can check the amount of their regular monthly FoodShare benefit by logging into Wisconsin’s [ACCESS website](#) or by using the [MyACCESS smartphone app](#). Regular benefits are always deposited on the same day in the first half of each month.

Regular FoodShare benefit amounts are based on information like household size, income, and expenses. If a household has experienced changes like an increase in size or a decrease in income, bills they have not reported, or expenses that have increased, they should report these updates to the agency that manages their benefits. They may be eligible for increased FoodShare benefits.

Anyone who needs additional nutritional support can:

- Call 211 or 877-947-2211 to find a local food pantry.
- Check if they are eligible for the [Emergency Food Assistance Program \(TEFAP\)](#) – a federal program that provides food assistance to those with low incomes.
- Check if they are eligible for the [WIC \(Women, Infants, and Children\) Program](#) – a state program that helps Wisconsin families, including dads and other caregivers, with food benefits, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support.

[More information for FoodShare members](#) can be found on the DHS website.