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Food pantries expect increase in demand when SNAP cuts take effect

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Kendall County Food Pantry Executive Director Alex Hurd gives a tour of the newly refurbished facility during an open house and ribbon-cutting ceremony on Wednesday, April 16, 2025 in Yorkville. Food pantries

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region anticipate an increase in demand as a result of almost \$200 billion in cuts to the

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Food pantries across northern Illinois expect an increase in demand as a result of almost \$200 billion in cuts in the next 10 years to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

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The cuts are part of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act that President Donald Trump signed into law July 4. The bill changes eligibility requirements, putting an estimated 360,000 Illinoisans at risk of losing SNAP benefits.

SNAP is a federal program that provides monthly benefits to low-income individuals and families to help them purchase food. Gov. JB Pritzker's office has said that almost 1 in 5 Illinois SNAP recipients are at risk of losing food benefits.

“With the SNAP benefits being reduced, we’re anticipating an increase in numbers,” said Alex Hurd, the executive director of the Kendall County Community Food Pantry in Yorkville. “Right now, it hasn’t affected at all because it hasn’t been implemented yet. I





John Arient, a founder of the Stone Soup Sharing Center in Marengo, listens at a roundtable discussion hosted by Congressman Bill Foster concerning the recently passed One Big Beautiful Bill Act at the Northern Illinois Food Bank in Geneva on Thursday, July 10, 2025. (John Starks/jstarks@dailyherald./John Starks/jstarks@dailyherald.)

The Kendall County Community Food Pantry serves not only Kendall County, but also DeKalb and La Salle counties. It serves an average of 450 families a week.



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Cuts to SNAP won't take full effect until after the 2026 midterm elections. Along with the change in eligibility requirements, Illinois and other states will have to cover a greater portion of costs for the SNAP program.

Able-bodied adults ages 55 to 64 without dependent children and parents of children 14 and older now must work at least 20 hours a week or participate in training programs. Before, this applied only to people up to age 54.

As part of the bill, for the first time in the program's 60-year history, the federal government will require the majority of states to fund a portion of SNAP benefits, potentially costing Illinois more than \$700 million, according to Pritzker's office. Implementing and administering these changes is projected to cost Illinois an additional \$100 million.

Downers Grove resident Terry Roman is worried about how the changes will affect his enrollment in the program. The 59-year-old has been in the SNAP program for about a year and a half after one of his legs gave out.

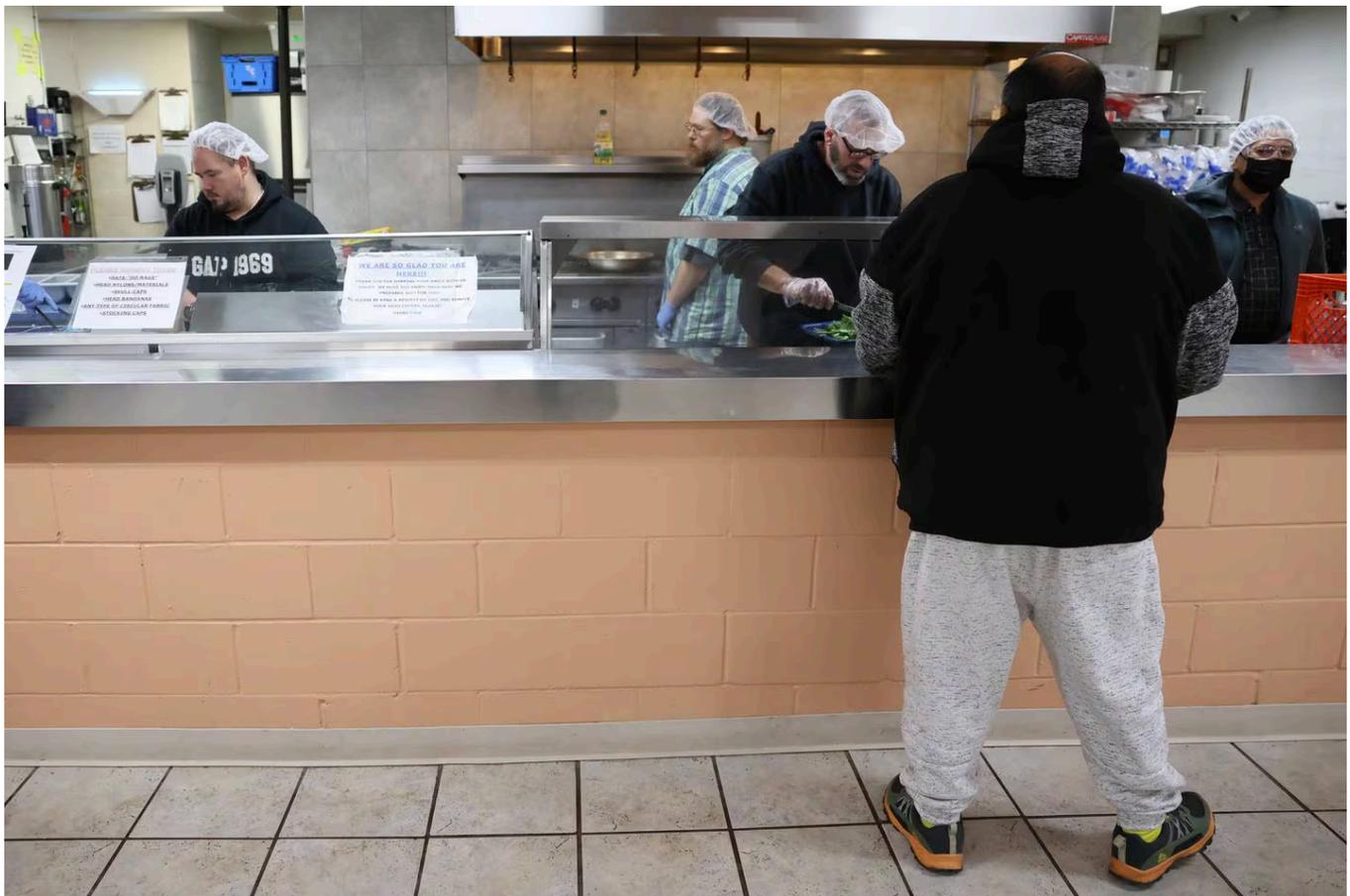
"I was paralyzed in one leg and in the hospital for about a year, going through rehab and stuff," Roman said. "I was bedridden for three months. I couldn't even get out of bed. I was in a wheelchair, then I went to a walker, and then I went to a cane. I still limp a bit, so I can't just do anything."

