

HB 323 Energy Assistance Categorical Eligibility

In 2021, The SNAP case load in Maryland increased 8%- nearly 573,00 households used the financial resources from this program to purchase nutritious food. ¹ However, the most recent figures report only 84,079 households are currently receiving utility bill assistance. ²

These programs have very similar requirements. A majority of the needed documents to verify energy assistance income-eligibility are collected for SNAP, Social Security Income or Temporary Cash Assistance.

Currently, applicants must submit different applications to different portals managed by distinct state agencies. These applications must also be resubmitted annually to prevent loss of coverage.

This bill will:

- ✓ Increase the EUSP eligibility income limit to 200% FPL, matching other basic assistance programs offered by the Department of Human Services for low-income families and
- ✓ Streamline the process for receiving help by automatically enrolling someone for utility assistance if they qualify for SNAP, TANF, SSI, or means-tested veteran's benefits.

This bill will prevent families from missing out on benefits due to needless, duplicative paperwork requirements.

For more information please contact:
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¹ University of Maryland. Maryland SNAP Households, 2021. [Research Paper].
<https://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/media/ssw/fwrtg/welfare-research/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/Maryland-SNAP-Households,-2021.pdf?&>

² Public Service Commission of Maryland. Electric Universal Service Program 2020 Annual Report.
<https://www.psc.state.md.us/wp-content/uploads/2020-EUSP-Annual-Report.pdf>