

To provide you with the best science and to reduce review time, please find the following science-approved facts for use in your campaigns and materials. After each fact you will also find fast facts based on the science that can be cut and pasted word-for-word without need for additional science review.

Definitions

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** A federal program that provides nutrition benefits to under-resourced individuals and families that are used at stores to purchase food. The program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) through its nationwide network of FNS field offices. Local FNS field offices are responsible for the licensing and monitoring of retail food stores participating in SNAP.¹
- **Farm Bill:** A comprehensive multi-year bill that addresses nutrition and agricultural policy issues. It is typically renewed every five years. The last bill was scheduled to be reauthorized in 2023, but was subsequently extended to September 30, 2025, via two one-year extensions. Nutrition is about two-thirds of the full cost of the legislation and includes SNAP and other critical nutrition and feeding programs. Some provisions of the Farm Bill, including aspects of SNAP, were addressed in H.R. 1 (119th Congress) that was signed into law in July 2025.²
- **Nutrition Security:** Individual or household condition of having equitable and stable availability, access, affordability, and utilization of foods and beverages that promote well-being and prevent and treat disease.³
- **Nutrition Security:** Having equitable and stable availability of, access to, affordability of, and use of foods and beverages that promote well-being and prevent and treat disease.⁴
- **Incentives:** Authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) Program was a project to evaluate health and nutrition promotion if incentives provided to SNAP participants and at point of sale increased the purchase of fruits and vegetables. Building off the success of HIP, the Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentives (FINI) Program was created in the 2014 Farm Bill to provide grants to eligible organizations to design and implement projects to increase produce purchases among families with low incomes who participated in SNAP by providing incentives at the point of purchase. The 2018 Farm Bill expanded FINI and renamed it the Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP), authorizing funds for nutrition incentive and produce prescription programs.

Sources:

1. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Retailer Service Center. Accessed June 2025. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/rsc>.
2. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Farm & Commodity Policy – Farm Bill Spending. Accessed June 2025. Available at: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/farm-economy/farm-commodity-policy/farm-bill-spending>
3. Thorndike AN, Gardner CD, Kendrick KB, Seligman HK, Yaroch AL, Gomes AV, Ivy KN, Scarmo S, Cotwright CJ, Schwartz MB; American Heart Association Advocacy Coordinating Committee. Strengthening US Food Policies and Programs to Promote Equity in Nutrition Security: A Policy Statement From the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2022;145(24):e1077–e1093. doi:10.1161/cir.0000000000001072
4. Thorndike AN, Gardner CD, Bishop Kendrick K, Seligman HK, Yaroch AL, Gomes AV, Ivy KN, Scarmo S, Cotwright CJ, Schwartz MB; on behalf of the American Heart Association Advocacy Coordinating Committee. Strengthening US food policies and programs to promote equity in nutrition security: a policy statement from the American Heart Association. *Circulation*. 2022; doi: 10.1161/CIR.0000000000001072.

SNAP Participation

FACT 1

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2024, 41.7 million people participated in SNAP per month. In FY 2023, the majority of SNAP benefits went to households with children, older adults, or those with disabilities. In FY 2023, 39% of SNAP participants were children, including over 4.4 million infants and toddlers ages 0 to 4 years old.

Fast Facts:

- In 2024, more than 41 million people participated in SNAP.
- In 2024, roughly 1 in 8 Americans participated in SNAP.
 - That's more than every person that lives in California.
 - Almost equal to the combined populations of Texas and Michigan.
 - That's roughly the same size of the population of Canada.
- Most people who rely on SNAP are children, older adults, and people with disabilities.
- In 2024, SNAP helped more than 41 million people afford groceries.
- About 2 in 5 SNAP participants are children.
- More than 4 million infants and toddlers have an opportunity to thrive because of the SNAP benefits their families receive.
- If each participant eats three meals a day, SNAP supports over 45 billion meals annually—a critical lifeline for families across the country.
- More than 4.4 million babies and toddlers depend on SNAP—enough to fill every seat in every NFL stadium twice.
- SNAP helps more than 4.4 million babies and toddlers—if they were each in a high chair, they would cover about 3,745 basketball courts.

Sources:

Monkovic, M., Ward, B. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Evidence, Analysis, and Regulatory Affairs Office, Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2023. April 2025. Available at <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-FY23-Characteristics-Report.pdf>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – Key Statistics and Research. July 24, 2025. Available at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/key-statistics-and-research>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Characteristics of SNAP Households: Fiscal Year 2023. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/snap/characteristics-fy23>

FACT 2

SNAP is focused on households with limited resources to purchase food and those most vulnerable, such as the elderly, children, and those with disabilities. Eighty-six percent of SNAP benefits go to households with incomes at or below the federal poverty line. Among SNAP households with at least one working-age, non-disabled adult, 55% worked while receiving SNAP and 74% worked in the year before or after receiving SNAP.

Fast Facts:

- SNAP is an essential resource for children, older adults, and people with disabilities.
- Eighty-six percent of SNAP benefits help people and families with low incomes.
- Most SNAP participants who can work do so.
- SNAP is an essential safety net to help families and their children after a job loss.
- SNAP is a lifeline for people who work hard but still struggle to afford food—more than half of working-age adults on SNAP are employed.
- Think of 10 SNAP households with a working-age adult: Five are working right now, and seven worked in the year before or after receiving benefits.
- SNAP is not just for people out of work. It's a safety net for families during tough times like job loss or reduced hours.
- SNAP helps the most vulnerable: children, older adults, and people with disabilities, those who need it most.

Sources:

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Policy Basics: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). November 2024. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/the-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

Monkovic, M., Ward, B. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Evidence, Analysis, and Regulatory Affairs Office, Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2023. April 2025. Available at <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/snap-FY23-Characteristics-Report.pdf>

FACT 3

SNAP participants with young children are at high risk of losing benefits when faced with recertification deadlines and other administrative burdens. This lapse in benefits, known as churning, increases the risk of food insecurity for families. One study of SNAP-participating households in Massachusetts with children younger than 6 years old found that 40.9% of households experienced churning in 2019. This lapse in benefits can also have a downstream effect on school meal eligibility.

Fast Facts:

- When families face administrative barriers to SNAP, young children are more likely to go hungry.
- Nearly half of SNAP-participating families with young children had inconsistent access to benefits because of administrative barriers in 2019.
- The more complicated it is to reapply for SNAP, the higher the risk of children and families going hungry.
- When families are unable to reapply for their SNAP benefits due to administrative barriers, it impacts their eligibility for free school meals.
- A study showed that in Massachusetts, nearly 41% of SNAP households with kids under age 6 experienced churning in 2019. Reducing these administrative barriers is critical to keeping food on the table for families.

Source:

Kenney EL, Soto MJ, Fubini M, Carleton A, Lee M, Bleich SN. Simplification of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Recertification Processes and Association With Uninterrupted Access to Benefits Among Participants With Young Children. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022;5(9):e2230150. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2022.30150.

FACT 4

Tribal members are not allowed to participate in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) and SNAP at the same time, even though there has been proposed federal legislation to allow dual participation. Approximately 87% of households eligible for FDPIR would be eligible for SNAP. Among households eligible for FDPIR, 46% would receive more benefits from SNAP, 41% would receive more value from FDPIR food packages, and 13% would not be eligible for SNAP.

