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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SNAP BENEFITS HALT DURING GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN IS DEVESTATING
FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES**

The federal government entered a shutdown at midnight on October 1st, leaving a plethora of uncertainties for the American people. Now one month and nearly one week into the shutdown, it is more unclear than ever how long the stalemate will last and how severe its impact will be on our communities. As of November 1st, SNAP benefits (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) failed to be released to millions of Americans, including approximately 131,000 Iowans. Some of the most vulnerable members of our communities, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, will be forced to go without SNAP benefits this month, greatly affecting their health and well-being.

SNAP provides a necessary lifeline for these individuals, reducing food insecurity and improving overall health. Proper, sufficient nutrition is imperative for cognitive function and development, which is particularly important in the I/DD community. SNAP benefits alleviate the financial stress of food costs, which can in return be used for essential resources for these individuals such as housing and healthcare.

SNAP is a critical lifeline for so many, and the I/DD community will deeply feel the effects. Combined with cuts to Medicaid programs and housing assistance, the lack of SNAP

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benefits for individuals with disabilities are severe and devastating. A number of these individuals face challenges meeting work requirements or are unable to seek employment entirely. For those that do hold employment, limited financial resources are not uncommon, especially in a time of resource insecurity and uncertainty. The effects of food insecurity on the lives of individuals with disabilities are detrimental, often leading to malnutrition, increased healthcare costs, mental health concerns, developmental halts, and reduced productivity. At Imagine the Possibilities, this can mean individual achievement is significantly harder to attain for both our individuals served and the Direct Support Professionals that serve them.

During times of hardship, it is important for our communities to take progressive action. Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds stated in her recent social media post that the state will be matching up to \$1M in cash donations to Iowa's 6 regional food banks to help alleviate some of the burden. See the Governor's statement [here](#). Likewise, our Iowa communities have come together to host food drives, stock food pantries, and serve communities and individuals who have been negatively impacted. Imagine believes that we are only as strong as our communities, and the most rewarding outcomes happen when we join each other to lift those in need. We encourage you to reach out to your legislators to let them know the importance of SNAP benefits for individuals with disabilities. If you are unsure who your legislators are, you can find them [here](#). If you are interested in helping your community, or if you or a loved one is experiencing food insecurity at this time, please refer to the list of resources below for more information.

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What You Can Donate: <https://dmarcunited.org/donate/give-food/most-needed-items/>

Donation Locations, Getting Help, or Volunteering: <https://foodbankiowa.org/>

Visit www.imagineia.org to learn more.

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