



The Feed!

Summer 2023 NEWSLETTER

PHILABUNDANCE



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Acting Secretary of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Valerie Arkoosh, MD, MPH, helps pack boxes during recent visit to Philabundance





Loree D. Jones Brown
Chief Executive Officer

In early March, we were so grateful to host the Acting Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Valerie Arkoosh, MD, MPH, and the CFO of Feeding Pennsylvania, Shea Saman. Their visit brought awareness to the ripple effect of the change in SNAP benefits.

From Loree's Table

Dear Friends,

Here at Philabundance, spring has been an opportunity to say goodbye to the bleak winter months and to enjoy the warmer weather and longer days. More importantly, for us, it has been a chance to look to the future with a renewed sense of optimism, hope, and promise.

While this issue of *The Feed!* shines a light on the incredible accomplishments and progress of our dedicated community of volunteers, staff, donors, and partners, we are reminded, once again, that our work is far from done. On March 1, many of our neighbors were faced with a new reality as the elimination of SNAP Emergency Allotments (EA) went into effect. These additional SNAP benefits have been a lifeline for struggling Pennsylvanians who, in the aftermath of the pandemic, have faced historic levels of inflation which have raised the cost of basic living expenses—from rent and utilities to medications, and even food for their families.

Sadly, the effects of this reduction are already being felt throughout the communities we serve, resulting in an even greater need for organizations, just like ours, creating extremely high demand on food banks at a time when they have far less government support, are facing higher food costs, and are already having difficulty meeting existing demand.

At Philabundance, we remain committed to combatting hunger, even in the most challenging times. Your continued support sustains our efforts to close these critical gaps for those who need it most.

On behalf of our entire Philabundance family, I thank you for your dedication to this essential work. We are truly grateful for your partnership.

Yours in service,

Loree D. Jones Brown
Chief Executive Officer

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End of SNAP Emergency Allotments

Signal a Looming Hunger Cliff

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, SNAP recipients have been temporarily receiving an “extra SNAP” payment each month to help with the tremendous challenges brought on by the pandemic. Under this relief measure, SNAP recipients’ benefits were increased to the maximum amount for their household size. Those who already qualified for the maximum received an additional \$95. At any level, these extra SNAP payments — known as SNAP Emergency Allotments (EAs) — have been a lifeline to the people we serve.

While they started as part of COVID relief, SNAP EAs have also been a critical support as historic inflation has increased the cost of food and other basic necessities. In 2022 alone, SNAP EAs provided a total of \$2 billion to Pennsylvania households and nearly \$1 billion to New Jersey households; however, Congress put an end to these enhancements in its end-of-year spending package and final EA payments were issued on February 28. Now, SNAP recipients receive only their regular benefit amount, a drastic reduction which will be felt not just by benefit holders, but by the charitable food systems tasked with closing this gap for families in need.

To learn more about how you can advocate for these essential benefits by urging Congress to permanently expand SNAP benefits through the 2023 Farm Bill, visit www.feedingamerica.org/take-action/advocate/farm-bill.

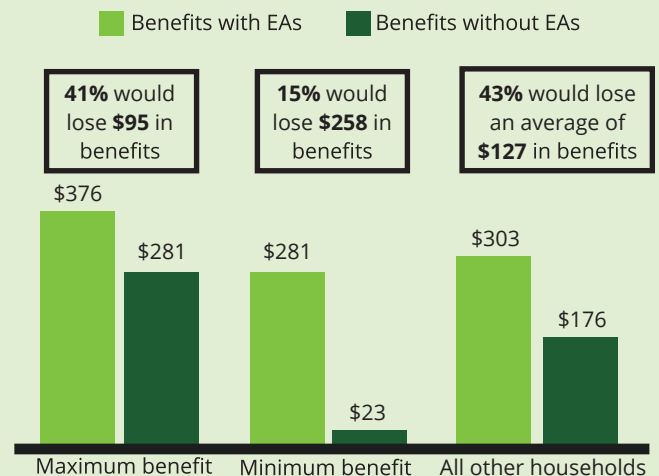
SNAP EAs provided a total of
\$2 BILLION
 to PA households in 2022 alone

Over 1.8 million individuals in over
1 MILLION
 PA households receive SNAP each month

The loss of SNAP EAs represents a
36% REDUCTION
 in purchasing power for our neighbors who rely on SNAP to help put food on the table



Loss for Households of One (US Average)



Source: Center for Budget and Policy Priorities

Left top: Acting Secretary of Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, Valerie Arkoosh, MD, MPH, and CFO of Feeding Pennsylvania, Shea Saman, raising awareness about the change in SNAP.

Left bottom: Acting Secretary of DHS, Valerie Arkoosh, MD, MPH, packing food boxes at our warehouse.



More than 100 members of Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority volunteered to pack kids backpacks with nutritious food

Sisters in Service

Sorority Sisters Help Close the Meal Gap for Children

On March 9, members of the Alpha Kappa Alpha (AKA) Sorority, Incorporated gathered in Philadelphia to kick off the 92nd North Atlantic Regional Conference. Comprised of more than 355,000 initiated members in graduate and undergraduate chapters located in 12 countries, AKA—hailed as the premier Greek-letter organization for African American women—took time from its four-day conference to deliver on its guiding motto: “service to all mankind.”