Fast Facts:

- Eligible tribal members have to choose between participating in FDPIR or SNAP.
- Many tribal members living on reservations must enroll in FDPIR because rural and reservation communities lack access to SNAP offices or authorized food stores.
- Tribal members who live in rural and reservation communities without meaningful access to SNAP offices or authorized food stores may receive fewer benefits to feed their families.
- Indigenous children and families living on their native lands may receive fewer benefits than their non-tribal counterparts.

Source:

Cunyngham K, Castner L. Tribal Food Assistance: A Comparison of the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Urban Institute. April 2009. Available at: <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/28396/412034-Tribal-Food-Assistance.pdf>.

FACT 5

As of June 2026, an estimated 728,000–776,000 children are losing SNAP benefits across the 12 states with available data since the enactment of H.R. 1. Children account for nearly half (46%) of the more than 1.6 million people who are no longer receiving assistance in these states. Declines in child participation vary by state, with Arizona experiencing the largest percentage decline in SNAP participants: about 205,000 children lost benefits compared to July 2025, a 55% drop. Losing SNAP also makes it harder for children to qualify for other food assistance programs, such as WIC and free school meals.

Fast Facts:

- Since the passage of H.R. 1 or OBBB, at least 700,000 children in only the 12 states with available data are no longer getting SNAP food assistance.
- Children make up nearly half of the people who lost SNAP benefits since the passage of H.R. 1.
- SNAP helps families afford food. When children lose SNAP, families may also have a harder time connecting to other food supports, like WIC and free school meals.
- The estimate of affected children reflects data from 12 states, so the true number of children who no longer can access food through SNAP is likely much higher.

Sources:

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Sharp drop in number of children receiving SNAP food assistance under new federal law. *CBPP*. Published May 27, 2026. Accessed June 17, 2026. <https://www.cbpp.org/blog/sharp-drop-in-number-of-children-receiving-snap-food-assistance-under-new-federal-law>

Santa Cruz N. More than 770,000 children are no longer receiving SNAP benefits after Trump changes federal food program. *ProPublica*. Published June 17, 2026. Accessed June 17, 2026. <https://www.propublica.org/article/snap-benefits-children-food-stamps>

Improving Diet Quality and Promoting Nutrition Security in SNAP

FACT 6

While SNAP does not address diet quality through statute, unlike other federal nutrition assistance programs, there is growing public support to do so, including from SNAP participants. A survey of SNAP participants in 2024 revealed strong support for improving the program's nutritional impact: 74.5% supported providing extra funds for healthy foods and 69.9% supported providing extra funds for fruits and vegetables.

Fast Facts:

- SNAP is the only federal nutrition assistance program that does not prioritize diet quality or nutrition at the federal level.
- WIC, CACFP, and school meals all have nutrition standards embedded in the program nationally to help participants lead healthier lives—SNAP does not.
- Many SNAP participants want increased access to healthy, nutritious foods.
- There is broad support among SNAP participants to strengthen nutrition standards for SNAP.

Sources:

Hatton CR, Wolfson JA, Uriarte A, Leung CW. Participant support for changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. JAMA Health Forum. 2024;5(12):e243722. doi:10.1001/jamahealthforum.2024.3722

Leung CW, Musicus AA, Willett WC, Rimm EB. Improving the nutritional impact of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: perspectives from the participants. Am J Prev Med. 2017; 52:S193–S198. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2016.07.024.

Our goal is for every family to have access to healthy food.

As of August 2026, 23 states have addressed diet quality in the SNAP program through approved waivers from USDA to restrict the purchase of sugary drinks and other less-healthy items with SNAP benefits. Evidence gained from randomized trials and modeling studies suggest these restrictions may reduce sugary drink purchases or consumption, which may, in turn, help improve diet quality. We are closely monitoring ongoing state evaluations to provide stronger real-world evidence to support policy change that increases access to healthy, affordable food for everyone.

Sources:

Alba C, Wang X, An R. Are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Restrictions on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages Effective in Reducing Purchase or Consumption? A Systematic Review. Nutrients. 2024;16. doi: 10.3390/nu16101459.

Choi SE, Wright DR, Bleich SN. Impact of Restricting Sugar-Sweetened Beverages From the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program on Children's Health. Am J Prev Med. 2021;60:276–284. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2020.08.023. 35.

Food and Nutrition Administration. SNAP Food Restriction Waivers. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Updated July 7, 2026. Accessed August 28, 2026. <https://www.fna.usda.gov/snap/waivers/foodrestriction>

Harnack L, Oakes JM, Elbel B, Beatty T, Rydell S, French S. Effects of subsidies and prohibitions on nutrition in a food benefit program: a randomized clinical trial. JAMA Intern Med. 2016;176(11):1610–1618.

SNAP Incentives

FACT 7

People who received SNAP benefits and who participated in the Healthy Incentive Pilot (HIP), which provided financial incentives for purchasing fruits and vegetables, ate almost a quarter of a cup (26%) more targeted fruits and vegetables per day than non-participants. They also spent more of their SNAP benefits on targeted fruits and vegetables—\$12.05 versus \$10.86 on average each month.

Fast Facts:

- When it's easier to access and afford healthy options like fruits and vegetables, SNAP participants buy more nutritious foods.
- HIP increased daily fruit and vegetable consumption among SNAP participants by 26%.
- SNAP participants in HIP ate more fruits and vegetables.
- SNAP participants in the Healthy Incentive Pilot ate 26% more fruits and vegetables.
- Over a year, Healthy Incentive Pilot generated about \$14 more in healthy foods per person—imagine if 1 million SNAP users joined HIP, that's \$14 million more toward fresh produce!
- The extra fruits and veggies for participating in the Healthy Incentive Pilot adds up to 91 cups per year—enough to fill over 22 grocery bags of fresh produce per person annually (*assuming approximately 4 cups of produce per grocery bag*).

Source:

Bartlett S, Klerman JA, Olsho L, et al. Evaluation of the Healthy Incentives Pilot (HIP) Final Report. Prepared by Abt Associates for the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service; September 2014. Available at: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/ops/HIP-Final.pdf>.

FACT 8

Impact findings from year five of the GusNIP program demonstrate that households participating in the nutrition incentive program purchased more than \$54 million in fruits and vegetables, 13 times the overall dollar value of incentives redeemed compared to year one. Participants also reported eating more fruits (1.07 cups/day) and vegetables (1.59 cups/day) than the average adult in the U.S. (0.88 cups/day of fruit and 1.55 cups/day of vegetables) and reported eating more fruits and vegetables the longer they were in the program.

Fast Facts:

- When a nutrition incentive program made it easier to purchase fruits and vegetables, SNAP participants ate more fruits and vegetables the longer they were in the program.
- When it's easier to afford fruits and vegetables, SNAP participants eat more of them than the average U.S. adult.
- Households purchased more than \$54 million in fruits and vegetables through the nutrition incentive program.

