



**Community Advocacy Guide:**  
**Bill 24-0600: Give SNAP a Raise Amendment Act of 2022**  
**Public Hearing: Thursday April 28, 2022**

The bill can be accessed here: <https://lims.dccouncil.us/Legislation/B24-0600>

*The DC Food Policy Council (FPC) is a coalition of local food leaders and government representatives appointed by Mayor Muriel Bowser to promote a more equitable, healthy, and sustainable food system in the District. The FPC creates Community Advocacy Guides on District food-related legislation to educate and inform residents about the legislation and how to testify.*

### **Background**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, is a federal nutrition assistance program for families and individuals with low-income. In DC, SNAP is administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS). SNAP plays an important role in the lives of over 140,000 District residents who receive SNAP benefits which are loaded to a debit card to purchase foods at qualifying grocery stores, corner stores, and other retailers. In 2020, USDA approved DC's application to allow SNAP customers to use their benefits for online grocery shopping, significantly expanding the accessibility of this program. Historically, SNAP is the largest and most successful of all federal nutrition programs and has been shown to reduce hunger and malnutrition in adults and children, and supports health, employment, housing, and educational outcomes.

### **What does this bill do?**

On January 3, 2022, the Give SNAP a Raise Amendment Act of 2022 was introduced by seven DC Councilmembers. The bill proposes to:

- Update the language in the Food Stamp Expansion Act of 2009 to change the old term “food stamps” to the new term “SNAP”.
- Add a District funded supplemental benefit that brings the minimum total benefit (federal component + District local funds) to 15% of the federal eligible maximum monthly allotment (based on family size), rounded up to the nearest dollar.
- Add a District funded supplemental benefit that provides a benefit equal to the difference between the Thrifty Food Plan maximum and the Low-Cost Food Plan maximum, rounded up to the nearest dollar.

The increases to the total minimum benefits under the Act will create additional supports for individuals and families identified in the FPC's report *The Road Ahead: 2021 Update on Food Access & Food Security in the District of Columbia*. These populations include seniors (adults 60+), persons with disabilities, Black and Latinx households with children, and workers with low-income, many of whom only qualify for the minimum benefits under the federal qualifications. Any increase in SNAP benefits helps families spread their budgets, spending more earned income on other basic needs such as housing, transportation, health care, and education.



The increase in benefits for households would vary widely based on household size and income. The following example illustrates how the bill would affect a household of two qualifying for federal SNAP benefits in the amount of \$20:

Federal Benefit	Local SNAP Subsidy	Current Total Benefit	Proposed Local 15% Minimum Benefit	Proposed Local Low-Cost Food Plan Supplement	Total Benefit Under Proposed Legislation
\$20	\$10	\$30	\$49	\$44	\$123

### How can I give input on this bill?

The DC Council’s Committee on Human Services, chaired by Councilmember Brianne Nadeau, has scheduled a virtual public hearing via Zoom on Thursday, April 28, 2022, at 10am.

Anyone can testify on this bill, even if you are not a DC resident. Anyone wishing to testify should complete this form: <https://www.brianneknadeau.com/testify> or call the Committee on Human Services at 202-724-4353 by the close of business on Friday, April 22, 2022. If you are testifying on behalf of an organization, please provide the name the organization and your role with the organization. Each witness will receive an individual Zoom invitation for the hearing in a separate e-mail. It is encouraged, but not required, to submit your testimony in writing as well to [humanservices@dccouncil.us](mailto:humanservices@dccouncil.us).

#### Tips on testifying virtually:

As an individual, you will have 3 minutes to speak. If you represent an organization, you will have 5 minutes to speak. Your written testimony can be as long as you like and include more information than you read aloud in your allotted time. Remember that one page of double-spaced text (about 250 words) takes about 2 minutes to read aloud. After you testify, Councilmembers may ask follow-up questions about your testimony. It’s ok if you don’t know the answer to a question. You can always say, “I’ll get back to you.”

You will not be assigned a specific time to testify but rather you will be expected to be present when your name is called. You may estimate when this will be based on the witness list that is shared the day before the hearing. When it is your turn to testify, you will be called on. You will need to be able to be on Zoom with a reliable internet connection. The virtual hearing will be publicly visible.

#### Tips on writing testimony:

1. Thank Committee Chair Brianne Nadeau for convening this hearing and considering this bill;
2. Greet any other Councilmembers who are present;
3. Briefly introduce yourself and/or your organization/business;
4. Explain why you care about SNAP benefits in the District;
5. Explain how one or more pieces of this bill will make a difference to you, your organization, or your community;
6. Express any concerns or suggestions you have to improve this bill;



7. Close by thanking the Councilmember(s) for listening and re-stating clearly whether you think the Council should make this legislation a law in DC.

Be sure to practice reading your testimony aloud before the hearing and time how long it takes you. Practicing will help stay within the time limits and make your points clearly and succinctly.

**What can I do if I can't testify that day?**

You can still submit written testimony to the Committee on Human Services by email at [humanservices@dccouncil.us](mailto:humanservices@dccouncil.us) or to Nyasha Smith, Secretary to the Council, 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 5, Washington, D.C. 20004. Additionally, you can also leave voicemail testimony by calling the Human Services Committee voicemail number at 202-570-4281. If you use this option, please state and spell your name, provide the name of the organization you are representing (if any), the topic of your testimony, and then begin your testimony. The record will close at the end of business on Thursday, May 5, 2022.