



[Highest SNAP Participation in More than 20 Years Reveals the Unprecedented Level of Need Across Maryland](#)

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BALTIMORE, MD – The pandemic has resulted in a huge increase in the number of Marylanders in need of food assistance from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). New [data](#) recently released from the Maryland Department of Human Services show that [nearly 850,000 Marylanders are currently relying on SNAP](#) – a level of need that we have not seen in Maryland in more than twenty years. While every county has seen a surge, the largest increases in SNAP participation from February to June are in the DC metro area: Anne Arundel (87% increase), Prince George’s (84% increase), Charles, Baltimore, and Montgomery counties.

The number of children receiving support from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program has also increased dramatically, from just under 30,000 in February to more than 46,000 in June – a nearly 60% increase in our most vulnerable kids. In Anne Arundel and Prince George’s Counties, the number of children more than doubled during this time.

Given the direct connection between participation in these federal benefit programs (SNAP and TANF) and eligibility for schools to participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), more schools than ever before are now CEP-eligible. “CEP is one of the best ways to ensure that all kids have access to the food they need,” said Tam Lynne Kelley, Senior Manager. “CEP is a federal school meal funding option being used in hundreds of Maryland schools, and as a result of the pandemic, many more schools are now eligible to use CEP to become Hunger-Free Schools,” she added.

The deadline to elect CEP is August 31, 2020. Contact your school district’s Food and Nutrition Department to see if your school is eligible for this funding.

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