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Professor Thomas
MJFC 460-01
5 February 2024

PKG Update:

Please answer the following questions in sentence form. Be thorough in your responses:

- 1) Discuss your story, answering the question: Who Cares? And What is my story about?
Include in detail which of the 5 Motivators are you using in your report?

My story on DC SNAP benefits' temporary increase and accessibility issues highlights the temporary changes in SNAP benefit amounts DC residents can expect to see reflected in their balances beginning in the month of February. The package also focuses in on the angle of college students and their hampered ability to be approved for and receive SNAP benefits, considering the interview requirements that many DC Advocacy groups are petitioning against on behalf of DC residents and students. The current interview requirement mandates that applicants must complete an initial certification interview either in person or by phone. Overall, with the publication of this package, DC residents enrolled in snap will be informed on the temporary amount increase, and those who may be eligible will be aware of the ongoing fight to increase food stamp accessibility in the District.

This story is going to encompass three of five journalistic motivators: money, family, and health. It will involve money as a motivator because many individuals, families, or college students in D.C. who receive SNAP benefits or could be eligible for the benefits are a part of low-income households and an increase in benefits or alleviations to eligibility requirements could be a money-saving solution for them and a way for them to afford groceries and maintain their budgets.

The story will also touch on the motivator of family because there are DC families enrolled in SNAP benefits and these changes affect their entire household's ability to afford groceries. This package also may notify parents of working-class families in DC that eligibility requirements could become more relaxed and convenient, making SNAP Benefits more accessible for them.

Lastly, the story will reflect health as a motivator since food insecurity remains an issue in the world and DC, and SNAP Benefits help alleviate this issue for some individuals with low incomes.

- 2.) What sources have you contacted/researched for background information (provide specific information)?

I have reached out to Aaron Ament, the President and co-founder of The National Student Legal Defense Network for information on the team's petition. I have also reached out to Tyler Ritchie, a legal fellow at The National Student Legal Defense Network for comments on the issue. The two have yet to respond.

Regarding background research, I plan on contacting someone at the DC Department of Health & Human Services (DHS) for clarity on how the interview process and eligibility requirements work in DC. I also plan on reaching out to someone at the DC DHS to determine if there are available statistics on the number of missed-interview denials in DC, and number of DC residents enrolled in SNAP Benefits.

I'm also hoping to interview a spokesperson for the Department of Agriculture, such as Allan Rodriguez who is a press secretary there whom I have reached out to and am waiting for a response.

To capture the human aspect of this story, I plan on asking individuals at the grocery store if they're comfortable speaking about their DC SNAP application experience or opinions on the benefits increase. I will also be asking neighbors on Nextdoor.com to speak to their experience.

As of now, I am still searching for a college student to interview who has applied for food stamps and experience challenges or obstacles with the process.

My research has been sourced from [Benefits Data Trust](#), The Pew Research Center, the US Department of Agriculture, [Higher Learning Advocates](#), and the U.S. Government Accountability Office. Higher Learning Advocates' ['Let Students Eat'](#) page has various updated research sources with statistics on food insecurity in the country's college student population.

Also, I found that the U.S. Government Accountability Office [released research](#) in 2019 that showed nearly 2 million college students who are eligible for SNAP benefits were not enrolled.

2) What is your plan B if your main source(s) follow through?

If my main sources fall through, I have plans to reach out to the Communications Office of the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) and Indivar Dutta-Gupta, the President and Executive Director at Clasp on the petition and issue of SNAP Benefit accessibility and the eligibility requirement issues.

3) What type of b-roll will you use to do your story? What opportunities will you have to utilize natural sound?

I will record b-roll video of residents doing their grocery shopping and checking out in the grocery store, some b-roll of food specifically at Harris Teeters, b-roll of the USDA building, the Department of Health & Human Services, and the "SNAP EBT Accepted Here" signs on doors. I will be able to get natural sound of shopping carts, and grocery store checkout sounds.

4) Where is your stand-up going to be in Washington? What is the backdrop? Unless otherwise approved by Prof Thomas you must do your story at a location that is recognizable to Washington, DC. (Ex: White House, Capitol, Supreme Court, Mall, Monuments, etc)

My stand up will be in front of the United States Department of Agriculture building or DC Department of Health and Human Services building. If these options do not work, I plan to do it at the National Mall.