



Vermont Legislative Research Service

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State Supported Food Assistance

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) distributes around \$100 billion a year to over 12% of the population, averaging \$187.20 for each participant per month in 2024 to help purchase food using Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards.¹ The United States Food and Drug Administration (USDA), reports that 6 months of participation in SNAP correlates with a 5-10% decrease in food insecurity for households.² During the 2025 government shutdown, 42 million beneficiaries of SNAP were posed to not receive payments for the month of November due to federal funds not being released.³ In response to the risk of rising food insecurity this funding gap presented, states across the US took measures to cover benefit payments and support food banks.⁴

After a brief overview of food assistance in the US, the proceeding sections of this report contain an examination of these state responses, followed by a discussion of the challenges of providing food assistance through EBT programs and food banks.

Food Assistance Overview

Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program

SNAP is the US's primary food assistance program accounting for 70% of the USDA's \$142.2 billion 2024 nutrition assistance budget.⁵ Households must apply for benefits and there are eligibility restrictions based on income, work requirements, and disability status. Approved funds are loaded onto state-administered EBT cards and can be used to purchase select types of goods

¹ US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Key Statistics*, Updated July 24, 2025, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/key-statistics-and-research>.

² USDA Food and Nutrition Service Office of Policy Support, *Measuring the Effect of SNAP Participation on Food Security*, August 2013, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/Measuring2013Sum.pdf>.

³ Domenico Montanaro, “The Longest Government Shutdown in History is Over. Here is what you need to know,” *National Public Radio*, November 15, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/11/15/nx-s1-5609367/trump-government-shutdown-what-to-know-longest>.

⁴ David Chen, “How States Are Preparing for a Freeze in Federal Food Assistance,” *The New York Times*, October 30, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/30/us/politics/snap-states.html>.

⁵ US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – Key Statistics*.

at stores that are set up to accept EBT.⁶ There is a measured economic benefit from SNAP that helps bolster economic activity during downturns and recession with researchers finding in 2019 that every \$1.00 the government spent on the program induced an additional \$1.54 of spending, supported 13,560 jobs, and generated \$32 million in farm revenue.⁷

While the federal government provides the entirety of benefits monies for SNAP, the states are responsible for administering the program for their residents and covering part of administrative costs. Experts at the National Conference of State Legislatures explain how administrative independence creates opportunities to increase support for the program. States can make the registration process easier by shortening application forms, allowing phone registration, and by extending the deadline for submission. States have a small amount of control over eligibility and can increase it, for example by removing the assets tests and gross income eligibility limits. Some states such as Wisconsin and Arizona created programs that incentivize using SNAP benefits to purchase produce from local farms. Others created restaurant programs to allow for purchases of hot meals.⁸

Vermont SNAP is called 3SquaresVT. In FY 2023, 3SquaresVT distributed \$158.2 million in EBT SNAP benefits to 70,685 residents, around 11% of the population.⁹ That year 9.2% of households in Vermont were ‘food insecure’, meaning that access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money or other resources, and 9.9% of the Vermont population lived below the poverty line.¹⁰ In recent years, Vermont has issued between \$12 and \$13 million in benefits each month to eligible households.¹¹ There are over 600 retailers and 40 farmers markets that accept SNAP benefits.¹²

Other Food Assistance Programs

There are several other federally funded food benefits programs that states have some administrative control over including Women Infant Children, School Lunch, The Emergency Food Assistance Program, Commodity Supplemental Food, and Seniors Farmers Market.¹³ Beyond federal programs, some states such as Maine and Washington use state funding to

⁶ National Conference of State Legislatures, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*, Updated September 26, 2025, <https://www.ncsl.org/human-services/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program>.

⁷ Patrick Canning and Brian Stacey, “The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Economy: New Estimates of the SNAP Multiplier,” *US Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service*, July 2019, https://ers.usda.gov/sites/default/files/laserfiche/publications/93529/ERR265_Summary.pdf?v=20320.

⁸ National Conference of State Legislatures, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*.

⁹ USDA Food and Nutrition Service, *SNAP State Activity Report FY 2023*, May 2025, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-sar-fy23.pdf>.

¹⁰ USDA Economic Research Service, *State Fact Sheets – State Data*, Updated March 11, 2025, https://data.ers.usda.gov/reports.aspx?ID=4035&StateFIPS=50&StateName=Vermont#P84d44107c6f041a089da2ef5c334918a_2_39iT0.

¹¹ Vermont State Legislature Food and Resiliency workgroup, *3SquaresVT Program*, February 20, 2025, <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Workgroups/House%20Agriculture/Food%20Resiliency/3SquaresVT/W~Miranda%20Gray~3SquaresVT%20Program%20Overview~2-21-2025.pdf>.