Source:

GusNIP NTAE. Gus Schumacher Nutrition Incentive Program (GusNIP): Impact Findings Y5: September 1, 2023 to August 31, 2024; 2025. https://www.nutritionincentivehub.org/media/bnahnprk/y5-findings-report-2025_v7-compliant-1.pdf

FACT 9

SNAP incentives can increase spending on fruits and vegetables in grocery stores. A 2017 study conducted in a rural community found that shoppers with low incomes who received an incentive for fruits and vegetables spent 15.3% more on fruits and vegetables weekly than those who did not receive the incentive. Weekly spending on fruits and vegetables increased more among SNAP-eligible individuals who redeemed their incentive coupons.

Fast Facts:

- SNAP incentives drive healthier spending.
- Incentives at grocery stores increase fruit and vegetable purchases.
- A 2017 study in a rural community found shoppers with low incomes who received an incentive spent 15.3% more on fruits and vegetables than those without incentives.

Source:

Polacsek M, Moran A, Thorndike AN, et al. A supermarket double-dollar incentive program increases purchases of fresh fruits and vegetables among low-income families with children: The Healthy Double study. *J Nutr Educ Behav*. 2018; 50(3):217-228, doi: 10.1016/j.jneb.2017.09.013.

FACT 10

Discounts on produce may increase spending on these items. A 2019 study found that an immediate 50% discount on fruits and vegetables increased weekly spending on qualifying fresh produce by 27% compared to those without the discounts.

Fast Facts:

- SNAP participants buy more fresh produce when we make it affordable for them.
- When the cost of fresh fruits and vegetables is cut in half, SNAP participants spend 27% more on produce compared to the control group.
- Produce discounts = More healthy purchases
- A study found that an immediate 50% discount on fruits and vegetables increased weekly spending on produce by 27%.

Source:

Moran A, Thorndike A, Franckle R, et al. Financial incentives increase purchases of fruit and vegetables among lower-income households with children. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2019;38(9):1557-1566.

FACT 11

Produce coupons may increase produce sales and consumption. A 2020 study found that providing produce coupons to SNAP participants in Washington, D.C., at corner stores led to 77% of shoppers reporting increases in produce consumption, while participating stores collectively experienced a 288% increase in produce items sold compared to the previous unincentivized year.

Fast Facts:

- In one study, providing SNAP participants with produce coupons led to a 77% increase in produce consumption and a 288% increase in produce sales.
- When we make it easier for families to afford fresh produce, most SNAP recipients will buy it.
- When we make it easier to afford healthy produce, families want to buy it.
- Making fresh produce more affordable to families receiving SNAP benefits helps SNAP-eligible food retailers.

Source:

Snelling AM, Yamamoto JJ, Belazis LB, Seltzer GR, McClave RL, Watts E. Incentivizing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program purchases with fresh produce in corner stores to reduce food inequity in underserved areas of Washington DC. *Health Equity*. 2020;4(1):386–393

FACT 12

Dollar-matching programs are a potentially effective strategy for increasing fresh produce purchases. A dollar-matching program in Michigan providing SNAP participants with an incentive for fresh produce purchases found that SNAP participants' spending on fresh produce was significantly higher at stores that implemented the incentive in 2015 (7.4% higher) and in 2016 (2.2% higher) than at stores that did not implement the incentive.

Fast Facts:

- Dollar-matching SNAP incentives help more families afford fresh, nutritious produce.
- Dollar-matching incentives can make it possible for more children and families receiving SNAP benefits to eat healthy, nutritious produce.
- A dollar-matching program significantly increased SNAP participants' spending on fresh produce.

Source:

Rummo PE, Noriega D, Parret A, Harding M, Hesterman O, Elbel BE. Evaluating a USDA program that gives SNAP participants financial incentives to buy fresh produce in supermarkets. *Health Affairs*. 2019;38(11):1816–1823. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00431

FACT 13

Incentive programs help make fruits and vegetables more affordable, especially for people with low income. A randomized control trial in 13 states and Washington, D.C., found that financial incentives at farmers markets significantly increased fruit and vegetable consumption for SNAP participants, with higher incentive levels associated with greater market spending and fruit and vegetable intake. The highest-level incentive level (providing \$2 for every \$1 spent) led to the biggest increases in farmers market spending and daily fruit and vegetable intake, raising consumption by 0.31 cups a day among SNAP participants who used the incentive.

Fast Facts:

- Financial incentives at farmers' markets boost fruit and vegetable consumption for SNAP participants.
- Higher incentives = more spending and more produce eaten.
- A 2-for-1 SNAP incentive boosted fruit and vegetable intake by about one-third of a cup per day among SNAP participants who used the incentive.
- Increased fruit and vegetable intake means helping families stretch budgets while eating healthier.

Source:

Karpyn A, Pon J, Grajeda SB, Wang R, Merritt KE, Tracy T, May H, Sawyer-Morris G, Halverson MM, Hunt A. Understanding impacts of SNAP fruit and vegetable incentive program at farmers' markets: findings from a 13 state RCT. *Int J Environ Res Public Health*. 2022;19(12):7443. doi:10.3390/ijerph19127443

Sugary Drinks and SNAP

FACT 14

One study found that sugary beverages accounted for approximately 12% of total daily caloric intake (258 kcal) among SNAP participants, higher than that of SNAP-eligible non-participants (9%, 205 kcal) and SNAP-ineligible non-participants (6%, 153 kcal). This may be in part due to aggressive marketing of sugary drinks.

Fast Facts:

- SNAP participants drink more sugary beverages than non-participants, which may be due in part to aggressive marketing of sugary drinks.
- Sugary beverages account for about 12% of SNAP participants' daily calories, which may be due in part to aggressive marketing of sugary drinks.
- Twelve percent of SNAP participants' daily calories come from sugary beverages, in part due to aggressive marketing of sugary drinks.

Sources:

Grummon AH, Taillie LS. Nutritional profile of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program household food and beverage purchases. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2018;108(4):838-848. doi:10.1093/ajcn/nqy152. Available from: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6128139/>

Moran AJ, Musicus A, Gorski Findling MT, et al. Increases in Sugary Drink Marketing During Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Benefit Issuance in New York. *Am J Prev Med*. 2018;55(1):55-62. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2018.03.012

Nguyen BT and Powell LW. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participation and sugar-sweetened beverage consumption, overall and by source. *Prev Med*. 2015:82-6.

FACT 15

In both SNAP and non-SNAP households, sweetened beverages are second- and fifth-largest commodity expenditures, respectively. This may be in part due to aggressive marketing of sugary drinks.

Fast Facts:

- Households with low incomes spend more on sweetened beverages than many other foods or drinks, which may be due in part to aggressive marketing of sugary drinks.
- Children in families with low incomes consume sweetened beverages more than children in families without low incomes, which may be due in part to aggressive marketing of sugary drinks.

