

JCRC Policy Statement on Hunger and SNAP in Georgia

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Atlanta (JCRC Atlanta) is alarmed by the possibility of deep cuts to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), especially as it will affect the people of the State of Georgia. JCRC Atlanta calls on partners within and beyond the Jewish community to join us in several specific initiatives to combat food insecurity in Atlanta and throughout Georgia.

Judaism compels us to care for the poor and the hungry. Leviticus 23:22 states: “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger.” Midrash Tannaim adds: “Whenever you give food to the poor, God accounts it to you as if you gave food to God.”

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Atlanta has long acted on those values, from holding an annual Hunger Seder for awareness and resources to lobbying Georgia members of Congress to expand nutrition programs in the five-year Farm Bill.

JCRC therefore is alarmed by deep cuts to the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), our nation’s most significant anti-hunger program. SNAP provides food assistance to approximately 1.4 million Georgians and reduces the likelihood of food insecurity by 30%.

The federal government now is forcing states to assume significant SNAP costs. Between administration and benefits, Georgia’s new expenses are expected to far exceed half a billion dollars a year just to maintain current support.

Fortunately, Georgia has a budget surplus of \$14.6 billion, including a rainy-day fund of \$5.6 billion. That rainy day has arrived for at least one-eighth of our fellow Georgians.

JCRC Atlanta urges its partners within and beyond the Jewish community to join us in the following initiatives to combat food insecurity throughout Georgia:

- Meet with Georgia legislators before and during the General Assembly session about the necessity of including a fully funded SNAP line item in the state budget.
- Engage with synagogues, other Jewish organizations and Jewish individuals fighting hunger to enhance cooperation and strengthen our combined efforts — including convening the JCRC Community Council on Dec. 11 to share ideas and plans.

- Provide resources and connections to faith-based and secular organizations committed to this vital work, expanding our communal power and reach through interfaith partnership.
- Gather for our next Hunger Seder on March 29 so that we can share progress, resources and interfaith community.