¹² Locations found at: US Department of Agriculture, *SNAP Retailer Locator*, Accessed, December 3, 2025, <https://usda-fns.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=15e1c457b56c4a729861d015cd626a23>.

See Appendix Figure 1 for full state map of SNAP retailers

¹³ US Department of Agriculture, *Food Assistance Programs*, Accessed November 24, 2025, <https://www.nutrition.gov/topics/food-security-and-access/food-assistance-programs>.

administer food assistance EBT programs for immigrants who are ineligible to participate in SNAP.¹⁴

Food banks support local food assistance efforts through network coordination and storing food in warehouses to deliver to food distribution sites. They operate in various manners including with state and federal funding and through donations and volunteer support. While most goods offered are donated to the food bank, they are able to purchase less often donated and perishable goods when funds are available.¹⁵ States are able to support food banks with money from federal grants such as the Social Services Block Grant, which distributes \$1.7 billion to help low-income households.¹⁶ Vermont’s state-run foodbank distributes around 12 million pounds of food annually through its network of over 300 community partners.¹⁷

State Government Response to Federal Funding Gaps

During the 2025 federal government shutdown, most states responded with their own support for food assistance programs. Dozens initially sent funds to food banks due to delays and complications with setting up and loading EBT cards.¹⁸ Food bank funding amounts ranged depending on state size and capacity, with \$3 and \$4 million contributed by Connecticut and Minnesota, and \$80 million in California.¹⁹ Several states provided benefits on their EBT cards to cover payments using a variety of methods. Alaska and Delaware both declared states of emergency to grant the governor authority to direct funds to food assistance programs.²⁰ In addition to directing \$1 million to state food banks, Virginia used a budget surplus to start the Virginia Emergency Nutrition Assistance which would distribute an estimated \$37.5 million per week to 850,000 SNAP recipients.²¹ Hawai’i moved \$100 million of surplus funds from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families to create an open enrollment program that assisted

¹⁴ Maine: Maine Legislature Revised Statutes, Title 22: *Health and Welfare*, Chapter 851, § 3104-A (2013), <https://legislature.maine.gov/statutes/22/title22sec3104-A.html>; Washington: Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, *State Food Assistance Program (FAP)*, accessed December 12, 2025, <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/esa/community-services-offices/state-food-assistance-program-fap>.

¹⁵ Tori Waite, “What’s the difference between a food bank and a food pantry,” *Feeding America*, February 20, 2019, <https://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-blog/what-difference-between-food-bank-and-food-pantry>.

¹⁶ Administration for Children and Families, *SSBG Fact Sheet*, Accessed December 1, 2025, <https://acf.gov/ocs/fact-sheet/ssbg-fact-sheet>.

¹⁷ Vermont Food Bank, *Learn About Your Foodbank*, Accessed December 3, 2025, <https://www.vtfoodbank.org/learn-about-your-foodbank/>.

See Appendix Figure 2 for full state map of food shelf and pantry locations assembled from vtfoodbank.org

¹⁸ Maria Godoy and Jennifer Ludden, “SNAP benefits will restart, but will be half the normal payment and delayed,” *National Public Radio*, November 3, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/11/03/nx-s1-5596121/snap-food-benefits-trump-government-shutdown>.

¹⁹ David Chen, “How States Are Preparing for a Freeze in Federal Food Assistance,” *The New York Times*, October 30, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/30/us/politics/snap-states.html>.

²⁰ Alaska: Mike Dunleavy, “Declaration of State of Emergency” *State of Alaska*, November 3, 2025, <https://files.constantcontact.com/40a57e32901/12ffa6b6-4ef8-4e11-b819-45459b8cd8ed.pdf?rdr=true>; Delaware: Matthew Meyer, “Declaration of a State of Emergency in the State of Delaware Due to the Interruption of Federal SNAP Benefits,” *State of Delaware*, October 29, 2025, <https://governor.delaware.gov/state-of-emergency/declaration-of-a-state-of-emergency-in-the-state-of-delaware-due-to-the-interruption-of-federal-snap-benefits/>.

