

REQUEST FOR THE SECRETARY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) TO PILOT PROJECTS MEANT TO IMPROVE NUTRITION AND HEALTH UNDER THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

April 15, 2025

1. **Type of Request:** To operate a project modifying eligible foods under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and support improved health outcomes.
2. **Statutory Citation:** 7 U.S. Code § 2026(b)
3. **Primary Regulation Citation:** 7 CFR § 282.1
4. **State:** Arkansas
5. **Statutory and Regulatory Requirements to be Waived:** 7 U.S. Code § 2012(k) and 7 CFR § 271.2
6. **Proposed Alternative Procedure:** The State of Arkansas and the Arkansas Department of Human Services is requesting to exercise Section 17 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 to modify the definition of eligible foods under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Specifically, Arkansas will include in the definition of eligible foods hot rotisserie chickens.

This request aligns with Section 17, 7 U.S. Code § 2026, permitting states to conduct projects on a trial basis to conform the goals of Arkansas with the goal of SNAP—to provide food assistance, alleviate food insecurity, and promote nutrition among low-income individuals.

7. **Justification for Request:** The “N” in SNAP stands for “Nutrition.” And the Declaration of Policy in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (P.L. 88-525, as amended via P.L. 118-5) emphasizes nutrition and health.

SNAP’s existing prohibition on hot rotisserie chickens denies low-income families the opportunity to purchase and consume a protein-rich, reasonably affordable food option that can support a family meal. Given that many people leverage rotisserie chickens to prepare a meal, the program should accommodate this commonsense reform.

This reform has the added benefit of supporting Arkansas-grown and harvested chicken—arguably the best chicken in the world.

President Trump is the first President to make tackling America’s poor nutrition and chronic disease epidemic a priority and Arkansas is proud to stand by his side in that effort.

Implementation of Request: The mission of SNAP, as outlined in the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 Declaration of Policy, is to raise “levels of nutrition among low-income households.” The State’s mission is to promote healthier food purchases that have the

benefit of supporting healthier lifestyles and reducing chronic health conditions. These goals and this policy align.

The State will identify the proper product code to allow retailers to add rotisserie chicken as an eligible food in their point-of-sale systems.

8. **Anticipated Impact on Households:** The state will not modify benefit allotments or eligibility parameters. The state will communicate this program change to beneficiaries and impacted households. No increased benefit costs are anticipated. There is no federal mandate for retailers to participate in the program and accept SNAP benefits. It is a voluntary program for retailers.
9. **Proposed Implementation Date:** Upon technical assistance review and approval, on July 1, 2026.
10. **Time Period of Request:** 5 years.
11. **Proposed Evaluation of Request:** The state will conduct program evaluations based on retailer data to assess the waiver's impact on numbers of rotisserie chickens purchased annually.
12. **Comment Period:** Upon submission to FNS today, DHS intends to post this proposal on its website for 30 days to allow time for public comment.



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Secretary, Arkansas Department of Human Services