

HOUSE BILL 323

O1, C5

3lr1779
CF 3lr1784

By: **Delegate Charkoudian**

Introduced and read first time: January 25, 2023

Assigned to: Economic Matters

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Social Services Programs – Eligibility and Enrollment**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Human Services to enroll individuals,
4 based on certain eligibility, in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program;
5 requiring the Office of Home Energy Programs to enroll individuals, based on certain
6 eligibility, in certain Office of Home Energy Programs assistance programs; altering
7 the eligibility requirements for the electric universal service program; and generally
8 relating to eligibility for and enrollment in social services programs.

9 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
10 Article – Human Services
11 Section 5–501 and 5–5A–07
12 Annotated Code of Maryland
13 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

14 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
15 Article – Human Services
16 Section 5–5A–01(a) and (d)
17 Annotated Code of Maryland
18 (2019 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

19 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
20 Article – Public Utilities
21 Section 7–512.1(a)(1)
22 Annotated Code of Maryland
23 (2020 Replacement Volume and 2022 Supplement)

24 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
25 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

26 **Article – Human Services**

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 5–501.

2 (a) (1) The Department may implement a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
3 Program in accordance with the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

4 (2) The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program shall include:

5 (i) a Restaurant Meals Program in accordance with § 5–505 of this
6 subtitle; and

7 (ii) a Heat and Eat Program in accordance with § 5–506 of this
8 subtitle.

9 (b) The State shall bear the nonfederal portion of the administrative costs of the
10 Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for each county.

11 (c) Each local department shall administer the Supplemental Nutrition
12 Assistance Program:

13 (1) under the supervision and control of the Department; and

14 (2) in accordance with the regulations of the Department and federal law.

15 (d) If a household includes an individual who is at least 62 years old and receives
16 a federally funded benefit in an amount less than \$40 per month under the Supplemental
17 Nutrition Assistance Program, the State shall provide a supplement to increase the total
18 benefit to \$40 per month.

19 **(E) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ENROLL IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION**
20 **ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO MEETS THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY**
21 **REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR A RECIPIENT OF**
22 **SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME.**

23 5–5A–01.

24 (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.

25 (d) “Office” means the Office of Home Energy Programs.

26 5–5A–07.

27 (a) (1) The Office shall:

28 (i) carry out an energy emergency crisis intervention program to
29 prevent low-income households, including the near poor, the elderly, households with
30 children, and those on fixed incomes from experiencing danger to health or survival as a

1 result of an energy emergency;

2 (ii) establish intake procedures for those experiencing an energy
3 emergency;

4 (iii) establish guidelines for the income and program eligibility of
5 applicants; and

6 (iv) identify local public or private agencies to administer the crisis
7 intervention program.

8 (2) (i) The Office shall make payments to fuel vendors and utility
9 vendors that have provided service to persons qualifying for the crisis intervention
10 program.

11 (ii) The amount of assistance shall be based on need.

12 (b) (1) The Office shall carry out one or more fuel and utility assistance
13 programs to make payments on behalf of qualified households to defray fuel and utility
14 costs.

15 (2) (I) The Office shall determine program and income eligibility
16 guidelines.

17 (II) **THE OFFICE SHALL ENROLL IN ANY FUEL AND UTILITY
18 ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO MEETS THE FINANCIAL ELIGIBILITY
19 REQUIREMENTS ESTABLISHED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR A RECIPIENT OF:**

20 **1. THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE
21 PROGRAM;**

22 **2. TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES;**

23 **3. SUPPLEMENTAL SECURITY INCOME; OR**

24 **4. MEANS-TESTED VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS.**

25 (3) The amount of assistance shall be based on need.

26 (c) For fiscal year 2023 only, the Governor shall appropriate to the Office an
27 amount equal to the unexpended appropriation to the Office for fiscal year 2021 funding
28 that was included in Supplemental Budget No. 5.

29 **Article – Public Utilities**

30 7-512.1.

1 (a) (1) The Commission shall establish an electric universal service program
2 to assist electric customers with annual incomes[:

3 (i) at or below 175% of the federal poverty level; or

4 (ii) for a customer at least 67 years of age,] at or below 200% of the
5 federal poverty level.

6 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
7 October 1, 2023.