

SNAP is targeted at the most vulnerable.

- 76% of SNAP households included a child, an elderly person, or a disabled person. These vulnerable households receive 83% of all SNAP benefits.ⁱ
- SNAP eligibility is limited to households with gross income of no more than 130% of the federal poverty guideline, but the majority of households have income well below the maximum: 83% of SNAP households have gross income at or below 100% of the poverty guideline (\$19,530 for a family of 3 in 2013), and these households receive about 91% of all benefits. 61% of SNAP households have gross income at or below 75% of the poverty guideline (\$14,648 for a family of 3 in 2013).ⁱⁱ
- The average SNAP household has a gross monthly income of \$744; net monthly income of \$338 after the standard deduction and, for certain households, deductions for child care, medical expenses, and shelter costs; and countable resources of \$331, such as a bank account.ⁱⁱⁱ

SNAP is responsive to changes in need, providing needed food assistance as families fall into economic hardship and then transitioning away as their financial situation stabilizes.

- SNAP participation historically follows unemployment with a slight lag. SNAP participation grew during the recession, responding quickly and effectively to increased need. As the number of unemployed people increased by 94% from 2007 to 2011, SNAP responded with a 70% increase in participation over the same period.^{iv}
- As the economy recovers and people go back to work, SNAP participation and program costs, too, can be expected to decline. Unemployment has begun to slowly fall, and SNAP participation growth has flattened out. The Congressional Budget Office projects SNAP participation to begin declining in 2015, with both unemployment and SNAP participation returning to near pre-recession levels by 2022.^v

SNAP has a strong record of program integrity.

- SNAP error rates declined by 57% since FY2000, from 8.91% in FY2000 to a record low of 3.80% in FY2011.^{vi} The accuracy rate of 96.2% (FY2011) is an all-time program high and is considerably higher than other major benefit programs, for example Medicare fee-for-service (91.5%) or Medicare Advantage Part C (88.6%).^{vii}
- Two-thirds of all SNAP payment errors are a result of caseworker error. Nearly one-fifth are underpayments, which occur when eligible participants receive less in benefits than they are eligible to receive.^{viii}
- The national rate of food stamp trafficking declined from about 3.8 cents per dollar of benefits redeemed in 1993 to about 1.0 cent per dollar during the years 2006 to 2008.^{ix} As you may have read in local news, USDA is aggressively fighting trafficking, but while there are individual cases of program abuse, for every one instance of fraud, there are hundreds of stories of heartbreaking need.

The need for food assistance is already greater than SNAP can fill.

- SNAP benefits don't last most participants the whole month. 90% of SNAP benefits are redeemed by the third week of the month, and 58% of food bank clients currently receiving SNAP benefits turn to food banks for assistance at least 6 months out of the year.^x
- The average monthly SNAP benefit per person is \$133.85, or less than \$1.50 per person, per meal.^{xi}
- Only 55% of food insecure individuals are income-eligible for SNAP, and 29% are not income-eligible for any federal food assistance.^{xii}

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- iii U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2011*. Table A.5. November 2012. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/Published/snap/SNAPPartHH.htm>
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<http://www.paymentaccuracy.gov/high-priority-programs>
- viii U.S. General Accounting Office. *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Payment Errors and Trafficking Have Declined, but Challenges Remain*. July 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-10-956T>
- ix U.S. Department of Agriculture. *The Extent of Trafficking in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: 2006-2008, Final Report*. March 2011. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/ora/menu/published/SNAP/FILES/ProgramIntegrity/Trafficking2006.pdf> U.S. General Accounting Office. *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Payment Errors and Trafficking Have Declined, but Challenges Remain*. July 2010. <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d10956t.pdf>
- x U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. *Benefit Redemption Patterns in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. Final Report. February 2011.
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