

# **Breakout Session: Kentucky's vital safety net and the threats it faces**



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Moderated by Jessica Klein | KyPolicy Conference 2023

# Agenda

Background on Kentucky's safety net and hardships faced by Kentucky's children

## Panel Presentations

Dr. Sarah Vanover, Policy and Research Director, Kentucky Youth Advocates

Priscilla Easterling, Outreach Coordinator, Kentucky Voices for Health

Jessica Klein, Policy Associate, KyPolicy

## Question and Answer





**Context: Pandemic-era improvements in our Safety Net  
reduced hardship for kids.**

# **Child Care for Kentucky Families**





# KY's Child Care Safety Net

# Contact Information

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Betsey Stevenson,  
Economist

“Child care is not a personal issue,  
it’s not a women’s issue;  
It’s actually an economic issue.”



[kyyouth.org](http://kyyouth.org)

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## Who Does Child Care Impact?

Child Care Providers

Families

Business Community





## Families:

- In two-thirds of married families, both parents work.
- More than 13.5 million single parents work to support their families.
- Parents carry the largest financial burden of the child care system: \$42 billion per year.
- The average cost of full-time, center-based child care in the US in 2018 was \$20,914.



## Families:

- 24% of American families are led by single mothers, and the average median income for these families is \$26,141.
- Higher-income families are twice as likely to use regulated child care compared to low-income families.
- 30% of working families are considered low-income, and only 4 out of 10 of those families can FIND/AFFORD child care.



## Mothers:

- Mothers are 40% more likely than fathers to report child care having a negative impact on their career.
- 39% of working mothers are solely responsible for staying at home with the children when child care falls through.
- Many mothers are waiting to have children until their careers are established, so they may be experienced employees by the time they have children.



Mothers often have to:

- Reduce their work hours
- Work part time
- Decline promotions
- Limit their careers over time
- Leave the workforce



## Child Care Providers:

- The child care system does not follow the laws of supply and demand.
- Child care providers are paid very low wages, and many do not have any benefits (ex. Paid time off, health insurance).
- Can not charge parents the actual cost of caring for their children, because families can not afford it.





## Child Care Providers:

- The average salary for a child care provider in KY is \$22,620 per year.
- The average salary for a child care director in KY is \$31,828 per year.
- One in five child care providers in KY must work a second job in order to pay their bills.
- Only 15% of Kentucky's child care providers have health insurance.



## Community:

- 65% of parents state their work schedule has been affected by child challenges (average of 15 days per year).
- The US loses between \$30-\$35 Billion in household income annually due to child care challenges.
- 54% of employers discovered that child care access reduced employee time off by 30%. On-site child care reduced time off by 60%.



## Community:

- Over 50% of Kentuckians live in a child care desert (more than four children per child care slot).
- 83% of parents report that it is difficult to find quality, affordable child care.
- 3 out of 5 rural communities are child care deserts.
- Child care deserts can still be found in urban and suburban neighborhoods.
- Only 8% of regulated child care programs serve children during nights and weekends.



## Possible Solutions:

- On-site child care for employers
- Child care business partnerships
- Increase in family child care homes
- Additional state and federal funding
- Mixed-delivery child care



## House Bill 499:

- Rep Samara Heavrin passed a bill in the 2022 session to create an employer-state partnership to pay for child care.
- The employer and the state would each contribute to the employee's child care, and the employee would be responsible for the remainder.
- There is no financial requirement for employees to participate.
- The program will start accepting applications in April 2023 and launch in July 2023.





## Categorical Eligibility for Subsidy:

- Any child care provider that works 20 hours per week in a state-regulated program can receive the maximum amount of child care subsidy.
- A benefit to assist in a low wage jobs
- A way to draw employees back from the retail and hospitality industry
- A way to open additional child care classrooms throughout the state to support the entire workforce

# Next Steps

## Call to Action

- Let your legislators know that child care is important.
- Have your business complete a needs assessment on employee child care needs.
- Look at child care options appropriate for your type of business.



A photograph of two young women standing outdoors in a park-like setting. The woman on the left has curly brown hair and is wearing a light pink t-shirt. The woman on the right has straight brown hair and is wearing a grey t-shirt. They are both smiling and holding a pink hula hoop with a decorative pattern. In the background, there are other people, including a woman carrying a baby in a carrier and another woman walking. The word "Questions?" is overlaid in large white text across the center of the image.

# Questions?

# **Health Care Coverage for Kentucky Families**

# Health Care Coverage for Kentucky Families

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# Food Insecurity in Kentucky

# Food Insecurity in Kentucky is Prevalent

Food Insecurity or the lack of consistent access to enough nutritious food to live a healthy, active life impacts over 640,000 Kentuckians.

That is...

1 in 7 Kentuckians

1 in 6 children

1 in 6 seniors

Meanwhile food costs continue to climb (despite inflation easing. )

In Kentucky, 644,540 people are facing hunger - and of them 179,030 are children.



People facing hunger in  
Kentucky  
are estimated to report needing

**\$302,792,000**

more per year to meet their food needs.

The average cost of a meal in Kentucky is \$2.75. Data from Feeding America's [Map the Meal Gap](#) study.  
[Learn more >](#)

# Food Assistance Programs in Kentucky

## Longstanding Programs:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)  
Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)  
School Nutrition Programs – National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Programs (NSLP, SBP)  
Disaster SNAP (DSNAP)  
Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

## New COVID-related Programs:

Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)  
Summer EBT  
Expanded Summer Feeding Program  
Temporary fix for EBT-skimming



## Monthly SNAP Participation in Kentucky

Total SNAP participation on a monthly basis from January 2005 - December 2022



Source: SNAP participation data from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

Note: Does not include data from February 2019 when benefits were not distributed due to a federal government..