²¹ Charlotte Woods, “Virginia SNAP substitute to roll out weekly through November,” *Virginia Mercury*, October 28, 2025, <https://virginiamercury.com/2025/10/28/virginia-snap-substitute-to-roll-out-weekly-through-november/>.

with housing and utility bills allowing families to put a greater share of income towards food.²² Vermont directed \$250,000 to the Vermont Food Bank and approved \$6.3 million to provide one-time payments covering 15 days of benefits if SNAP funds did not arrive.²³

Challenges for EBT and Food Banks

Autonomy

The method by which food assistance is delivered affects recipients experiences of autonomy and dignity.²⁴ In a case study of the Netherlands' Beter Eten pilot program in Rotterdam, researcher Thirza Andriessen found that providing grocery debit cards, similar to SNAP's EBT, instead of food parcels gave participants greater control over where, when, and what food is purchased.²⁵ In contrast to receiving food aid in food pantries, participants valued the invisibility of their reliance on charity in the Beter Eten program. The debit card appeared identical to a standard bank card and could be used at local grocery stores. This allowed participants to integrate the food assistance into their regular grocery shopping routines, avoiding waiting in line at dedicated charity sites or interacting with volunteers positioned as "givers" of aid. As a result, feelings of shame and social exposure that are common in pantry-based food assistance models were reduced. Participants reported preferring the more consistent offerings and operating hours of regular grocery stores for food assistance.²⁶

Part of consumer choice is the ability to acquire culturally appropriate food. Participants emphasized the significance of "presenting their own culture on the table" as a major reason as to why they considered Beter Eten better than traditional food banks.²⁷ The ability to select food that reflects personal and cultural identities allows recipients to express themselves through consumption.²⁸

Food banks can produce stigma and feelings of shame through expectations of gratitude and limited choice.²⁹ Receiving low-quality or surplus food has been found to reduce self-worth and

²² State of Hawai'i Office of the Governor, "Governor Green Announces Coordinated Relief Effort to Protect Hawai'i Families from Federal Shutdown Impacts," Press release, October 29, 2025, <https://governor.hawaii.gov/newsroom/office-of-the-governor-news-release-gov-green-announces-coordinated-relief-effort-to-protect-hawai%CA%BBi-families-from-federal-shutdown-impacts/>.

²³ Lola Duffort, "Vermont will backfill SNAP benefits for at least 15 days," *Vermont Public*, October 29, 2025, <https://www.vermontpublic.org/local-news/2025-10-29/vermont-backfill-snap-15-days>.

²⁴ Thirza Andriessen, "How the social dignity of recipients is violated and protected across various forms of food aid in high-income countries: a scoping review," *Agric Hum Values* 41, (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-023-10476-w>.

²⁵ Thirza Andriessen, "Forms of autonomy and dependence in food aid: unravelling how they are related and perceived by recipients," *Agric Hum Values* 42, (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10460-025-10715-2>.

²⁶ Andriessen, "Forms of autonomy and dependence in food aid."

²⁷ Andriessen, "Forms of autonomy and dependence in food aid."

²⁸ Roberta Sassatelli, "Consumer Identities." in *Handbook of Identity Studies*, 2nd Ed., (2019), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203869710.CH14>.

²⁹ Martin Caraher, "The 'dark side' of food banks? Exploring emotional responses of food bank receivers in the Netherlands," *British Food Journal*, Vol. 116 No. 9, (2024), <https://doi.org/10.1108/BFJ-02-2014-0081>.

intensify feelings of poverty, and “eroding dignity.”³⁰ “Shop-style” food aid models such as SNAP’s EBT provide recipients to choose products and pay in retail-like settings reduces shame and strengthens dignity by allowing recipients to be seen as regular customers rather than charity recipients.³¹

Food Price Inflation

Grocery prices in the US rose by 23.6% from 2020-2024.³² In that same period, the number of people on SNAP increased by 1.85 million, an increase of 4.5%.³³ While specific numbers on increased food inflation are not available for Vermont, a US Bureau of Labor analysis of the Northeast found that grocery prices rose by 2.7% between 2024 and 2025.³⁴ That rise was driven mostly by a 5.6% increase in the price of meat, poultry, fish, and eggs.³⁵ In the 2021 Vermont Basics Needs and Livable Wage report, researchers found that the average monthly expenditure on food for a single person was \$336 per month, that increased to \$481 in 2024.³⁶ That represents a 43% increase in the monthly cost of food, though this number is likely inflated due to changes in the way in which this number was calculated in the two reports.³⁷

During the early months of the Covid-19 pandemic, food insecurity rose from 11% nationally to 38%.³⁸ To combat this rise, in March of 2020 Congress passed the CARES Act, which included a direct \$1,200 stipend for individuals and an additional \$15.5 billion for SNAP funding.³⁹ That bill was further strengthened in 2021 as part of the American Rescue Act, which provided an additional \$95 per month for households.⁴⁰ The increase in federal funding for SNAP

³⁰ Sue Booth, “Gratitude, resignation and the desire for dignity: lived experience of food charity recipients and their recommendations for improvement, Perth, Western Australia,” *Public Health Nutrition* 21, no. 15 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1368980018001428>.

