

## **INDIAN COUNTRY OPPOSES CUTS TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)**

As part of the Farm Bill reauthorization in the House of Representatives, the Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) funding will be substantially cut. **The proposed cuts to SNAP, coupled with high unemployment rates in Indian Country, will greatly harm the health and wellbeing of American Indians and Alaska Natives.**

**REQUEST: Uphold the federal government trust responsibility to American Indians and Alaska Natives and oppose any House nutrition legislation that will severely cut food assistance to Indian Country!**

### **BACKGROUND:**

The legislation discussed publicly by House Leadership would cut SNAP benefits by \$40 billion over 10 years and, if enacted, would:

- End states' ability to waive the three-month limit on SNAP benefits childless, nondisabled adults who are unable to find work. Currently, states are eligible to waive this requirement and actually use this waiver in areas with lingering high unemployment rates, which often include Indian reservations.;
- Allow states to end SNAP benefits to most adults who are receiving or applying for SNAP—**including parents with children as young as 1 year old**—if they are not working or participating in a work or training program for at least 20 hours per week despite being in areas with little-to-no employment opportunities. This would cut off an **entire family's** food aid, including their children's, for an **unlimited time**. States are incentivized to invoke this because they can keep half of the federal savings; and
- Cut critical funding for SNAP's nutrition education program (SNAP-Ed), which promotes **healthy eating** choices for low-income households. After a 28% budget cut in FY 2013, SNAP-Ed would be reduced by \$26 million in FY 2014.

Many American Indian and Alaska Native families currently receive federal food assistance and are in areas of high unemployment:

- **Twenty-four percent** of American Indian and Alaska Native households receive SNAP benefits;
- **Twenty-seven percent** of American Indians and Alaska Natives were below the poverty line from 2007 to 2011—nearly double the national poverty rate; and
- **More than thirty percent** of American Indians and Alaska Natives in the nine states with the largest tribal populations are below the poverty line.

The House proposal exacerbates and increases the conditions of poverty many tribal citizens face. Indian Country cannot afford any cuts to SNAP.