Sources:

Grummon AH, Taillie LS. Nutritional profile of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program household food and beverage purchases. *Am J Clin Nutr*. 2018;108(4):838-848. doi:10.1093/ajcn/nqy152. Available from: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6128139/>

Taillie LS, Grummon AH, Fleischacker S, et al. Best practices for conducting rigorous research on food policy interventions: A review. *Obesity Reviews*. 2021;22(S3):e13179. doi:10.1111/obr.13179.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Foods Typically Purchased by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Households. November 2016. Available at: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/ops/SNAPFoodsTypicallyPurchased.pdf>

FACT 16

Incentives for purchasing more fruits and vegetables and prohibiting the purchase of less nutritious foods can improve diet quality. A randomized controlled trial conducted among SNAP-eligible individuals found that pairing incentives for purchasing more fruits and vegetables with restrictions on the purchase of less nutritious foods (e.g., sugary drinks, sweet baked goods, and candies) improved diet quality, reduced consumption of sugary drinks and sweets, and increased fruit intake compared with individuals who made purchases with no restrictions or incentives.

Fast Facts:

- Providing incentives to buy more fruits and vegetables and restricting the purchases of less healthy foods improves diet quality, reduces consumption of sugary drinks and sweets, and increases fruit intake.
- When we make it easier to eat healthy food and drinks and restrict less healthy foods, diet quality improves.
- Providing affordable, nutritious alternatives to less healthy foods improves diet quality.

Source:

Harnack L, Oakes JM, Elbel B, Beatty T, Rydell S, French S. Effects of subsidies and prohibitions on nutrition in a food benefit program: a randomized clinical trial. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2016;176(11):1610-1618.

FACT 17

Evidence shows that removing sugary drinks from SNAP may improve diet quality. Data from modeling studies show that removing sugary drink purchases in SNAP could significantly reduce sugary drink consumption and future cardiovascular disease events; and data from a review of randomized trials and modeling studies show that removing sugary drinks from SNAP could reduce consumption and purchases of these beverages.

Fast Facts:

- Modeling studies show that eliminating sugary drink purchases in SNAP could significantly reduce sugary drink consumption.
- Removing sugary drinks from SNAP could prevent thousands of future cardiovascular disease events.
- Sugary drinks are the #1 source of added sugar in U.S. diets—removing them from SNAP could cut billions of empty calories.

Sources:

Choi SE, Wright DR, Bleich SN. Impact of Restricting Sugar-Sweetened Beverages From the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program on Children's Health. *Am J Prev Med*. 2021;60:276–284. doi: 10.1016/j.amepre.2020.08.023. 35.

Mozaffarian D, Liu J, Sy S, Huang Y, Rehm C, Lee Y, Wilde P, Abrahams-Gessel S, de Souza Veiga Jardim T, Gaziano T, et al. Cost-effectiveness of financial incentives and disincentives for improving food purchases and health through the US Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): A microsimulation study. *PLoS Med*. 2018;15:e1002661. doi: 10.1371/journal.pmed.1002661. 36.

Alba C, Wang X, An R. Are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Restrictions on Sugar-Sweetened Beverages Effective in Reducing Purchase or Consumption? A Systematic Review. *Nutrients*. 2024;16. doi: 10.3390/nu16101459.

FACT 18

There is growing public discussion and support for modifying SNAP criteria to improve diet quality. One survey found that 82% of respondents support providing additional benefits to SNAP participants that can be used to purchase only healthful foods. A majority of SNAP participants surveyed supported removing SNAP benefits for sugary drinks. Of the 46% of SNAP participants who initially opposed removing sugary drinks, 45% supported removing SNAP benefits for sugary drinks if the policy also included additional benefits to purchase healthful foods.

Fast Facts:

- Eighty-two percent of people surveyed support giving SNAP participants extra benefits for healthy foods only.
- If 82% of Americans agree, that's 4 out of every 5 people—a strong majority backing healthier SNAP choices.
- Fifty-four percent of SNAP participants support removing sugary drinks from SNAP.
- Among those initially opposed (46%), 45% changed their minds if the policy included additional benefits for healthy foods.

Source:

Long M, Leung C, Cheung L, Blumenthal S, Willet W. Public support for policies to improve the nutritional impact of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). *Public Health Nutri*. 2014;17:219–224.

SNAP Impact on Food Insecurity, Poverty, and Healthcare

FACT 19

In 2024, over 7 million households (7.2 million) had very low food security, meaning at least one person in the household did not have enough to eat. Approximately 318,000 households with children experienced very low food security. These households reported that children were hungry, skipped a meal, or did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food.

Fast Facts:

- In 2024, over 7 million families struggled to afford food for their families.
- In 2024, 318,000 families with children did not have enough for everyone to eat.
- About 318,000 families with children had one or more child who was hungry, skipped meals, or went a whole day without eating because their families did not have enough money for food in 2024.
- When families can't afford food, children go hungry.

Sources:

Rabbitt MP, Reed-Jones M, Hales LJ, Suttles S, Burke MP. *Household Food Security in the United States in 2024*. Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; 2025. Report No. ERR 358.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Food security in the U.S. – key statistics & graphics. Updated February 18, 2026. Available at: <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/key-statistics-graphics>

FACT 20

In April 2020, the Brookings Survey of Mothers with Young Children found that 12% of mothers who have children aged 5 and younger reported that their children didn't have enough to eat. To combat the effects of the pandemic, Congress authorized a temporary 15% increase in SNAP benefits, emergency allotments ensuring households received the maximum benefit for their size, and dedicated additional funding to support the increased demand for SNAP. These actions are, in part, why food insecurity did not grow worse during the pandemic. One study found that the emergency allotments alone reduced food insufficiency among households with children by 1.2 percentage points, with greater impacts among Black and Hispanic households with children.

Fast Facts:

- At the start of the pandemic, 12% of young children did not have enough to eat.
- Congress increased SNAP benefits in response to growing demand for the program during the pandemic.
- Congress' decision to raise SNAP benefits helped keep children and families from going hungry during the pandemic.
- The pandemic put immeasurable stress on parents and caregivers, but Congress' decision to raise SNAP benefits meant feeding children was one less thing parents and caregivers had to worry about.
- Emergency SNAP allotments reduced food insufficiency among households with children by 1.2 percentage points, with even greater benefits for Black and Hispanic families.

Sources:

Bauer L. Hungry at Thanksgiving: A Fall 2020 Update of Food Insecurity in the U.S.: Brookings Institution; November 23, 2020.

No Kid Hungry. *COVID 19 SNAP Waivers & Options*. Share Our Strength; 2021. Accessed February 3, 2026. https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/media/COVID19%20SNAP%20Waivers%20Options_9-6-21_0.pdf

Schanzenbach, DW. The impact of SNAP emergency allotments on SNAP benefits and food insufficiency. Institute for Policy Research Rapid Research Report. January 27, 2023. Available at: <https://www.ipr.northwestern.edu/documents/reports/ipr-rapid-research-report-snap-emergency-allotments-impact-27-january-2023.pdf>

FACT 21

Studies show that early childhood food insecurity may be linked to significant developmental and long-term health risks, including higher odds of developmental delays and poorer cardiovascular health in adulthood. However, SNAP participation may help buffer some of these harms: one study found food-insecure families participating in SNAP show similar developmental outcomes to food-secure families.