³¹ Thirza Andriessen, “How the social dignity of recipients is violated and protected across various forms of food aid in high-income countries.”

³² Victoria Davidenko and Megan Sweitzer, “U.S. food prices rose by 23.6 percent from 2020 to 2024,” *USDA Economic Research Service*, last modified February 14, 2025, <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/ag-and-food-statistics-charting-the-essentials/food-prices-and-spending>.

³³ Drew DeSilver, “What the data says about food stamps in the U.S.,” *Pew Research Center*, last modified November 14, 2025, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/11/14/what-the-data-says-about-food-stamps-in-the-us/>.

³⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Price Index, Northeast region — July 2025*, August 12, 2025, https://www.bls.gov/regions/mid-atlantic/newsrelease/2025/consumerpriceindex_northeast_20250812.htm.

³⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Price Index, Northeast region — July 2025*.

³⁶ Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office, *2020 Basic Needs Budgets and the Livable Wage* January 15, 2021 <https://ljfo.vermont.gov/assets/Subjects/Basic-Needs-Budgets/1defd5222f/2021-Basic-Needs-Budget-and-Livable-Wage-report-FINAL-1-16-2021.pdf>.

³⁷ See page 4, Vermont Legislative Joint Fiscal Office, *2020 Basic Needs Budgets and the Livable Wage*, January 15, 2021.

³⁸ Julia A. Wolfson and Cindy W. Leung, “Food Insecurity During COVID-19: An Acute Crisis With Long-Term Health Implications,” *American Journal of Public Health* 110, no. 12 (December 2020): 1763, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7662000/>.

³⁹ USDA Food and Nutrition Service, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Emergency Allotments*, April 1, 2021, accessed November 25, 2025, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/emergency-allotments-guidance-040121>.

⁴⁰ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Emergency Allotments*.

corresponded with a decrease in food insecurity in 2021, down to 10.5%.⁴¹ That program expired at the end of 2022, and in 2023 food insecurity rose to 13.5%.⁴²

With an increase in food prices, it is more expensive for food banks to buy food. Feeding America, the largest network of food banks in America, cited a 30.5% increase in price per pound of food from 2022 to 2023.⁴³ With the rising costs for food, there is a larger demand for food banks to fill the gap. When the prices of groceries increased nationally by 10.5% in 2022, 95% of food banks in the Feeding America system reported an increase in demand.⁴⁴

Researchers conducting a study of 40,000 Coloradans on SNAP found that their visits to foodbanks increased based on SNAP's distribution schedule, suggesting that any cuts in SNAP would lead to greater demand for the foodbank system.⁴⁵

While food donations make up the bulk of most food bank inventories, individual cash donations also play an important role. The Food Bank of Iowa, for example, claims 48% of their inventory comes from donated dollars.⁴⁶ Cash donations also help foodbanks to secure items that are not often donated, such as dairy and meat.⁴⁷ An increase in cash donations also allows foodbanks to secure more nutritious items.⁴⁸ Unlike more visible crises like natural disasters which often lead to an increase in donations to foodbanks, inflation is a less visible affliction.⁴⁹ Due to lack of salience, food bank donations often do not increase to meet the additional demand that comes with inflation.⁵⁰

Federal Policy Changes

On July 4, 2025, President Donald J. Trump signed Public Law 119-21, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025.⁵¹ Under the bill, states' responsibility for SNAP administrative costs increase

⁴¹ Eliza W. Kinsey, Anna A. Zink, and Rachael J. Jones, "Comparison of Food Insecurity Rates Before and After the End of Emergency Allotment SNAP Benefits", *JAMA Network*, September 5th, 2025, accessed November 15th, 2025, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama-health-forum/fullarticle/2838328>.

⁴² Kinsey et al., "Comparison of Food Insecurity Rates Before and After the End of Emergency Allotment SNAP Benefits."

⁴³ USDA, *The Impacts of Inflation on the Charitable Food System & Food Insecurity*, February 23, 2023, <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2023aof-Engelhard.pdf>.

⁴⁴ The Farmlink Project, "Inflation, Food Insecurity, and the Charitable Food Space," December 1, 2022, <https://www.farmlinkproject.org/stories-and-features/inflation-food-insecurity-and-the-charitable-food-space>.

⁴⁵ Anne T. Byrne and David R. Just, "The Other Half: An Examination of Monthly Food Pantry Cycles in the Context of SNAP Benefits," *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy* 43, no. 2 (June 2021): 716–31, <https://doi.org/10.1002/aep.13150>.

⁴⁶ Food Bank of Iowa, "Learn about food banking," accessed November 26, 2025, <https://foodbankiowa.org/news/learn-more-about-food-bank-of-iowa/>.

