

# DHHS FY 16/17 Budget Initiative: End State-Funded SNAP for Non-Citizens

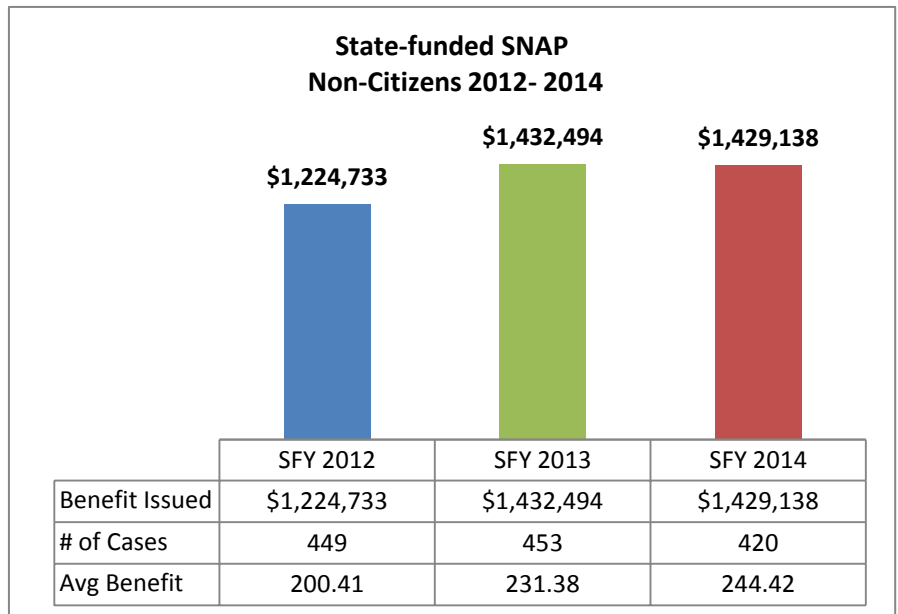
## Background

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP – formerly known as “Food Stamps”) was designed to provide food assistance to low-income individuals. Federal law prohibits SNAP to non-citizens who have not been in the U.S. more than 5 years. These non-citizens include but are not limited to Legal Permanent Residents and illegal immigrants (refugees and asylees are not subject to the five year bar).

In 1997, the Maine Legislature decided to use exclusively state taxpayers’ dollars to fund SNAP benefits for non-citizens that are barred from receiving federally-funded welfare benefits.

**Maine is one of only five States that provide a state-funded SNAP program.**

In 2011, the Maine Legislature ceased providing state-funded SNAP benefits to non-citizens unless they were already receiving benefits, had an application pending, or met certain exceptions, such as if they were asylum seekers waiting for work permits.



## Initiative

This initiative achieves savings by aligning state policy with federal policy and discontinuing the awarding of state-funded SNAP benefits to non-citizens beyond the level of support the federal government provides. Current Maine law offers state-funded assistance to those non-citizens who are ineligible under federal law.

### Savings:

Year	Savings
SFY 16	(\$906,684)
SFY 17	(\$1,208,912)

## Impact

- Currently, 709 non-citizens who are barred from receiving SNAP benefits under federal law are receiving SNAP assistance from the state, and would lose their state-funded SNAP assistance. The vast majority are adults. They reside primarily in Androscoggin and Cumberland counties. The current average benefit is \$215 per household per month. There are 361 households receiving this benefit.