Fast Facts:

- Food insecurity in early childhood is linked to serious developmental and long-term health risks.
- Studies show children who don't consistently have enough nutritious food face higher chances of developmental delays and may experience poorer heart health later in adulthood.
- Access to SNAP can help protect children from some harms of food insecurity.
- Research finds that young children in food-insecure families who participate in SNAP show developmental outcomes similar to children in food-secure households.
- When families can reliably access SNAP, it may help buffer children from the negative developmental impacts typically associated with food insecurity.
- When young kids don't always have enough healthy food, it can affect their learning and health as they grow.
- Programs like SNAP can help protect kids. Families who use SNAP often see their children grow and develop just like kids in families who always have enough food.
- When families can get support to put food on the table, it can help protect children's healthy development.

Source:

Lam J, et al. Food Insecurity and Long Term Cardiovascular Health: Evidence From a Large Prospective Cohort. *Nutrients*. 2025;17(24):2427. Accessed February 9, 2026. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12348265/>

FACT 22

Research demonstrates that SNAP participation can reduce the likelihood of children experiencing food insecurity. One analysis of nearly 3,000 households with children found SNAP participation for six months was associated with an approximately one-third decrease in the likelihood of children being food insecure.

Fast Facts:

- Participating in SNAP may reduce a child's risk of experiencing food insecurity.
- When parents and caregivers have access to SNAP, their children are less likely to experience hunger.
- Fewer children go hungry and skip meals because of SNAP.
- Six months of SNAP benefits can cut the likelihood of child hunger by more than 30%.

Sources:

Ettinger de Cuba SA, et al. SNAP, Young Children's Health, and Family Food Security and Healthcare Access. *Am J Prev Med.* 2019;57(4):525-532.

Li Y, et al. The Association of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Food Insecurity among Households with Children in the United States during COVID-19. *J Nutr.* 2023;153(10):3110-3121.

Mabli J, Worthington J. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Child Food Security. *Pediatrics.*

April 2014; 133(4):610-619. 10.1542/peds.2013-2823

FACT 23

Between 2015 and 2019, SNAP kept over 6.6 million people from poverty before the COVID-19 pandemic, including over 3 million children. During the pandemic, temporary changes to SNAP—such as emergency allotments and benefit increases—were estimated to reduce poverty by 14.1% and child poverty by 21.8%.

Fast Facts:

- SNAP keeps children and families out of poverty.
- Before the pandemic, SNAP kept almost 6.6 million people out of poverty.
- Before the pandemic, SNAP kept almost 6.6 million people—including over 3 million children—out of poverty.
- During the pandemic, emergency SNAP changes were estimated to reduce poverty by 14.1% and cut child poverty by 21.8%

Sources:

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Chart Book: SNAP Helps Struggling Families Put Food on the Table. Updated November 25, 2024. Available at: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-helps-struggling-families-put-food-on-the-table-0>.

Wheaton L, Kwon D. Urban Institute. Effect of the Reevaluated Thrifty Food Plan and Emergency Allotments on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits and Poverty. August 1, 2022. Available at: <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/effect-reevaluated-thrifty-food-plan-and-emergency-allotments-supplemental>.

FACT 24

SNAP participation is associated with better health outcomes and higher adherence to medications, especially among food-insecure individuals and older adults managing chronic conditions like hypertension.

Fast Facts:

- SNAP keeps food-insecure adults and older adults from having to choose between buying food or buying their prescription medications.
- SNAP helps older adults afford their prescription medications.
- SNAP helps food-insecure adults afford their prescription medications.
- SNAP ensures that our parents and grandparents never have to decide between affording food and affording life-saving medications.

Sources:

Islam MM, Oyarzun-Gonzalez X, Bose-Brill S, Donneyong MM. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and adherence to antihypertensive medications. *JAMA Network*. 2024;7(2):e240123. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.0123. Available at: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2815447>

Ojinnaka CO, Arteaga I, Hodges L, Heflin C. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program participation and medication adherence among Medicaid-insured older adults living with hypertension. *J Gen Intern Med*. 2023;38:1349–1356. doi:10.1007/s11606-022-07994-4. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11606-022-07994-4>

Srinivasan M, Pooler JA. Cost-Related Medication Nonadherence for Older Adults Participating in SNAP, 2013–2015. *Am J Public Health*. 2018;108(2):224–230. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2017.304176.

FACT 25

Participating in SNAP may lower annual healthcare costs for adults by reducing food insecurity. For example, a study conducted in 2017 found that annual healthcare costs for adults in SNAP were nearly 25% (about \$1,400) less than those of non-participants.

Fast Facts:

- Participating in SNAP may lower participants' healthcare costs.
- SNAP helps lower healthcare costs by reducing food insecurity.
- Healthcare costs for SNAP participants are nearly 25% lower than non-participants.
- Participating in SNAP can reduce annual healthcare costs for an adult by about \$1,400.
- Helping families afford food to lead healthier lives helps lower the healthcare costs associated with food insecurity.

Sources:

Berkowitz SA, Seligman HK, Basu S. Impact of Food Insecurity and SNAP Participation on Healthcare Utilization and Expenditures. University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research Discussion Paper Series, DP2017-02. https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1105&context=ukcpr_papers

Berkowitz SA, Seligman HK, Rigdon J, Meigs JB, Basu S. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Participation and healthcare expenditures among low-income adults. *JAMA Intern Med*. 2017;177(11):1642–1649.

FACT 26

One study in Missouri found that infants with uninterrupted SNAP participation were more likely to receive all recommended well-child visits in their first year, which also increased the likelihood of receiving key vaccinations.

Fast Fact:

- A study has shown that babies with uninterrupted SNAP participation were more likely to get all recommended well-child visits in their first year.

Source:

Heflin C, Arteaga I, Hodges L, Mueser P. SNAP participation and well-child visits among infants: evidence from Missouri administrative data. *SSM - Population Health*. 2021;15:100877. doi:10.1016/j.ssmph.2021.100877.

FACT 27

In 2021, the Thrifty Food Plan—which determines SNAP benefit amounts—was reevaluated and updated, resulting in a 21% increase in benefits. Research shows that this adjustment lifted 2.9 million people, including 1.3 million children, out of poverty across the 48 continental states and Washington, D.C., reducing overall poverty by 4.6% in 2021.

Fast Facts:

- Updating the Thrifty Food Plan in 2021 increased SNAP benefits by 21%, lifting 2.9 million people—including 1.3 million children—out of poverty and reducing overall poverty by 4.6%.
- Updating SNAP benefit amounts in 2021 lifted 2.9 million people out of poverty, including 1.3 million kids.
- Updating the SNAP benefit amounts in 2021 reduced overall poverty by 4.6%.
- Increasing SNAP benefit amounts can move people out of poverty.

Source:

Gupta P, Martincheck K, Waxman E. SNAP Increase Kept 2.9 Million People Out of Poverty After Thrifty Food Plan Update. Urban Institute. 2025. Available at: https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/SNAP_Increase_Kept_2.9_Million_People_Out_of_Poverty_after_Thrifty_Food_Plan_Update.pdf.

SNAP Access

FACT 28

In 2022, SNAP participation was not maximized. In fiscal year 2022, 88% of eligible people received SNAP benefits. Across SNAP, participation varied considerably from a low of 59% in Arkansas to a high of 100% in Illinois, New Mexico, Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., Oregon, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Washington, Michigan, and Colorado.