⁴⁷ Sarah E. Roth, "A Mixed-methods Study of Nutrition-focused Food Banking in the United States," *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition* 19, January 24th, 2022, accessed November 15, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19320248.2022.2030272>.

⁴⁸ Roth, "A Mixed-methods Study of Nutrition-focused Food Banking in the United States."

⁴⁹ Pérez, Eduardo, Yash V. Marthak, and Francis A. Méndez Mediavilla. "Analysis and forecast of donations at domestic hunger relief organizations impacted by natural disasters." *Socio-Economic Planning Sciences*, April 24th, 2023, accessed November 15th, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.seps.2022.101470>.

⁵⁰ Gerard Edic, "Inflation Puts the Squeeze on Charitable Food Assistance," *The Invisible Hand*, April 14, 2023, <https://bizeconreporting.journalism.cuny.edu/2023/04/14/inflation-puts-the-squeeze-on-charitable-food-assistance/>.

⁵¹ One Big Beautiful Bill Act, H.R.1, 119th Congress, (2025-2026), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1>.

from 50 percent to 75 percent.⁵² This is an estimated \$8 million additional obligation for the state of Vermont.⁵³

The bill also requires states with SNAP payment error rates above 6% to pay a minimum share of 5%, and up to a maximum of 15% of state SNAP benefit costs.⁵⁴ The SNAP payment error rate (PER) measures how accurately state agencies determine household eligibility and benefit amounts.⁵⁵ This includes overpayment when households receive more benefits than they are entitled to, and underpayment, when households receive less benefits than they are entitled to.⁵⁶ The error rate is calculated first by states, reviewing a sample of their cases, then the USDA validates the findings by reviewing a smaller subsample.⁵⁷

Based on FY 2024, Vermont's PER, FY 2024 was 5.13%, thus not requiring a cost share. Unofficially, the cumulative PER for FY 2025 for cases reviewed through May is 5.93%.⁵⁸ Vermont issues around \$12.5 million in SNAP benefits every month.⁵⁹ Reaching the 6% error rate would result in a 5% state match, costing the state an additional \$7.5 million annually.⁶⁰

SNAP Eligibility changes: The One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 restricts eligibility and expanded work requirements. The bill eliminates eligibility for refugees, asylum seekers, and those granted legal protection for humanitarian reasons. Non-citizens who still qualify for benefits include lawful permanent residents after they have held a green card for five years, with specific exceptions.⁶¹ Work requirements were expanded for many adult SNAP recipients to work, volunteer, or participate in job training for at least eighty hours a month. Individuals who fail to meet this requirement are limited to three months of benefits in a three-year period. Prior to the bill, these requirements were applied to adults aged 18 through 54 who are physically and mentally able, and don't have dependents.⁶² The new law applies the requirements to those ages fifty-five through sixty-four, and to parents without children younger than fourteen. Work exemptions under the new bill are repealed for young adults aging out of foster care, veterans,

⁵² One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

⁵³ Miranda Gray, Deputy Commissioner, Economic Services Division, DCF, and Leslie Wisdom, Food and Nutrition Program Director, "3SquaresVT Program Changes," presentation to the Vermont Legislature, 2025, <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Workgroups/House%20Human%20Services/Food%20Insecurity/SNAP/W~Miranda%20Gray~3SquaresVT%20Program%20Changes~10-30-2025.pdf>.

⁵⁴ Mary Kekatos, "SNAP Is Back, but Millions of Americans Could Lose Benefits Due to New Restrictions," ABC News, November 18, 2025, <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/snap-back-millions-americans-lose-benefits-due-new/story?id=127593186#:~:text=States%20sharing%20costs,%2C%20Nov.%2010%2C%202025.&text=CBO%20estimates%20some%20states%20will,else%2C%20or%20cut%20food.%22>.

⁵⁵ U.S. Department of Agriculture, "SNAP Quality Control," Food and Nutrition Service, October 20, 2025, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/qc#:~:text=This%20includes%20both%20overpayments%20%E2%80%94%20when,error%20rates%20reflect%20program%20wast>.

⁵⁶ U.S. Department of Agriculture, "SNAP Quality Control."

⁵⁷ U.S. Department of Agriculture, "SNAP Quality Control."

⁵⁸ Gray and Wisdom, "3SquaresVT Program Changes."

⁵⁹ Gray and Wisdom, "3SquaresVT Program Changes."

⁶⁰ Gray and Wisdom, "3SquaresVT Program Changes."

⁶¹ One Big Beautiful Bill Act, H.R.1, 119th Congress, (2025-2026).