He had previously been a truck driver. Roman still has trouble climbing stairs.

Who will be affected and where

“I wouldn’t be surprised if the demand increases there,” he said. “I can’t help but think our numbers will go up, but to what extent, I’m not sure yet. Ultimately, we’re all in this together. We’re all trying to do the same thing, which is to serve those in need.”

Joliet-based MorningStar Mission also expects to see increased demand as a result of the SNAP cuts. MorningStar Mission serves Will and Grundy counties and part of Kendall County.



Volunteers serve warm meals at the MorningStar Mission shelter in Joliet as temperatures were expected to fall below zero. (Gary Middendorf – gmiddendorf@shawmedia/Gary Middendorf)

It operates two food programs. The East Side Café serves meals at no cost and is open to the public with no regulations or restrictions.



Star also operates the Friday Food Pantry, which is available for all Will County

“We’re going to have an increase of people interested in our food pantry and East Side Café,” said Stephanie Putman, director of programs for MorningStar Mission.

MorningStar strives to meet the nutritional needs of its clients. It also provides shelter and housing programs and operates thrift stores in Joliet and New Lenox.

Putnam said the number of people MorningStar serves through all of its programs can fluctuate because of a number of factors, including the time of year.

It has seen plenty of success stories.

“Recently, we had a client who became a homeowner for the first time,” Putnam said. “Those are the kind of stories we like to share. We meet people where they’re at and help them work on their short-term and long-term goals.”



Volunteers at Loaves & Fishes Community Services in Naperville provides food for those in need in **info**links for 2024. (Photo provided by Loaves & Fishes)

Officials with Loaves & Fishes Community Services also expect demand for food assistance to increase due to changes in the SNAP program. The organization serves DuPage County as well as Will, Kane and Kendall counties.

As Loaves & Fishes officials noted, more than 75% of the households the organization serves earn less than the basic cost of living but don't qualify for assistance under the SNAP program.

For example, they said, a family of three in DuPage County needs to earn almost \$90,000 a year to meet the basic expenses of housing, utilities, food, transportation, medical insurance, etc. But SNAP income eligibility ends at \$42,612 per year.

“That’s what we’re anticipating will grow as benefits are reduced,” said Megan Lynch, executive vice president of advancement for Loaves & Fishes. “Over the next 10 years, we’ll just see more people who are falling in that gap who will need assistance from food pantries like Loaves & Fishes.”



Volunteers participate in a free food giveaway event Saturday, May 25, outside the Will County office building, 302 N. Chicago St., Joliet. The event was hosted by Will County Executive Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant and the nonprofit organization ShareFest Will County. (Felix Sarver)

More donors to make up for cuts

Loaves & Fishes is the largest food pantry in Illinois. It serves more than 10,000 people on a weekly basis.

Meeting the demand for healthy food is the pantry's focus. Loaves & Fishes collaborates with the Northern Illinois Food Bank and other food pantries to complete bulk orders.

In anticipation of the food pantry seeing an increase in demand because of SNAP cuts,

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& Fishes is asking for more people to become monthly donors

“The majority of the households we serve have children under the age of 18, and most are working families,” Lynch said. “They are just not able to meet that cost of living.”

U.S. Rep. [Darin LaHood](#), R-Dunlap, supported the changes in the SNAP program.

“For critical programs like Medicaid and SNAP to continue for generations to come, we must prioritize addressing the spending crisis in our country and eliminate waste, fraud and abuse in federal spending,” he said in a statement.

Geneva-based [Northern Illinois Food Bank](#) works with more than 900 food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and other feeding programs to distribute food across 13 counties.

Along with the SNAP cuts, government support for the Northern Illinois Food Bank for fiscal 2026 is decreasing by 40%, about \$3 million to \$4 million, or about 10% of the food bank’s budget. To help make up for that loss, the food bank launched a [Community Response Fund](#).

“Right away, we’re asking us how they could help,” said Julie Yurko, president and CEO of the Northern Illinois Food Bank. “The response has been really terrific. ... We have definitely seen people very interested in what the deductions will mean for the food bank and wanting to help.”

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Eric Schelkopf

Eric Schelkopf, who is a Kendall County resident, writes for the Record Newspapers/KendallCountyNow.com, covering Oswego and Sandwich. Schelkopf, who is a Kendall County resident, started with the Kane County Chronicle in December 1988 and appreciates everything the Fox Valley has to offer, including the majestic Fox River.



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