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City's SNAP lawsuit update: Feds plan to use contingency funds to pay out partial Nov. benefits to eligible households

COLUMBUS, OH— Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today provided an update on the City's litigation against the Trump administration for their initial refusal to fund food assistance amid the ongoing government shutdown. A federal judge ordered the administration to respond no later than today at noon to report how it is complying with the order to send full or partial Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to 42 million Americans.

According to court documents the Trump administration will pay out \$4.65 billion in congressionally approved SNAP contingency funds. The \$4.65 billion is not enough to cover full November benefits, estimated at \$9 billion. The Trump administration is choosing not to use federal dollars from other sources to fill the funding gap. The U.S. Department of Agriculture will issue guidance to states to help them calculate benefits due to each eligible household. No funds will be available for new SNAP applicants certified in November.

The court initially ordered that payments be made no later than Wednesday, November 5, if the administration chose to make only partial payments.

City Attorney Zach Klein provided the following comment on the Trump administration's decision to make partial November payments to eligible households:

“While this is a positive step to get critical food assistance to our neighbors in need, we have to recognize that by not fully funding SNAP, it falls short on what families will need to make ends meet. I urge the administration to provide guidance and issue funds to states immediately so that benefits can reach those who rely on them as quickly as possible.

“While our lawsuit forced the Trump administration to fulfill its legal obligation to issue any funding at all, the fact is that Congress still needs to get a deal done to reopen the government, fully fund SNAP, and end the uncertainty for families across our country who continue to be impacted by the government shutdown.”

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and its local county offices administer the state's SNAP program and will determine the timeline for benefits calculation and disbursement.

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