



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 312

February Session, 2024

Substitute Senate Bill No. 364

Senate, April 8, 2024

The Committee on Human Services reported through SEN. LESSER of the 9th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 17b-105a of the general statutes is amended by
2 adding subsection (d) as follows (*Effective from passage*):

3 (NEW) (d) The Commissioner of Social Services shall stagger
4 distribution of supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits for
5 beneficiaries newly enrolled in the program on and after January 1, 2025,
6 so that such benefits are distributed at multiple intervals during a
7 month. The commissioner shall file a report, in accordance with the
8 provisions of section 11-4a, not later than October 1, 2024, with the joint
9 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of
10 matters relating to human services on the distribution plan and a follow-
11 up report to the committee not later than January 1, 2026, on
12 implementation of the plan.

13 Sec. 2. (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section, (1)
14 "Restaurant Meals Program" means a United States Department of
15 Agriculture program that allows an eligible supplemental nutrition

16 assistance program beneficiary to purchase meals at participating
 17 restaurants or other prepared food vendors with their benefits, and (2)
 18 "eligible beneficiary" means a supplemental nutrition assistance
 19 program beneficiary who is sixty years of age or older, disabled,
 20 homeless or the spouse of an eligible beneficiary.

21 (b) The Commissioner of Social Services shall study how best to
 22 utilize state participation in the Restaurant Meals Program in a manner
 23 that would offer an eligible beneficiary a variety of restaurant choices
 24 and healthy meal options state-wide with minimal impact to grocery
 25 store access. Not later than October 1, 2024, the commissioner shall file
 26 a report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a of the general
 27 statutes, on the study with the joint standing committee of the General
 28 Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to human services.

29 (c) The report shall include, but need not be limited to, the
 30 commissioner's recommendations concerning (1) recruiting a variety of
 31 restaurants and prepared food vendors to participate in the program,
 32 (2) efficient and accessible payment options for such restaurants and
 33 food vendors, (3) steps to ensure the viability of an adequate pool of
 34 grocery stores to serve eligible beneficiaries and other beneficiaries of
 35 the supplemental nutrition assistance program, and (4) costs associated
 36 with recruiting restaurants and other prepared food vendors and
 37 establishing efficient and accessible payment options.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	17b-105a(d)
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	New section

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Section 1(d), "any beneficiary" was changed to "beneficiaries" and "such beneficiary's benefits" was changed to "such benefits" for clarity.

HS *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
Social Services, Dept.	GF - Cost	500,000	None
Social Services, Dept.	GF - Revenue Gain	250,000	None

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact: None

Explanation

The bill results in a cost to the Department of Social Services (DSS) to stagger the distribution of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits for beneficiaries who enroll on or after July 1, 2025. This is anticipated to result in a cost of approximately \$500,000 in FY 25 for system adjustments and a corresponding \$250,000 federal grants revenue gain to the General Fund to reflect the federal share of such costs.

The bill also requires DSS to study and report, by October 1, 2024, how best to use state participation in the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP). This results in no fiscal impact because DSS already has the expertise and resources to do so.

The Out Years

The fiscal impact described above occurs only in FY 25 as system adjustments are one-time in nature.

Sources: Department of Social Services Testimony

OLR Bill Analysis**sSB 364****AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE.****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Social Services (DSS) commissioner to stagger distribution for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits starting January 1, 2025, for new SNAP enrollees. For these enrollees, the bill requires DSS to distribute the benefits at multiple intervals during a month. (In practice, DSS currently distributes benefits on the first three days of the month, based on the enrollee's last name.) It requires DSS to report to the Human Services Committee by October 1, 2024, on the distribution plan and by January 1, 2026, on the plan's implementation.

The bill also requires DSS to study how best to use state participation in the Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) to offer eligible SNAP beneficiaries various state-wide restaurant choices and healthy meal options with minimal impact to grocery store access. DSS must report its findings to the Human Services Committee by October 1, 2024. The report must include recommendations on the following topics:

1. recruiting a variety of restaurants and prepared food vendors to participate in the program, and associated costs;
2. efficient and accessible payment options for restaurants and food vendors, and associated costs; and
3. steps to ensure a viable, adequate pool of grocery stores to serve RMP-eligible beneficiaries and other SNAP beneficiaries.

RMP is a U.S. Department of Agriculture program that allows certain SNAP beneficiaries to buy meals at participating restaurants or other

prepared food vendors with their benefits. People who are at least 60 years old, disabled, or homeless are RMP-eligible, as are their spouses. The program is a state option and Connecticut does not currently participate.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

COMMITTEE ACTION

Human Services Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 20 Nay 1 (03/19/2024)