



Background. The purpose of the Food Assistance Program (FAP) is to raise the food purchasing power of low-income persons and reduce the incidence of hunger and malnutrition. FAP is Michigan’s name for the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which was formerly known as the Food Stamp Program. As of fiscal year 2019, one in eight Michigan residents received food assistance. On average, the program keeps 247,000 people out of poverty in Michigan, including 109,000 children. FAP is one of the most effective mechanisms available both to reach low-income households and to provide counter-cyclical help in recessions.

The supplemental request includes **\$2.1 billion additional federal authorization in the current year for the Food Assistance Program (FAP)**. FAP costs are growing because the federal government has enacted provisions to expand the normal program and normal caseload is increasing due to economic hardship.

Federal Stimulus.

1. The most recent COVID-19 relief bill, H.R. 133, expanded the Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Program (P-EBT). P-EBT was created last year to provide food assistance benefits to school-aged children who are missing out on free or reduced-price meals due to school closures or reduced school hours. The most recent bill further expanded this program to cover all children under age six who would receive free or reduced-price meals at school or daycare if not for the pandemic.
2. H.R. 133 also increased food assistance benefit amounts for all recipients by 15% through June 30, 2021.

Caseload Growth. Before the pandemic, FAP served about 630,000 families and caseload was gradually declining (-0.5%/month). Starting in March 2020, FAP caseload grew rapidly to reach a peak of 810,000 cases in May. Caseload fell throughout the summer but has since begun to climb again. As of December 2020, the program served 700,000 families. We expect base caseload to continue to grow.