Fast Facts:

- Participation in SNAP is not maximized—many who are eligible do not receive benefits.
- Closing the gap for working-poor households could mean hundreds of thousands more families eating healthier and staying out of poverty.
- In 2022, only 88% of people who were eligible for SNAP received benefits.
- Arkansas has the lowest rate of SNAP participation at 59%.
- Illinois, New Mexico, Massachusetts, Washington, D.C., Oregon, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Washington, Michigan, and Colorado have 100% SNAP participation.

Source:

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. Reaching Those in Need: Estimates of State Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation Rates in 2022. April 2025. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/snap/state-participation-rates/2022>.

FACT 29

SNAP participants have described feeling stigma in relation to the enrollment process, personal and perceived societal views of program participation, and underlying issues related to race, gender, nationality, family structure, or age.

Fast Facts:

- Parents and caregivers often feel stigmatized when trying to enroll in SNAP to feed their children.
- Reducing stigma could mean millions more families accessing benefits without fear or shame.
- SNAP is meant to help people and families afford enough to eat, but the enrollment process can be stigmatizing and counterproductive.
- Societal views of SNAP often lead participants to feel stigmatized.

Source:

Bleich SN, Moran AJ, Vercammen KA, Frelief JM, Dunn CG, Zhong A, et al. Strengthening the public health impacts of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program through policy. *Ann Rev Pub Health*. 2020. 41:453–480. doi: 10.1146/annurev-publhealth-040119-094143.

FACT 30

SNAP participation is estimated to reduce the likelihood of a household being food insecure. States that have adopted SNAP-supportive policies (e.g., exempting vehicles from SNAP asset calculations, simplifying reporting, providing online applications, and adopting broad-based categorical eligibility) generally have more SNAP-eligible participation than do states without these policies. States with SNAP-restrictive policies (e.g., eligibility restrictions for adult noncitizens, short recertification periods, drug testing, and fingerprinting during the application process) tend to have lower levels of SNAP participation among eligible individuals and households.

Fast Facts:

- Policies that make SNAP easier to access increase participation in the program and reduce food insecurity.
- When states make it easier to access SNAP, fewer children and families go hungry.
- When states make it harder to access SNAP, more children and families go hungry.
- States have the power to reduce food insecurity by making SNAP more accessible.
- Many states have passed SNAP-supportive policies to make it easier for more families to receive benefits. Other states have made it harder.
- When parents and caregivers can apply for SNAP online, fewer children go hungry.
- SNAP participation reduces the likelihood of household food insecurity.
- States with SNAP-supportive policies (like online applications, simplified reporting, and broad-based eligibility) have higher participation rates.
- States with restrictive policies (like drug testing, fingerprinting, and short recertification periods) see lower participation among eligible households.
- SNAP serves over 40 million people—if restrictive policies keep even 10% from enrolling, that’s 4 million people missing out on food assistance.
- Supportive policies could mean millions more families avoiding hunger.

Sources:

Cole N, Fox MK. Feeding Children When Schools Are Closed: Measuring the Impact of USDA’s Summer Food Service Program. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service; 2013. <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/Measuring2013.pdf>

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Using a policy index to capture trends and differences in state administration of USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Econ. Res. Rep. 244, US Dep. Agric., Econ. Res. Serv., Washington, DC. 2018. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=87095>

SNAP Benefit Adequacy and Issuance

FACT 31

Research shows that SNAP benefits are often not adequate to last a family the entire month and nearly 80% of benefits are exhausted by mid-month.

Fast Facts:

- SNAP does not provide families with enough benefits to afford food for an entire month.
- Many parents and caregivers run out of SNAP benefits to feed their families before the end of the month.
- SNAP benefits are meant to last families an entire month, but they are almost fully exhausted by mid-month.
- SNAP benefits often don't last the month.
- Research shows SNAP benefits run out too soon—79.5% are spent by mid-month.
- Families often struggle to cover food costs for the remaining weeks.
- If nearly 4 out of 5 families run out of benefits halfway through the month, that's about 32 million people facing food gaps every month.
- Imagine a family of four—running out mid-month means more than 15 days without enough SNAP support, forcing tough choices between food and other essentials.

Sources:

Executive Office of the President of the United States. Long-term benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. 2015. Available at: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/whitehouse.gov/files/documents/SNAP_report_final_nonembargo.pdf

Castner L, Shiferaw L, Wen A, Wolfendale C, and Appel E. Benefit Redemption Patterns in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program in Fiscal Year 2022. 2025. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/research/snap/benefit-redemption-patterns/2022>

FACT 32

The maximum SNAP benefit does not cover the cost of a moderately priced meal in 99% of U.S. continental counties and Washington, D.C., leaving many families to face food insecurity. The national average maximum SNAP benefit was \$2.84 per meal, which fell \$0.57 short of the average meal cost of \$3.41 in 2024.

Fast Facts:

- The maximum monthly SNAP benefits average \$2.84 per meal, which does not cover the average cost of a full meal for most people.
- SNAP participants are expected to feed themselves for \$2.84 per meal.
- Most SNAP participants do not receive enough benefits to cover the average cost of a meal.
- SNAP benefits fall short of covering a meal.
- The maximum SNAP benefit averages just \$2.84 per meal—far below the cost of a healthy meal for most Americans.
- Most families don't receive enough to cover the average cost of a meal, forcing tough choices between nutrition and other essentials.
- \$2.84 per meal = \$8.52 per day for three meals—less than the cost of a single fast-food combo.
- For a family of four, that's \$34 per day.
- If benefits matched the typical cost of a moderately priced meal (\$3.41), families would need 20% more support.

Source:

Urban Institute. *Does SNAP Cover the Cost of a Meal in Your County?* Updated July 16, 2025. Accessed February 3, 2026. <https://www.urban.org/data-tools/does-snap-cover-cost-meal-your-county>

FACT 33

A study found that 61% of SNAP participants viewed the cost of healthy food as a barrier to the adequacy of SNAP benefits.

Fast Facts:

- Most participants think that SNAP does not do enough to ensure they can afford healthy, nutritious foods.
- About two-thirds of participants think that SNAP does not do enough to ensure they can afford healthy, nutritious foods.
- Cost is a major barrier for SNAP participants who want to purchase healthier foods.
- That's 6 out of every 10 families struggling to afford healthy food—even with SNAP.
- About two-thirds of SNAP participants say cost is a barrier to affording healthy food.

Source:

Gearing M, Dixit-Joshi S and May L. Barriers that contain the adequacy of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) allotments: Survey Findings. 2021. Available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/barriers-constrain-adequacy-snap-allotments>.

Modernizing Technology—Benefit Redemption and Online Purchasing

FACT 34

The 2014 Farm Bill authorized the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot, which rolled out in eight states in 2019. The pilot was rapidly expanded due to the COVID-19 pandemic, driven by increased participation in SNAP and the need for socially distanced food shopping and delivery. Online SNAP purchases increased from less than \$3 million in February 2020 to \$246 million in December 2020. By March 2021, more than 1.5 million households were using their SNAP benefits to purchase groceries online through participating retailers.

