



NATIONAL WOMEN'S LAW CENTER

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Impact of Redefining the Poverty's Inflation Measure

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The Trump administration is floating a proposal that would use a slower measure of inflation for annual adjustments to the Official Poverty Measure (OPM) in an attempt to rob communities of basic assistance. The OPM (\$25,900 for a family of 4 in 2018) already does not reflect what's required for a family to meet their basic needs and using a slower measure of inflation would only make this worse. In another cruel attack against women, children, and families, this would unilaterally squeeze people off programs that help them meet their everyday needs. If implemented, the Trump administration would be responsible for millions of low- and moderate-income people losing vital benefits like food assistance, health care, and education.

Dozens of programs use poverty guidelines that are based on the OPM, including:

Head Start

- Head start served over a million young children in Fiscal Year (FY) 2018.¹
- If the annual inflation adjustment for the OPM shrinks, fewer children will be eligible for Head Start's critical education and comprehensive services over time.

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and Medicaid

- CHIP covered 8.9 million children in 2016,² and 19 states³ extended coverage to about 320,000 pregnant women.⁴
- Over 33 million women and girls get their health coverage from Medicaid.⁵
- A slower inflation measure for the OPM would kick more than 300,000 children and some pregnant women off CHIP and Medicaid over 10 years,⁶ and another 250,000 people who gained Medicaid coverage through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) expansion would lose their eligibility.⁷

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- SNAP provided food assistance to more than 40.4 million people in FY 2018.⁸
- If the poverty line is changed, about 200,000 would lose their SNAP benefits.⁹

School Meals

- The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provided free or reduced-price lunches to 29.8 million children each school day in FY 2018,¹⁰ and the School Breakfast Program served more than 14.7 million children.¹¹
- If the poverty line is changed, about 100,000 children would lose their eligibility for school meals. In addition, another 100,000 would lose their meal eligibility.¹²

Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Special Supplemental Nutrition Program

- In FY 2018, WIC provided nutritious food to over 6.8 million low-income pregnant women, new mothers, and young children

on average each month.¹³

- If the poverty line is altered, an estimated 40,000 infants and young children would lose access to WIC's programs, depriving these families of a healthy start.¹⁴

Other Programs Impacted:

- **ACA Cost-Sharing Reductions and Premium Tax Credits**
- **Title X Family Planning Program**
- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program**
- **Migrant Health Centers**
- **National Farmworkers Jobs Programs**
- **Workforce Investment Act Youth Activities**
- **Community Health Centers**

The Trump Administration has consistently pursued policies that would take vital assistance away from working people who are struggling to make ends meet. The proposal to use a lower measure of inflation to calculate OPM annual adjustments is another example of cruel attacks on low-income families. Instead of threatening basic assistance, the government should focus its work on policies that would improve women's economic security including raising wages, expanding access to high-quality affordable child care, and passing paid family and medical leave.

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- 1 Unpublished Ctr. for Law and Social Pol'y analysis of 2018 Office of Head Start Program Information Report (PIR) data.
 - 2 Ctr. for Medicare & Medicaid Servs., 2016 Number of Children Ever Enrolled Report (2017), available at <https://www.medicaid.gov/chip/downloads/fy-2016-childrens-enrollment-report.pdf>.
 - 3 Kaiser Family Found., Medicaid and CHIP Income Eligibility Limits for Pregnant Women as Percent of the Federal Poverty Level (Jan. 1, 2018), available at <https://www.kff.org/health-reform/state-indicator/medicaid-and-chip-income-eligibility-limits-for-pregnant-women-as-a-percent-of-the-federal-poverty-level>.
 - 4 Kate Honsberger, Nat'l Acad. for State Health Pol'y, CHIP Coverage is Important for Pregnant Women Too (Nov. 15, 2016), <https://nashp.org/chip-coverage-is-important-for-pregnant-woman-too/>.
 - 5 Nat'l Women's Law Ctr, calculations based on U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2017 Annual Social and Economic Supplement Table Creator, <https://www.census.gov/cps/cpstablescreator.html>.
 - 6 Aviva Aron-Dine & Matt Broaddus, Ctr. on Budget and Pol'y Priorities, Poverty Line Proposal Would Cut Medicaid, Medicare, and Premium Tax Credits, Causing Millions to Lose or See Reduced Benefits Over Time (May 2019), available at <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/poverty-line-proposal-would-cut-medicaid-medicare-and-premium-tax>.
 - 7 Ibid.
 - 8 U.S. Dept' of Agric., Food & Nutrition Serv., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, FY 15 Through FY 18 National View Summary, <https://fns.prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/34SNAPmonthly-4.pdf>.
 - 9 Aviva Aron-Dine et al., Ctr. on Budget and Pol'y Priorities, Administration's Poverty Line Proposal Would Cut Health, Food Assistance for Millions Over Time (June 18, 2019), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/administrations-poverty-line-proposal-would-cut-health-food>.
 - 10 U.S. Dept' of Agric., Food & Nutrition Serv., National School Lunch Program: Participation and Lunches Served, available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pd/sisummar/pdf>.
 - 11 Ibid.
 - 12 Aviva Aron-Dine et al., Ctr. on Budget and Pol'y Priorities, Administration's Poverty Line Proposal Would Cut Health, Food Assistance for Millions Over Time (June 18, 2019), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/administrations-poverty-line-proposal-would-cut-health-food>.
 - 13 U.S. Dept' of Agric., Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Monthly Data - National Level, https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pd/37WIC_Monthly.pdf.
 - 14 Aviva Aron-Dine et al., Ctr. on Budget and Pol'y Priorities, Administration's Poverty Line Proposal Would Cut Health, Food Assistance for Millions Over Time (June 18, 2019), <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/administrations-poverty-line-proposal-would-cut-health-food>.