

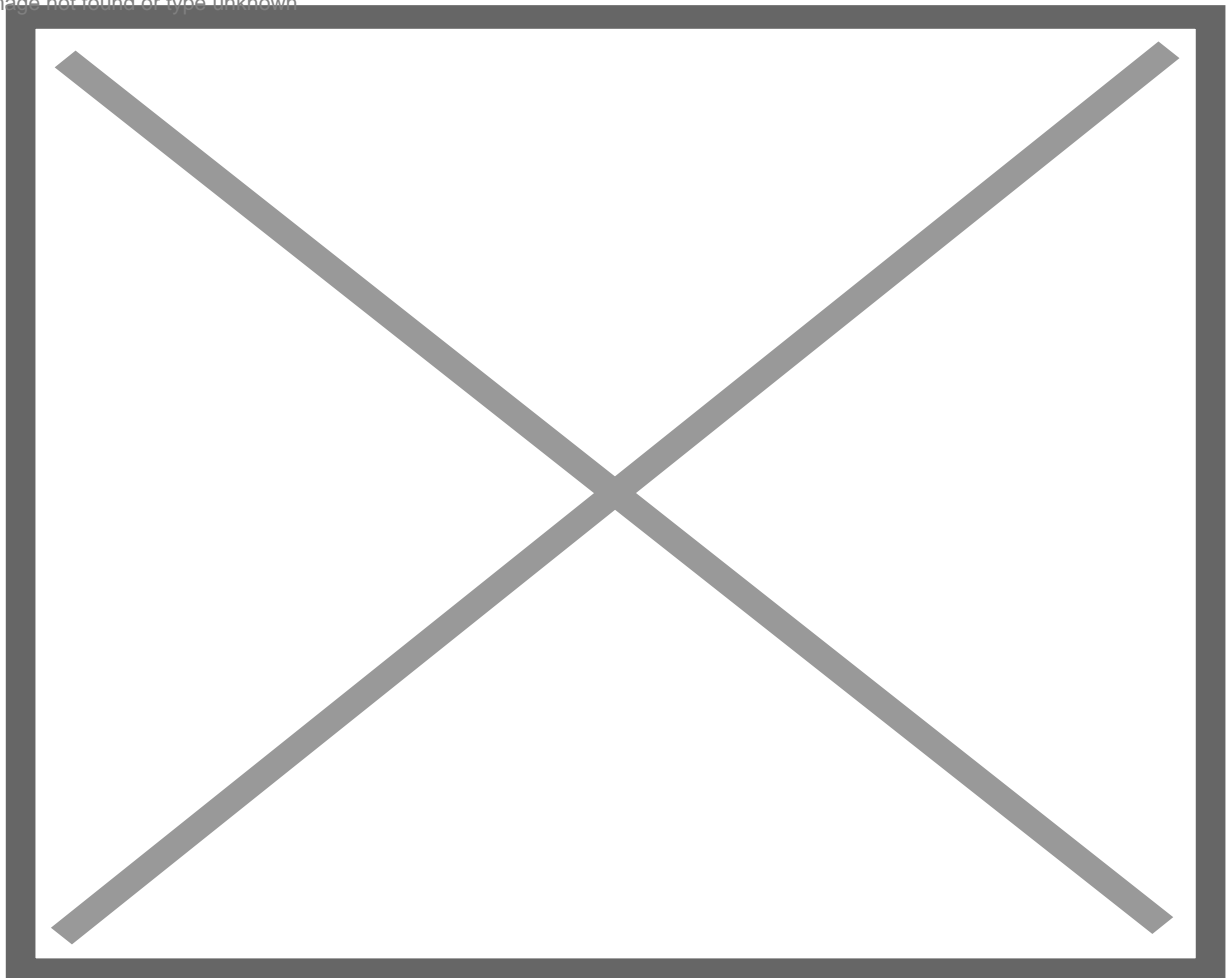
SNAP Changes Take Effect, Tightening Work Rules and Cutting Exemptions; VI Waiver in Place Until Dec. 2025

SNAP reforms under President Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill are now active, enforcing stricter work rules, cutting exemptions for parents, older adults, and veterans. The USVI remains shielded by an unemployment-based waiver until December 31, 2025.

Federal / **Published On September 02, 2025 06:29 AM /**

Janeke Simon **September 02, 2025**

Image not found or type unknown



Major changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) took effect Monday under President Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill, reshaping how millions of Americans access food assistance — including residents of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

The reforms tighten work requirements, reduce exemptions, and place new limits on future benefit growth.

Under the new rules, “able-bodied” adults without dependents (ABAWDs) who do not work at least 80 hours per month will only qualify for SNAP benefits for three months within a three-year period, unless they receive an exemption. The Virgin Islands is temporarily shielded from this time limit because its unemployment rate remains more than 20 percent higher than the national average. That [waiver](#), however, will expire on December 31, 2025. If it is not renewed, an undetermined number of local recipients will have to begin certifying their work hours or risk losing benefits.

The age range for the work requirement has also been expanded. SNAP recipients aged 55 to 64 are now required to verify their work hours, while veterans and people experiencing homelessness have lost their previous exemptions. Young adults up to age 24 who aged out of foster care at 18 are also no longer exempt.

Parents with children are affected as well. Until now, all parents of children under 18 were exempt from work requirements. That exemption now only applies to parents of children younger than 14.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects that stricter matching fund requirements will also remove some households from SNAP eligibility, while those who remain enrolled will receive less support beginning in 2027. This is because the law caps annual increases to the Thrifty Food Plan, the measure used to calculate benefit levels.

National reporting suggests the changes will alter shopping habits. CNBC predicts that Americans affected by SNAP cuts will increasingly turn to value-focused retailers, boosting sales at stores like Walmart and BJ’s Wholesale while reducing traffic at Target and Costco. Yet with the Virgin Islands lacking such large-scale, low-cost grocers, it remains unclear how local SNAP households will adjust to the program’s new demands and reduced support.