



For Immediate Release: 03/08/2023

Contact: Wesley Story, 972.999.5225

or wstory@feedingtexas.org

Texas Food Banks Call for Lawmakers to Update the SNAP Vehicle Asset Test

More than 54,000 Texas households were denied SNAP due to the Vehicle Asset Test in 2022.

TEXAS – The Feeding Texas network, made up of 21 food banks across the state, is calling on state legislators to update the SNAP Vehicle Asset Test today in a virtual day of advocacy.

Eligibility for SNAP is primarily based on income and family size. Texas also chooses to use a Vehicle Asset Test, which places a limit on the value of the vehicles that a family may own and still qualify for the program.

“No family should lose their ability to put food on the table because of inflation in the car market, but that is exactly what is happening in Texas,” **said Celia Cole, CEO of Feeding Texas.** “Used cars significantly increased in value in the past year due to inflation and supply chain challenges. As a result, many families that were previously approved for SNAP have had their benefits taken away.”

Sen. César Blanco (D-El Paso) and Rep. Ryan Guillen (R-Rio Grande City) filed companion bills in the Senate (SB 273) and House (HB 1287) that would index the SNAP Vehicle Asset Test to inflation to better reflect today’s car values.

Current limits are stagnant at \$15,000 for the first vehicle and \$4,650 for any additional vehicle that a family owns. These limits have not been updated since 2001 for the primary car and 1974 for additional cars.

“Texans everywhere are feeling the impact of inflation,” **Rep. Guillen said.** “Because SNAP eligibility is linked to vehicle value, hungry Texans are losing benefits at a time when they need them most. These vehicle limits were set over 20 years ago — they are outdated and out of touch with reality.”

In Texas, 11,615 households were denied SNAP due to the Vehicle Asset Test in 2019. In 2022, the total number of rejections grew to 54,740, nearly five times as many denials despite little change in the total number of SNAP participants.

This trend was clear in the counties served by the Tarrant Area Food Bank. In 2019, 1,186 households in the food bank's service area were denied SNAP due to the Vehicle Asset Test, and that number grew to 5,673 in 2022.

"This is a significant increase in denials in just a few short years," **said Julie Butner, President and CEO of the Tarrant Area Food Bank.** "More families are going without the food assistance they need because the Vehicle Asset Test has not kept up with the economy."

Because SNAP is a federal program, Texas will incur no additional costs for updating the Vehicle Asset Test policy.

"Updating Texas' SNAP Vehicle Asset Test is not a handout, it is a hand-up for thousands of Texas families facing food insecurity who should not be punished for having the vehicles they need to lift themselves out of poverty and welfare," **Sen. Blanco said.** "It is a simple solution that would help thousands of hungry families at no cost to the state."

###

Feeding Texas leads a unified effort for a hunger-free Texas. Learn more and find your local food bank at www.feedingtexas.org.

BOILERPLATE FOR YOUR FOOD BANK / ORG