City of Phoenix

Report

Agenda Date: 10/1/2026, **Item No.** 1

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Navigation Support and Flexible Financial Assistance Update - Citywide

This report provides an update regarding the City's implementation of two new programs approved by Mayor and City Council in the 2026-27 budget to receive one-time General Funds totaling $5.15 million. These two programs administered by the Human Services Department (HSD) are the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Navigation Support and Flexible Financial Assistance. This report does not encompass all the City's activities for each of these programs, but rather reviews key highlights and updates.

Summary

The information below provides an overview and updates from the Human Services Department (HSD) for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Navigation Support and Flexible Financial Assistance programs, which were funded one-time in the FY2026-27 General Fund.

SNAP Navigation Support Overview

A one-year initiative designed to support individuals and families in successfully applying for, maintaining and complying with SNAP requirements. The program focuses on high-impact intervention points rather than ongoing case management to maximize reach and efficiency. The goals include:

- Increased successful SNAP application submissions;
- Reduced benefit loss due to missed recertifications; and
- Support compliance with work requirements.

The budget for this program is expected to be just under $2 million for navigation support.

Program Update

HSD received approval to be a SNAP-Outreach provider effective October 1, 2026. This will allow HSD to seek partial reimbursements for SNAP outreach activities.

HSD is now approved to be a Community Partner-Assistor Organization and has initial access to the Health-e-Arizona Plus (HEAplus), which is the SNAP electronic

application system. Staff applications for access to HEAplus have been submitted. The completion of security trainings are required to access HEAplus as well as final State verification of City staff. The State has only issued security training and verifications to a small portion of HSD staff. A request has been made to the state to expedite this process. Key HSD staff have received SNAP training from the State as well as shadowing other outreach organizations.

Program operational procedures and workflows drafts are completed and are undergoing final review. The appointment system for residents to access services has received approval to be used through the City's Technology Review Process. The majority of equipment has been received to support in-person clinics and application assistance at the Family Service Centers. The program's website and marketing materials have been drafted and are undergoing final review.

This program is expected to begin on October 19, 2026 with outreach and education starting prior. However, this date is dependent on the State verifying staff and granting access to HEAplus for City staff.

All staff for this initiative have started or are in the onboarding process.

Flexible Financial Assistance Overview

This one-year program will be administered in two methods: targeted one-time crisis assistance and stability assistance. This type of crisis financial support allows households to use the money saved on utilities, rent, transportation or other basic expenses to put towards other household needs. The program will benefit vulnerable Phoenix residents, including but not limited to those who were former recipients of federal financial assistance programs and households with low-incomes.

The targeted one-time crisis assistance will be available to residents who lost SNAP benefits on or after October 1, 2025 or who lose Medicaid or Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) on or after October 1, 2026. The one-time $700 assistance package consists of a one-time $600 credit to be paid directly to utility companies and a one-time $100 gas card or bus pass.

For stability assistance, eligible households must reside in a Qualified Census Tract or have incomes no greater than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Line or receive or have received SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Medicaid. Households must enter into a service contract, which requires goal setting and achievable activities, and they may receive up to $2,500 in basic needs payments to be distributed per household based on specific needs evaluated through the case management process.

Households are only eligible for either the targeted one-time assistance or the stability assistance.

The budget for this program is $3.15 million with $2,950,000 to be distributed to qualified residents and $200,000 to be used by HSD for administrative expenses.

Program Update

For the targeted one-time crisis assistance program, HSD has received over 2,000 applications with 839 applications approved and $587,300 of assistance being issued. Those who were denied are due to applicants currently receiving SNAP or are not Phoenix residents. After the initial launch, HSD did modify the application to try to curb applications being submitted by current SNAP recipients and from non-Phoenix residents, which resulted in an approval rate increase to 76 percent. It is expected that over 2,800 households will receive this assistance in FY2026-2027.

For the stability assistance program, currently 60 households are being evaluated for enrollment into this program. Outreach is occurring with additional households who are currently receiving case management services from the City of Phoenix. It is estimated that 360 households will be served in this program during this fiscal year.

Responsible Department
This item is submitted by Deputy City Manager Gina Montes and the Human Services Department.