

Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
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Date: March 24, 2026

Co-Chair: Rep. Nolan West,

Co-Chair: Rep. Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn, and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee

Re: HF 3773 – Minnesota Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (MNSNAP)

Chair and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee,

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH) writes in strong support of HF 3773, which establishes the Minnesota Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (MNSNAP). This legislation creates a vital state safety net for Minnesotans who may lose federal SNAP benefits due to federal cuts or new restrictions.

Impact on African Heritage Communities

African Heritage Minnesotans, including African Americans, Afro Caribbeans, and African immigrants, experience disproportionately high rates of food insecurity and economic instability. These communities face higher poverty rates, lower incomes, higher unemployment, and greater representation in low-wage work. Immigrant families, single-parent households, and youth aging out of foster care are especially vulnerable.

Federal SNAP restrictions disproportionately affect groups where African Heritage Minnesotans are overrepresented, including veterans, seniors, people experiencing homelessness, new Americans, and working parents. HF 3773 helps mitigate these inequities.

Key Strengths of HF 3773

1. **Ensures Continuity of Food Assistance**

Protects Minnesotans who were eligible for federal SNAP as of June 30, 2025, preventing sudden loss of food support.

2. **Provides Comprehensive Assessments**

Requires timely, in-person assessments to identify barriers such as disability, homelessness, or safety concerns, with home-visit attempts and written notice to ensure meaningful outreach.

3. **Creates a Pathway Back to Federal SNAP**

Participants transition back once they meet federal requirements, ensuring efficient use of resources.

4. **Establishes a Moratorium on Terminations**

Beginning July 1, 2026, benefits cannot be terminated due to new federal restrictions without a current professional assessment.

Benefits for African Heritage Minnesotans

HF 3773 advances racial equity by preventing hunger, stabilizing families, supporting youth, elders, veterans, and new Americans, and reducing pressure on community organizations. It also strengthens local economies, including culturally specific food retailers.

Recommendations to Strengthen Equity

CMAH supports HF 3773 and recommends:

- **Culturally Specific Implementation:** Partner with African Heritage–led organizations; require cultural and linguistic competence training.
- **Disaggregated Data Reporting:** Collect and publish data by race, ethnicity, and cultural community.
- **Community Oversight:** Establish an advisory group including CMAH and other ethnic councils.
- **Anti-Barrier Access:** Provide flexible scheduling, multilingual notices, and multiple outreach attempts.
- **Adequate Funding:** Support both benefits and administrative capacity, including community-based navigation.

Conclusion

HF 3773 is a timely and necessary measure that protects vulnerable Minnesotans, promotes stability, and advances racial equity. CMAH urges the Legislature to pass HF 3773 and incorporate these equity provisions to ensure the program fully serves African Heritage communities statewide.

Sincerely,

Linda Sloan | Executive Director
Lolita Davis Carter | Legislative & Policy Director
Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage

The Minnesota Legislature empowered the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage to ensure that people of African heritage fully and effectively participate in and equitably benefit from the State of Minnesota's political, social, and economic resources, policies, and procedures. Generally, the Council is charged with the responsibility of:

- *Advising the Governor and the Legislature on issues confronting People of African Heritage;*
- *Advising the Governor and the Legislature on statutes, rules, and revisions to programs to ensure that Black people have access to benefits and services provided to people in Minnesota;*
- *Serving as a liaison to the federal government, local government units, and private organizations on matters relating to People of African Heritage in Minnesota;*
- *Implementing programs designed to solve problems of People of African Heritage when authorized by statute, rule, or order; and*
- *Publicizing the accomplishments of People of African Heritage and their contributions to the state.*

March 23, 2026

Dear Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee:

We are writing to offer our endorsement of HF1900 and strong opposition to HF3831 and HF3603—all based on the same principle that at a time of record high food insecurity, we should be removing barriers to food assistance, not adding them.

- HF1900 removes the outdated provision subjecting SNAP participants to random drug testing. By removing this provision, Minnesota will be following the lead of other states that have ended SNAP drug felony restrictions and achieved lower rates of substance use disorders.
- HF3831 would add an asset limit to SNAP eligibility, which penalizes households attempting to achieve financial stability and disproportionately impacts seniors and people with disabilities—creating greater food insecurity and weakening nutrition outcomes. In addition, asset limits are extremely complex to administer and risk increasing Minnesota’s SNAP payment error rate and adding costs that would significantly outweigh any prospect of savings.
- HF3603 would prohibit using SNAP to purchase certain foods, undermining the dignity of participant choice without proof that these changes will improve diets. It will lead to significant red tape for local retailers—risking the loss of local grocers accepting SNAP and thus an overall loss of access to food for those who need it most.

As the Minnesota hunger relief system is facing ongoing strain with more than 9 million food shelf visits in 2025 – a new record for the 4th consecutive year— now is the time to protect and strengthen SNAP as our most effective tool to address food insecurity. SNAP provides nine meals for every one meal provided by the state’s existing hunger relief systems.

We ask for your support for HF1900, which honors Minnesota’s long history of caring for our neighbors when they are struggling and urge your opposition to HF3831 and HF3603, which create unnecessary barriers to food assistance and additional red tape.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration,

Advocates for Better Health

Children’s Defense Fund Minnesota

City of Minneapolis

CLUES- Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio

Community Emergency Services, Inc.

Fairview Health Services

Friendly Hmong Farms

ICA Food Shelf

Jewish Family & Children’s Services of MN

Keystone Community Services

Legal Services Advocacy Project

MN Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics (MAND)

Minnesota Budget Project

Minnesota Grocers Association

PRISM

Second Harvest Heartland

Second Harvest Northland

The Center for Victims of Torture

The Food Group

The Open Door

Valley Outreach