HEALTHY MECK

UNDERSTANDING UPCOMING CHANGES TO SNAP IN NORTH CAROLINA

What community members and partners should know about recent SNAP policy changes

---

Why are changes happening?

Recent federal legislation changed several parts of SNAP, including work requirements, administrative funding, and how some program costs may be shared among federal, state, and local governments.

Some changes have already begun. Others will take effect over the next several years.

Changes to work requirements

According to the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, federal law expanded SNAP work requirements to additional groups of adults and modified certain exemptions.

Work requirements now apply to a broader group of able-bodied adults and some parents of older children.

Eligibility rules continue to depend on a household's individual circumstances.

Other eligibility and benefit-related changes

Recent federal changes also affect:

- Certain utility allowance calculations.
- Some non-citizen eligibility rules.
- Administrative procedures used by SNAP programs.

The effect of these changes will vary from household to household.

Changes to SNAP funding

Beginning in **October 2026**, the federal government will pay a smaller share of SNAP administrative costs.

Beginning in **October 2027**, states may also be required to share some SNAP benefit costs when payment error rates exceed federal thresholds.

What could this mean for Mecklenburg County?

The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners estimates that Mecklenburg County could face approximately:

- **$8.1 million** in additional annual administrative costs.
- **$61.9 million** in estimated annual benefit-related costs associated with payment error rates.
- Approximately **$70.0 million** in total annual county cost exposure when these provisions are fully implemented.

These estimates represent potential future costs and should not be interpreted as Mecklenburg County's current SNAP budget or a finalized county obligation.

What does this mean for residents?

SNAP continues to serve more than **119,000 Mecklenburg County residents (nearly 1 in 10)** each month.

Eligible households may continue to apply for and receive benefits based on program rules.

Healthy Meck is monitoring these changes because they may affect:

- Program administration.
- County government costs.
- Access to benefits.
- Retailers and community organizations that support food access.

Learn more

Community members who would like to learn more about SNAP, current policy discussions, and available resources can visit:

- Stronger with SNAP from the North Carolina Alliance for Health.
- NCDHHS Food and Nutrition Services reports.
- NCDHHS information about H.R. 1 implementation.
- NCACC materials describing county cost estimates.

Healthy Meck's perspective

Healthy Meck supports efforts to ensure that Mecklenburg County residents continue to have access to healthy food and clear information about available resources.

We believe that residents, community organizations, retailers, county staff, and policymakers all benefit from transparent information about how SNAP works and how policy changes may affect the community.

Sources

- NCDHHS Impact of H.R. 1 on SNAP in North Carolina - https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/104981
- NCACC Increased Costs to Counties for SNAP - https://www.ncacc.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/2026-NCACC-AP-Data-Fact-Sheet-FINAL.pdf
- NCDHHS Food and Nutrition Services Caseload and Participation Reports - https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/reports-and-statistics/fns-caseload-statistics-reports
- Stronger with SNAP, North Carolina Alliance for Health - https://www.ncallianceforhealth.org/partnerships/stronger-with-snap-2/
- U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Mecklenburg County - https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mecklenburgcountynorthcarolina/PST045225

Methodology

- Mecklenburg County participation figures come directly from August 2026 NCDHHS SNAP/FNS reports.
- County cost estimates come from calculations published by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners.
- The estimated **$70 million county cost exposure** represents a potential future fiscal impact when all currently identified provisions are fully implemented. It is not Mecklenburg County's current SNAP budget, a finalized appropriation, or a proposed tax increase.
- Administrative-cost changes begin in October 2026. Benefit cost-sharing provisions begin in October 2027 under current federal law.