⁶² David Lieb et al. "What to know about expanded work requirements about to kick in for SNAP", Associated Press, November 21, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/snap-food-aid-work-requirements-bf6ee9334591d24f09011e67c22adb0b>.

and unhoused individuals.⁶³ As a result of these federal changes, over 4,000 individuals currently receiving 3Squares VT benefits either lost an existing exemption or became newly subject to federal work requirements.⁶⁴

Conclusion

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025 increases the state administrative cost responsibility from 50% to 75% and has the possibly to impose new cost-share penalties on the state of Vermont if the payment error reaches the 6% threshold. Besides federal changes, there are important factors to consider when deciding on state food assistance policy. Foodbank operational capacity and effectiveness are vulnerable to food price inflation. Food price inflation puts a large burden on an already strained industry while often failing to generate a proportional increase in the necessary cash donations. Regarding access, examination of SNAP retailers and food shelf locations show similar coverage correlating with population density, though total SNAP retailer sites more than double food shelves and pantries.⁶⁵ Eligibility is a factor as are days/hours of operation and food stock. To generate a more complete analysis of access, data would need to be gathered from individual retailers and distribution sites.

This report was completed on December 15, 2025, by Skye Whalen, Kevin Mcgreal, and Theodore Sternberg under the supervision of VLRS Director, Dr. Anthony “Jack” Gierzynski and VLRS Deputy Director, Dr. Jonathan “Doc” Bradley, in response to a request from Rep. Dave Yacovone.

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Disclaimer: The material contained in the report does not reflect the official policy of the University of Vermont.

⁶³ One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

⁶⁴ Gray and Wisdom, “3SquaresVT Program Changes.”

⁶⁵ See Appendix, Figures 1, 2, and 3 to compare maps of SNAP retailers, food shelves/pantries, and population density.

