



January 7, 2026

Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

On May 12, 2024, the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Food and Energy Assistance Division, submitted a demonstration waiver request to modify eligible foods under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The original request proposed implementing the Demonstration Project from March 1, 2026, through January 29, 2028, with the option to request up to three annual extensions, for a total project period not exceeding five years. USDA approved this request on August 4, 2025.

To ensure successful, equitable, and statewide implementation of this Demonstration Project, CDHS respectfully requests a modification to the implementation date, moving it to April 30, 2026. This additional time is necessary to incorporate critical feedback received through extensive stakeholder engagement and to ensure that both SNAP-authorized retailers and SNAP participants are adequately prepared. This additional time is also necessary to allow for alignment with the timeframe needed to update the SNAP Code of Colorado Regulations (10 CCR 2506-1) to correctly identify SNAP-eligible foods.

Colorado is home to 64 counties, 47 of which are classified as rural or frontier counties. Through retailer listening sessions conducted across the state, retailers—particularly those serving rural and frontier communities—consistently communicated that additional time is needed to update point-of-sale (POS) systems, train staff, and coordinate with vendors to comply with the new requirements. Many retailers emphasized that without sufficient preparation time, implementation challenges could disrupt operations and limit their ability to continue serving SNAP participants effectively in communities where food access options are already limited.

In parallel, CDHS engaged with community advocates and partners who echoed these concerns from the participant perspective. Advocates emphasized the importance of allowing sufficient time for clear, culturally responsive educational messaging and outreach to ensure that SNAP households understand the policy changes and how to navigate them without confusion or unintended harm. Additional time will also support trusted community-based organizations in preparing participants and reinforcing consistent messaging statewide.



CDHS firmly believes that this targeted adjustment to the implementation timeline will strengthen retailer readiness, support participant understanding, and ultimately lead to a more successful Demonstration Project. By allowing additional time for planning, coordination, and education, Colorado is positioning this effort to meet its intended goals while maintaining food access and minimizing disruption—particularly in rural communities.

Colorado extends its sincere appreciation to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture for their continued partnership and support as we work to enhance the nutritional impact of SNAP benefit spending while protecting access and stability for SNAP households across the state.

Sincerely,



Teri Chasten
Colorado SNAP Director

