

**NOTICE REGARDING PROPOSED CLASS  
ACTION SETTLEMENT  
GARNETT V. ZEILINGER**

**You should read this notice if you:**

- **Submitted an application or recertification application for SNAP benefits to the DC Department of Human Services (DHS) between June 1, 2016 and August 24, 2023 and did not receive a decision within 30 days, or**
- **Were due to recertify for SNAP benefits with DHS between June 1, 2016 and August 24, 2023, did not receive the proper notice from DHS to do so, and had your benefits terminated.**

A settlement in a federal court lawsuit, *Garnett v. Zeilinger*, may affect your legal rights. The plaintiffs in *Garnett* claimed that the DC Department of Human Services (DHS) failed to process Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications on time, and that DHS failed to provide legally required notices to SNAP recipients who needed to recertify their benefits. The parties have agreed to a settlement in the case, which must be approved by the Court.

**PROPOSED SETTLEMENT**

A copy of the proposed settlement is available at <https://dhs.dc.gov/page/proposed-snap-settlement>. If you have questions about the proposed settlement, you can contact Legal Aid at 202-221-8222 or send an email to [snapsettlement@legalaiddc.org](mailto:snapsettlement@legalaiddc.org).

**Who does the settlement apply to?** The court certified three different classes. The settlement applies to everyone in one of the classes. You are a class member if you fit within any of the following three categories:

- a. All District of Columbia residents since June 1, 2016: (1) who have applied, are applying, or will apply for SNAP benefits, through an initial application; and (2) who have had or will have the processing of such application delayed beyond the timeframes mandated by law;
- b. All District of Columbia residents since June 1, 2016: (1) who have applied, are applying, or will apply for SNAP benefits, through a recertification application; and (2) who have had or will have the processing of such application delayed beyond the timeframes mandated by law;
- c. All District of Columbia SNAP recipients since June 1, 2016: (1) who have been or will be required to submit a recertification application to maintain SNAP benefits; (2) as to whom the Defendant has failed or will fail to issue notice of the need to recertify; and (3) who have been or will be terminated from participation in SNAP due to Defendant's failure to issue such notice;

AND

You applied for SNAP benefits or were required to submit a recertification application to maintain SNAP benefits on or before August 24, 2023.

**What does the proposed settlement do?** The parties agree that over the past five years during which time this case has been litigated, DHS has taken a number of steps to improve its SNAP program. Many more people's SNAP applications are processed on time, and many more people receive legally required notices regarding their SNAP recertifications. In the settlement, DHS agrees to several additional measures, including:

- DHS agrees to publish data about its compliance with federal SNAP timely processing requirements on its website.
- For a period of three years, DHS agrees to share certain documents related to its SNAP application and recertification processing, including correspondence with the federal agency that monitors the

administration of SNAP benefits, with the Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia (Legal Aid), one of the plaintiffs' law firms.

- DHS agrees not to oppose Plaintiffs' application for court approval for certain costs and reasonable attorneys' fees incurred in representing the class.

### **RIGHT TO OBJECT**

Any class member has the right to object to the proposed settlement as not fair, reasonable and adequate. The Court has set a hearing to consider class member objections on January 18, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. at the following address:

**U.S District Court for the District of Columbia, Courtroom 27A  
333 Constitution Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20001**

Class members may object to the settlement either by appearing at the hearing, or by filing a written objection with the Court by January 5, 2024. If you intend to have an attorney represent you at the hearing, you must file a written objection.