## SNAP

**SNAP provides 9 meals for every 1 meal provided by a food bank.**

Dec. 2022 SNAP Participation: **553,476**

New benefit amounts as of October 1, 2022 to meet the needs caused by rising food prices.

SNAP responds quickly to changes in the economy to feed families and stimulate local economies.

COVID-related flexibilities helped people get much needed benefits they were eligible for. (college students, maximum benefits, etc.) But many of these have ended or will end soon.



# Disaster SNAP

DSNAP provided much needed food assistance during natural disasters 3 times in Kentucky within the last 2 years.

June 2021 during severe heavy rains and flooding in 31 counties.

January 2022 during tornadoes in Western Kentucky, DSNAP provided almost \$735,000 in food assistance to almost 4,000 people.

Most recently during the Eastern Kentucky flooding.

- Provided Disaster SNAP benefits to people not usually eligible for SNAP but who have experienced disaster-related expenses.
- [Replaced SNAP benefits](#) for families who report lost food purchased with SNAP in 12 counties, they will also automatically receive a supplement amount up to the maximum amount for their household size.
- Granted a [hot meal waiver](#) use in grocery stores, gas stations and restaurants that accept SNAP in 27 counties.
- Extended SNAP [recertification for food assistance](#) for 6 months in 12 affected counties.





# SNAP

## SNAP Emergency Allotments ended May 1, 2022.

Emergency SNAP Benefits (Max Allotment) had been in place while the KY Public Health Emergency Declaration is in effect (plus a transition month).

SJR 150, sponsored by Senator Donald Douglas and passed by the 2022 General Assembly, ended that Emergency Declaration in KY - meaning additional benefits through Emergency Allotments ended May 1.

42% of all SNAP benefits going into local economies were from EAs. That's almost \$50 million per month suddenly evaporating from the monthly budgets of SNAP recipients and the monthly revenue for KY farmers and grocery stores.

With this program ending nationally, many other states will soon see the cliff we have seen this year.



# HB 7 Impact on SNAP

Two components that will help Kentuckians: Standard Medical Deduction and ESAP program

Similar to previous safety net attacks, many components in the initial proposal would have put new, costly barriers in front of Kentuckians needing food and medical help. Luckily, many of those were removed during the legislative process.

- Prohibiting the state from giving food assistance to certain adults in economically distressed areas, even during downturns.
- Banning the state from providing exemptions to the SNAP time limit for those in extraordinary circumstances.
- Ending Broad Based Categorical Eligibility, creating new barriers to SNAP for seniors and households with kids. creates tripwires for losing food assistance through “change reporting.”
- Forcing working families that need help with food into scarce employment and training programs.
- Expanding of an existing ban from SNAP that takes food away from parents and their children.
- Creating an illegal lifetime ban from public assistance.

## WIC Participation in Kentucky

Total monthly WIC participation February 2017 - March 2021



Source: Data from the USDA.

# WIC

WIC helps feed pregnant or breastfeeding women, infants and children under 5.

Sept. 2022 Participation: **113,301**

Average monthly benefit per person: **\$37.84**

WIC makes a big difference for new moms and young kids – particularly during the formula shortage.

WIC is traditionally invasive to use but is undergoing improvements known as “WIC modernization” funded through pandemic-related federal legislation.



# Pandemic EBT

**Pandemic EBT provided grocery money to over 600,000 Kentucky kids.**

School meals provide one of the most stable sources of food assistance and are often the only meal of the day for children in low-income households Kentucky.

When school meals were hard to access during the pandemic, P-EBT stepped in to provide grocery money to these families.

During the summer, when child hunger significantly increases, these benefits continued.

Kentuckians will see P-EBT benefits this school year and summer to cover the summer food costs for families eligible (NSLP) and for families with SNAP and kids 5 & under.

For questions call DCBS, 855-306-8959



# Summer EBT

Summer EBT will provide more Kentucky kids with grocery money in 2024.

During the summer, when child hunger significantly increases, these benefits have been a reprieve as it covered summer food costs for families eligible for traditional P-EBT and for families with SNAP and kids 5 & under.

Because of the success of P-EBT, Summer EBT will begin Summer 2024, providing \$40 per child per month for eligible families – based on eligibility for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

The end of the “pandemic” component, means more KY families could be eligible for this benefit, including virtual and homeschool.

Administration of this new program could look different.

*More information coming Fall 2023.*



# What is needed?

**Bottom line: Kentucky needs a strong safety net to provide food assistance for Kentucky kids.**

Supports in upcoming federal policies (Child Nutrition Reauthorization and Farm Bill 2023)

State policies that don't create additional hardships for families with already low-incomes and don't create barriers or red tape to access assistance.

Administrative policies that improve Kentuckians ability to access the food assistance they are eligible for in and out of school or daycare.





# Q and A

A blue-tinted photograph of a grand classical building, likely a government or institutional structure, featuring a wide, ornate staircase. Three people are walking down the stairs: two men in suits and one woman in a patterned jacket. The text "Q and A" is overlaid in a large, yellow, sans-serif font in the center of the image.