Fast Facts:

- Modernizing SNAP helped keep children and families fed during the pandemic.
- When families can redeem their SNAP benefits online, more families participate in SNAP and can access food.
- We have the capacity to rapidly update and improve SNAP to make it easier for families to access and afford food.
- Two years after the launch of a pilot program to provide online SNAP shopping, more than 1.5 million participating households were purchasing groceries online.
- Modernizing SNAP = Helping feed more families
- Modern updates kept kids and families fed during the pandemic.
- Online SNAP redemption means more families can access food easily—no transportation barriers, no stigma at checkout.
- We have the capacity to rapidly improve SNAP so families can easily access food.
- Two years after launching online SNAP shopping, 1.5 million households were buying groceries online—a game-changer for convenience and dignity.
- 1.5 million households = Millions of meals delivered without leaving home.
- If each household buys groceries online twice a month, that's 36 million online transactions annually, reducing barriers for families everywhere.

Source:

United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. Fact Sheet: Biden-Harris Administration's Actions to Reduce Food Insecurity Amid the COVID-19 Crisis [press release]. Washington, DC: March 3, 2021. Available at: <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2021/03/03/biden-harris-administrations-actions-reduce-food-insecurity-amid>.

FACT 35

The SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot shows promise for increasing healthy purchases. One study found that the program contributed to sustained shifts in healthier food purchases among SNAP households and may help reinforce long-term improvements in food purchasing behaviors. More broadly, online food purchasing has the potential to increase healthy food choices by simplifying shopping; expanding grocery options; reducing unhealthy impulse purchases; addressing transportation barriers; and with changes to marketing practices when shopping online, improving the visibility of nutrition-related information.

Fast Facts:

- SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot = Healthier choices made easier
- Being able to redeem SNAP benefits online may make it easier for more families to live healthier lives.
- Online purchasing can support healthier food purchases by simplifying shopping, expanding grocery options, limiting unhealthy impulse purchases, and addressing transportation barriers.
- We need to make nutrition-related information more visible for online SNAP shoppers.
- Being able to use SNAP online can simplify shopping, making it easier for families to buy healthy foods.
- Being able to buy groceries online offers advantages for healthier food purchases including:
 - Expanding grocery options
 - Reducing unhealthy impulse buys
 - Removing transportation barriers
 - Improving visibility of nutrition information with better online marketing practices

Sources:

Lusk JL, McCluskey J. Consumer behavior during the COVID 19 pandemic. *Appl Econ Perspect Policy*. 2022;44(1):177-190. doi:10.1002/aep.13528.

Olzenak K, French S, Sherwood N, Redden JP, Harnack L. How online grocery stores support consumer nutrition information needs. *J Nutr Educ Behav*. 2020;52(10):952-957.

Jilcott Pitts SB, Ng SW, Blitstein JL, Gustafson A, Niculescu M. Online grocery shopping: promise and pitfalls for healthier food and beverage purchases. *Public Health Nutr*. 2018;21(18):3360-3376.

FACT 36

There are barriers to SNAP online purchasing that prevent adoption and equitable food access, particularly for elderly, immigrant, rural, and tribal communities. These barriers include limited internet and technology access, low digital literacy skills, delivery fees, lack of culturally-appropriate foods, limited availability of online grocery services (particularly in food deserts and rural areas), and perceptions of lower food quality for perishable items.

Fast Facts:

- There are still barriers to online SNAP purchasing that we must overcome.
- SNAP online purchasing isn't accessible for everyone—especially elderly, immigrant, rural, and tribal communities.
- Online purchasing is an important step to making SNAP more accessible, but older adult, immigrant, rural, and tribal communities continue to face barriers.
- Providing online ordering is not enough—rural communities may still lack enough SNAP-participating food retailers with healthy, nutritious options.
- SNAP's online shopping program is not accessible to everyone due to barriers such as cost, limited availability of online retailers, limited internet access, and delivery fees.
- SNAP serves 40+ million people—if even 25% face these barriers, that's 10 million Americans struggling to access food online.
- Closing these gaps could mean millions more families getting healthy groceries without leaving home.
- Key barriers to online SNAP purchasing include:
 - Limited internet and technology access
 - Low digital literacy skills
 - Delivery fees
 - Lack of culturally-appropriate foods
 - Few online grocery options in food deserts and rural areas
 - Perceptions of lower food quality

Sources:

Foster IS, Liu SY, Hoffs CT, LeBoa C, Chen AS, Rummo PE. Disparities in SNAP online grocery delivery and implementation: Lessons learned from California during the 2020-21 COVID pandemic. *Health Place*. 2022;76:102811. doi:10.1016/j.healthplace.2022.102811

Healthy Eating Research. Promoting Equitable Expansion of the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; 2021. <https://healthyeatingresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/HER-Online-Purchasing-Brief-FINAL.pdf>

Killion KE, Lituma-Solis B, Lucas-Moran L, Avelino DC, Smith C, Caspi C, Waring ME, Puglisi M, Chun OK, Duffy VB. Stakeholder perceptions of healthy food access and SNAP online grocery ordering during and after COVID-19. *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development*. 2025. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2025.143.02>.

Rogus S, Guthrie JF, Niculescu M, Mancino, L. Online Grocery Shopping Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behaviors Among SNAP Participants. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*. 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2019.11.015>.

Trude ACB, Lowery CM, Ali SH, Vedovato GM. An equity-oriented systematic review of online grocery shopping among low-income populations: implications for policy and research. *Nutrition Reviews*. 2022. 80; 1294–1310. <https://doi.org/10.1093/nutrit/nuab122>

FACT 37

Online shopping offers multiple benefits to SNAP shoppers. One study found that online shoppers spend an average of \$5.24 more on fruits and vegetables compared to brick-and-mortar shoppers without increasing their grocery bill. This benefit increases to \$6.84 when participants receive tailored assistance with meal planning and purchasing. Additionally, online shoppers in SNAP households report that online shopping helped them stretch limited food budgets, decreased experiences of stigma, and reduced stress compared to in-store shopping.

Fast Facts:

- Online shoppers spend \$5.24 more on fruits and vegetables than in-store shoppers—without increasing their total grocery bill.
- With tailored meal planning support, that benefit jumps to \$6.84 more on healthy foods.
- SNAP households report that online shopping:
 - Helps stretch limited food budgets
 - Reduces stigma
 - Lowers stress compared to in-store shopping
- If 1 million SNAP households each spend \$5 more on produce online monthly, that's \$5 million more invested in healthy foods every month—or \$60 million annually. Add tailored support? That's \$82 million a year toward fruits and veggies.

Sources:

No Kid Hungry. Online Shopping for Low-Income and SNAP Families. Washington, DC: September 2022. Available at: <https://www.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/NKH-Instacart-Online-Shopping-Micro-Report-v2.pdf>.

Gustafson A, Trude A, Hayes-Maslow L, Anderson Steeves E. Online Grocery Shopping Study. No Kid Hungry; 2022. Available at: https://bestpractices.nokidhungry.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/NKH_Online-Grocery-Study-Exec-Summary_Final.pdf.

FACT 38

SNAP online shopping continues to expand, but barriers remain for retailers that serve SNAP shoppers. SNAP-authorized retailers report technological limitations, high setup costs, regulatory complexity, and customer challenges such as limited digital literacy and internet access. Addressing these barriers can help expand equitable access to nutritious food and support retailers in serving SNAP shoppers.