Together, more than 100 AKA volunteers joined forces to pack 4,500 kids backpacks, supporting the organization’s existing Childhood Hunger Initiative Powerpack (CHIP) initiative while also aiding Philabundance in its continued efforts to combat food insecurity among children. The backpacks provide essential snacks and meal items for children and families who rely on free breakfast and lunch at school, services they go without over the weekend.

“Closing the meal gap for children who rely on school meals, that’s already a global initiative for us,” says Linda Medley, Regional Service Project Chair. “We have three chapters right here in Philadelphia, so we are already working to combat food insecurity, but this was an opportunity to use the power of our sisters from across the region to make an even greater impact.”

AKA may be a sorority, but more importantly, it’s a sisterhood of service, says Linda. Whether they’re championing mental health, advocating for social justice, or lending their efforts to combat hunger, it’s a lifelong commitment to service that remains at the heart of their connection, says Charlene Collins, Omega Omega Chapter President and Service Project Co-Chair.

“Everyone has a role to play, and as a society we need to continue to look out for—not look over—the underserved, especially those who are food insecure,” says Charlene. “Whether you’re writing a letter to your representative, volunteering by packing bags, or have the means to make a financial donation, everybody can play a part, because we need voices. We need people to make a difference.”



Toyota Helps “Haul Away Hunger”

On February 3, more than 85 Toyota Tundras gathered at the Philabundance Berks location to mark our 14th Annual Toyota Tundra Food Drive “Haul Away Hunger,” transporting more than 650,000 pounds of nutritious food to help feed our local communities facing food insecurity.

As the food pallet-packed vehicles rolled into Citizens Bank Park parking lot P to unload, they were met with much fanfare and excitement. The celebration included Toyota leadership, dealership executives, and business partners.



While it was a jovial atmosphere, the event has become a very serious necessity for so many folks in our region. If you think about the magnitude, that amount of food can feed double the capacity of Lincoln Financial Field.

“It’s unconscionable to think that so many people in our communities are in need of food, and Philabundance is a major lifeline to those who are food-insecure,” says Paul Muller, president of the Tri-State Toyota Dealers Association. “There are a lot of things people should be in the United States, and ‘hungry’ is just not one of them. That’s what makes it so important for us to stay involved to help drive hunger away from every table in our local communities.”

Be a Force for Good: Host a Food Drive

At Philabundance, we know that driving hunger from our communities is a collective effort, which is why food drives play a key role in reaching even more of our neighbors in need. In addition to having a direct impact on the individuals and families we serve, in-person and virtual food drives are a great way to join forces as friends, co-workers, or teammates—all while inspiring some friendly competition!

With support from our very own Food Drive Team, Philabundance has all the tools to make your next food drive a success. In-person drives receive an up-to-date list of our most in-demand items—like peanut butter, canned milk, whole grain and wheat pasta, pasta sauce, and canned veggies—ensuring that your drive has the greatest impact. Depending on the size of your haul, you can drop off directly at our Philadelphia warehouse or schedule a donation pick-up. Learn more about at donating food items at philabundance.org/get-involved/donate-food/.

Want to include even more participants in your efforts? A virtual food drive is a great alternative or addition to a food drive! You can easily create an online event at philabundance.org/VirtualFoodDrive and allow contributors to “shop” for different food items, showing just how far your dollars stretch when they give to Philabundance.





FOOD IS *love*

Boots on the Ground

Grateful for the Support of our Community Partners, Donors, and Volunteers

Every Tuesday and Friday morning from 8:30 am-11:30 am, cars line up on the side of our Galloway warehouse to pick up fresh produce and dairy items at our “Hub” distribution. Volunteers, along with our wonderful warehouse team, help the Community Partners load their vehicles to take back to their locations—spanning nine counties and more than 350 agency partners—to then distribute to their neighbors in need.

“Rain, snow, sleet, or hail, people are lined up waiting to get this food. Once we get ready, we try and get the people in and out as fast as possible. Some of these organizations are lined up out here before 4 in the morning.”

– Howard Williams, Lead Volunteer

Donna-Marie Valenza, a program manager at the Galloway location, has been working at Philabundance for more than 15 years and says she is here for the mission: “We couldn’t do this distribution without our volunteers, and we couldn’t feed the entire community without the agencies. They’re like the boots on the ground.”

Here at Philabundance we are so grateful for our community partners, donors, and volunteers for supporting our mission to end hunger now and to end hunger for good. To learn more about how you can make an impact as a volunteer, visit philabundancevolunteers.org.



At Philabundance, we see each and every day the role that food plays in fostering happy, healthy communities. And for those we serve, food is more than a meal — food is love. It’s an experience that comforts us, nourishes us, and connects us with the people we cherish and love. Sharing our abundance has the power to reinforce our relationships with each other and helps strengthen our communities.

This February, in recognition of both Valentine’s Day and American Heart Month, we celebrated the role that food plays in showing love to our neighbors and encouraged even more of our community to open their hearts and share the love through financial donations, food donations, or as volunteers!

To learn more about how you can continue sharing the love all year long, visit www.philabundance.org/get-involved.