Appendix

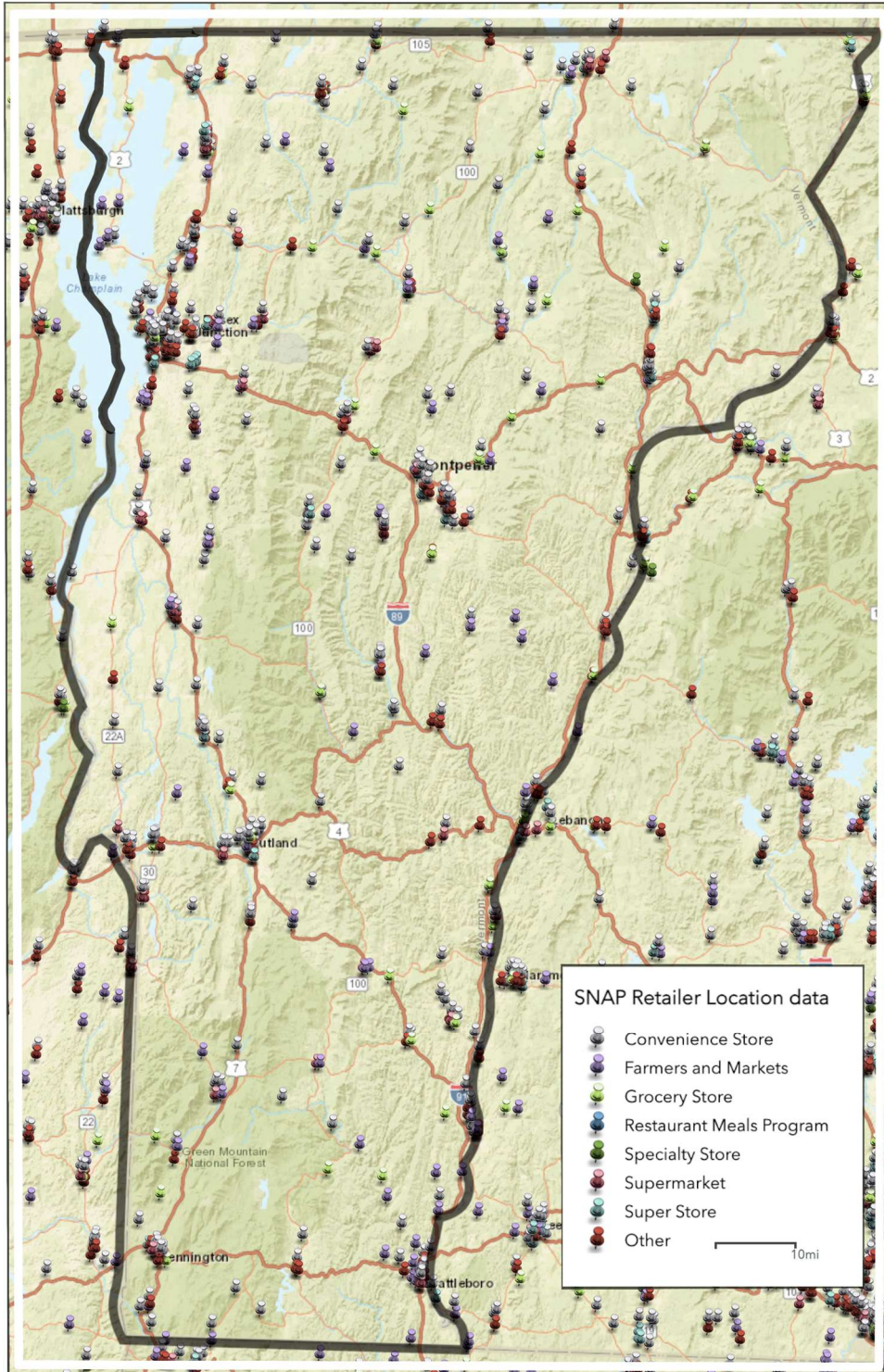


Figure 1: Map of State of Vermont SNAP Retailer Locations

Source: Map assembled by VLRS team using data from <https://usda-fns.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=15e1c457b56c4a729861d015cd626a23>.

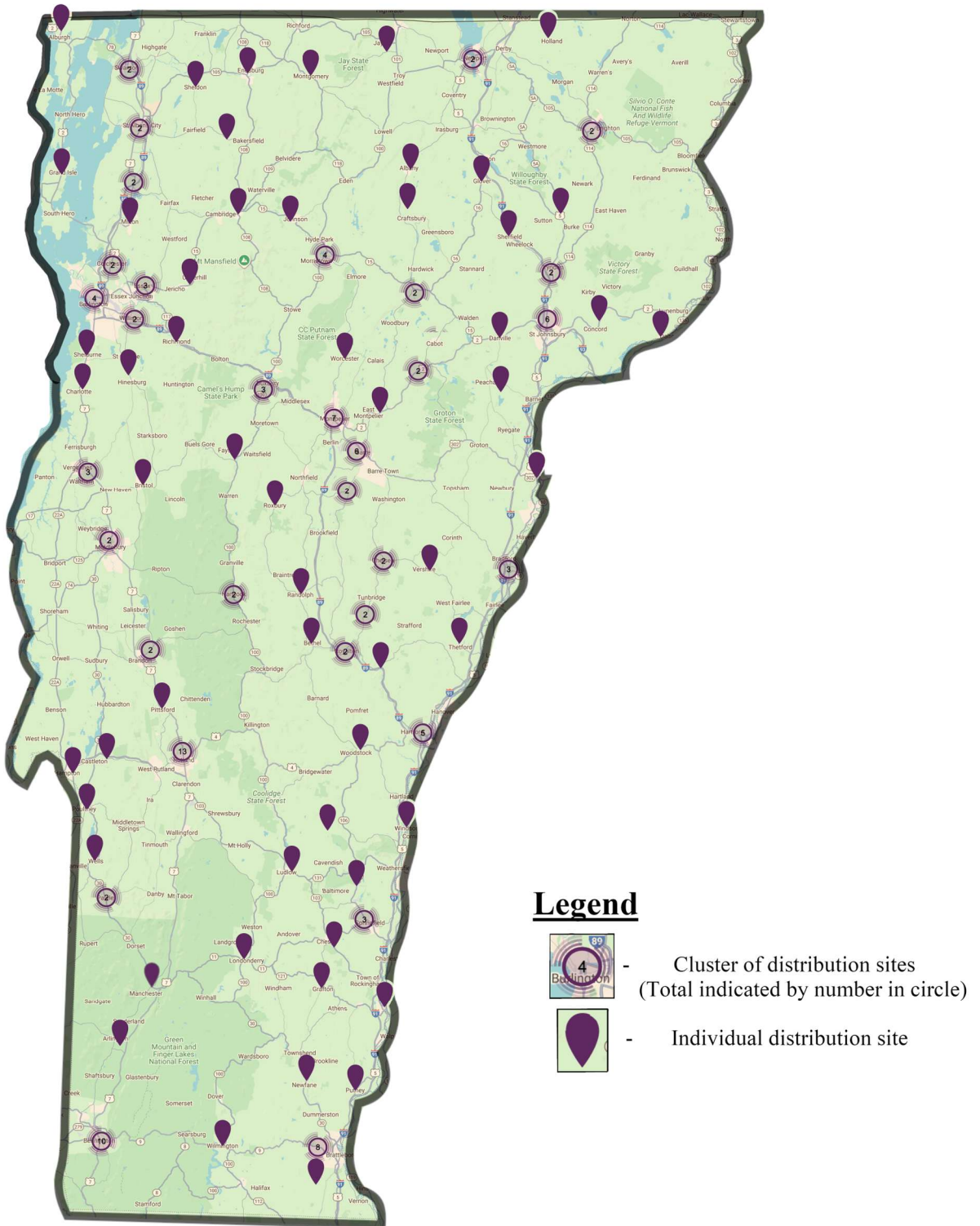


Figure 2: Map of VT Foodbank Network Food Shelf and Pantry Locations

Source: Map assembled by VLRS team using data from <https://www.vtfoodbank.org/access-food/find-a-food-shelf/>

