

## **Resolution 2024-2: Food Stamp Eligibility**

WHEREAS, families on food stamps must earn less than 130% of the federal poverty line, or \$3,125 per month (net) for a family of four. Families making just \$1 more per month lose their benefits; and

WHEREAS, households on food stamps cannot have assets (including money in the bank) exceeding \$2,750, or \$4,250 for households with at least one elderly or disabled family member; and

WHEREAS, Alaska has had more than a year of extreme delays in food stamp distribution across the state leaving thousands of vulnerable Alaskans without food assistance for months at a time, driving many Alaskans into debt and increasing the burden on food pantries to serve additional food insecure families; and

WHEREAS, Broad Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE), a state option under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that most states use, is proven to increase efficiency of application processing and is effective at supporting working Alaskans and seniors on fixed incomes; and

WHEREAS, removing the asset test and raising the income limit with BBCE will allow SNAP participants to climb their way to financial security by allowing them to accept pay raises, gradually reduce benefits, and set aside savings for the future; and

WHEREAS, BBCE eliminates the “benefits cliff” by allowing states to phase down benefits for working families as their income rises instead of losing eligibility due to slight earning increases; and

WHEREAS, BBCE eliminates the asset test, helping seniors and working families accumulate and retain assets, address emergencies, and ensure they are not living paycheck-to-paycheck, but accumulating and being able to pass assets on to the next generation is a key strategy for families to escape the cycle of poverty; and

WHEREAS, BBCE reduces the complexity of the SNAP application processes for states and households, increasing administrative efficiency, reducing the risk of errors in eligibility determination, and helping the state improve their ability to distribute assistance benefits;

WHEREAS, as followers of Christ, we are called to live by the greatest commandment: to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:36-39).

WHEREAS, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's (ELCA) 1999 social statement *Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All* commits the church to "address creatively and courageously the complex causes of poverty" as well as calls for "scrutiny of how specific policies and practices affect people and nations that are the poorest, and changes to make policies of economic growth, trade, and investment more beneficial to those who are poor;" therefore, be it ...

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Synod of the ELCA, in Assembly, memorialize the 2024 Alaska Synod assembly urging the Alaska State Legislature, in the 2024 legislative session, to implement Broad Based Categorical Eligibility for SNAP benefits; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Alaska Synod of the ELCA, in Assembly, encourage member congregations of the Alaska Synod to contact Alaska State legislators directly through letters, emails, telephone calls and in-person visits, urging them to pass legislation, in the 2024 legislative session, to implement Broad Based Categorical Eligibility for SNAP benefits.

Contact:

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