2020 Census: Vermont Profile

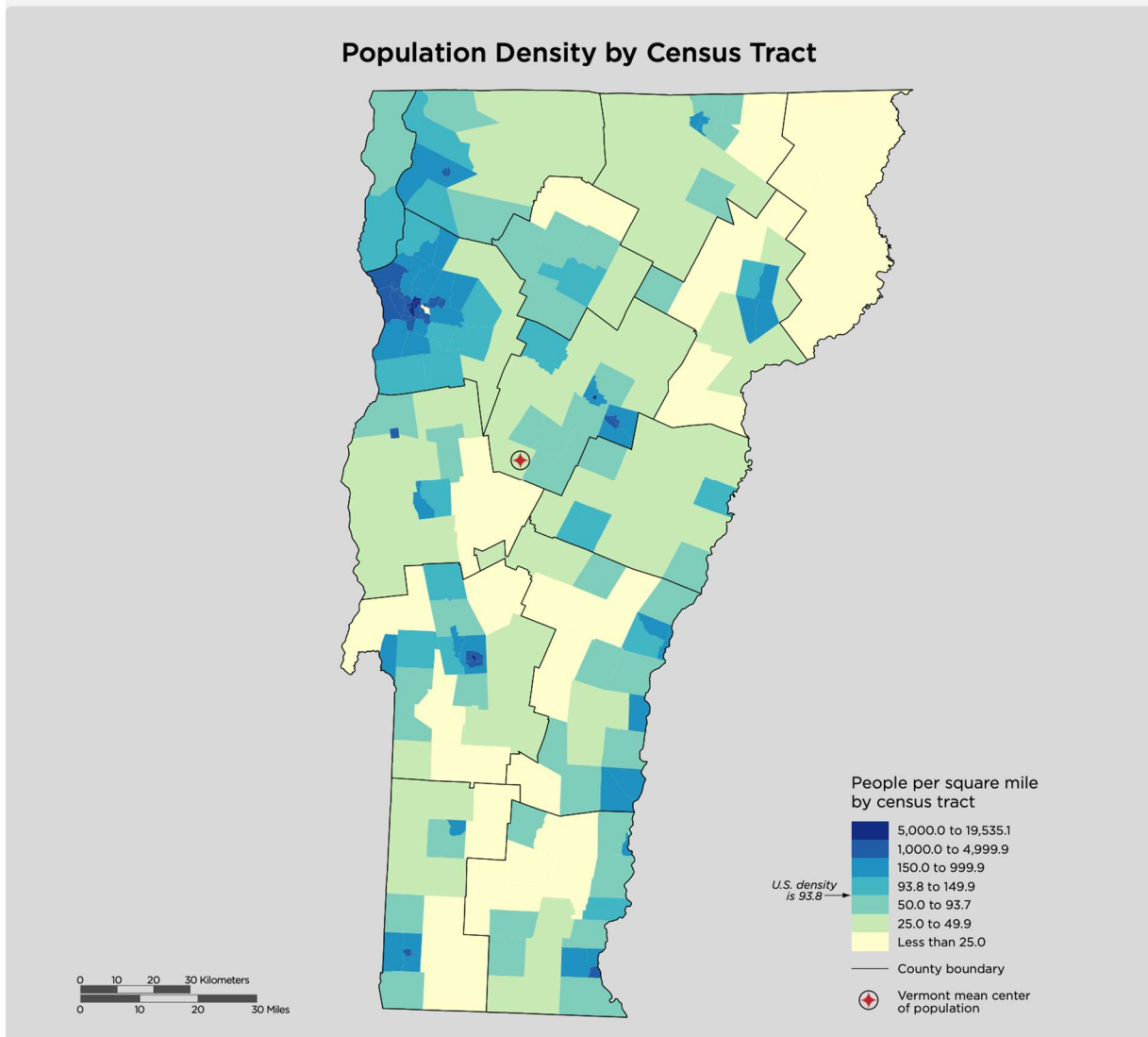


Figure 3: Vermont State Population Density Map