Fast Facts:

- SNAP online shopping is growing, but retailers face major barriers—high setup costs, tech limitations, regulatory complexity, and customer challenges like limited internet access and digital literacy. Addressing these gaps is key to food access.
- Removing barriers can expand equitable access to nutritious food and support retailers serving SNAP families.

Source:

Gillespie R, DeWitt E, Trude ACB, Haynes-Maslow L, Hudson T, Anderson-Steeves E, Barr M, Gustafson A. Barriers and Facilitators of Online Grocery Services: Perceptions from Rural and Urban Grocery Store Managers. *Nutrients*. 2022; 14(18):3794. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu14183794>

FACT 39

The primary barriers to more farmers markets and vendors accepting SNAP are technological, financial, and regulatory. Vendors report challenges such as high equipment costs, lack of internet access, burdensome administrative requirements—including limited support in the application process for SNAP authorization—and a limited number of SNAP clientele.

Fast Facts:

- Many farmers markets and smaller vendors who want to accept SNAP cannot afford to due to barriers such as technology, cost, and regulation.
- Smaller retailers and farmers markets struggle to afford the needed technology to accept SNAP benefits.
- Barriers such as technology, cost, and regulations may keep small retailers and farmers from accepting SNAP benefits.
- SNAP participants should be able to shop at farmers markets, but barriers may keep vendors from accepting benefits.
- Farmers markets and vendors want to serve SNAP shoppers—but technological, financial, and regulatory hurdles stand in the way.
- Common challenges include: high equipment costs, limited internet access, burdensome administrative requirements; little support during SNAP authorization; and few SNAP customers to justify costs.
- If more markets accepted SNAP, that could mean many new access points for fresh produce—impacting millions of meals for low-income families.
- Removing barriers could unlock thousands of local vendors, boosting both community health and local economies.

Sources:

Blaustein Rejto D. SNAP at Farmers Markets Growing, but Limited by Barriers. June 2015. Available at: <https://farmersmarketcoalition.org/snap-at-farmers-markets-growing-but-limited-by-barriers/>.

Kellegrew K, Powers A, Struempfer B, Parmer S, Funderbur K, Griffin J, and Tran C. Evaluating barriers to SNAP/EBT acceptance in farmers markets: A survey of farmers. 2018. Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development, 8(1), 133–146. <https://doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2018.081.010>.

Strengthening Requirements for SNAP-Authorized Retailers to Promote Healthier Retail Food Environments

FACT 40

The majority of SNAP-authorized stores are smaller stores, including convenience stores and private grocers. Convenience stores and small grocers offer comparatively fewer fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain-rich foods, and low-fat dairy products than supermarkets and food retailers in communities with higher incomes due to implementation challenges. However, the research is mixed on whether SNAP-authorized stores offer healthier options than non-SNAP stores.

Fast Facts:

- Stores that accept SNAP benefits are often small grocers or convenience stores.
- Smaller stores that accept SNAP benefits have fewer healthy food products available than other retailers.
- SNAP participants shopping at smaller stores may sometimes have reduced access to fresh fruits and vegetables and other nutritious foods.
- Communities with more SNAP participants often have fewer food retailers to choose from, and the food retailers they do have access to offer few fresh and nutritious options.
- In many low-income communities, SNAP-authorized stores are often convenience stores or small grocers.
- These stores typically offer fewer fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy compared to supermarkets in higher-income areas.
- SNAP serves 40+ million people—if millions live in areas with limited healthy options, that's millions of families forced to choose between what's available and what's healthy.
- Expanding access to nutritious foods in SNAP-authorized stores could mean tens of millions more healthy meals every month.

Sources:

Bolen E, Wolkomir E. *SNAP Boosts Retailers and Local Economies*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Updated May 28, 2020. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/snap-boosts-retailers-and-local-economies>

Canales E, Fan L, Buys DR, Cantave MD. A Market Basket Assessment: Prices and Availability of Healthy Foods Across SNAP-Authorized Food Outlets in Counties With High Obesity Rates in Mississippi. 2021. *Prev Chronic Dis*. 2021;18:210173. Available at: https://www.cdc.gov/pcd/issues/2021/21_0173.htm.

Laska MN, Caspi CE, Pelletier JE, Frieber R, Harnack L. Lack of healthy food in small-size to mid-size retailers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, 2014. *Prev Chronic Dis*. 2015;12:E135.

Pulvera R, Hewawitharana SC, Thompson HR, Leung CW, Gosliner W. *Availability and Quality of Healthy Foods Vary by Store Participation in SNAP and WIC in Low Income California Neighborhoods*. *J Hunger Environ Nutr*. 2024;19(6):1165-1180. doi:10.1080/19320248.2023.2285922.

Racine EF, Batada A, Solomon CA, Story M. Availability of foods and beverages in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-authorized dollar stores in a region of North Carolina. *J Acad Nutr Diet*. 2016;116(10):1613-1620.

FACT 41

Small stores are capable of stocking healthier products but may need additional support. Interviews with small food store owners across multiple states indicate a reluctant willingness to stock healthier foods and meet updated recommendations, but also reveal that the cost of stocking healthy items serves as a barrier. However, store owners also value SNAP participation, are open to stricter stocking standards, and would benefit from technical and infrastructure support, incentives to shift to healthier items, and efforts to drive consumer demand for the healthier products.

Fast Facts:

- Many stores acknowledge the importance of making healthier foods more available to SNAP recipients, but they cannot afford to stock them.
- SNAP-participating retailers need support to stock healthier options for their communities.
- We can help small stores stock healthier foods by providing technical and infrastructure support, incentives to stock healthier items, and assistance in driving consumer demand.
- Small stores can be part of the solution.
- Interviews with small food store owners across multiple states show that they value SNAP participation and they're open to stricter stocking standards.
- Small food store owners, who are open to stricter stocking standards and value SNAP participation, need technical and infrastructure support, incentives to shift to healthier items, and efforts to drive consumer demand for healthy products.
- Thousands of small stores serve SNAP shoppers—if even half stocked more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, that's millions of healthier meals available in communities that need them most.

Sources:

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Meza A, Tester JM, Yen IH, Laraia BA, Wolfson JA, Leung CW. Perceptions of SNAP and Stocking Standards: A Qualitative Study of California Small Food Store Owners and Managers. *Nutrients*. 2021;13(3):752. doi:10.3390/nu13030752.

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The Food Trust. *Healthy Food and Small Stores: Strategies to Close the Distribution Gap in Underserved Communities*. Philadelphia, PA: The Food Trust; 2022. <https://thefoodtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/healthy-food-and-small-stores.original.pdf>

FACT 42

There is support for exploring healthy retail marketing strategies. Diverse stakeholder input from Iowa indicated strong SNAP participant, SNAP retailer, and public support for further work to explore promoting healthy retail marketing strategies and recommended studying the feasibility of including evidence-based product-placement strategies and restrictions on the marketing of unhealthy products by SNAP retailers. This aligns with a national survey of SNAP participants showing broad support for healthy food retail policies and strategies that enhance visibility and accessibility, like placing healthy foods and drinks in checkout areas (80.6% support) and posting labels on shelves to indicate the healthfulness of foods (76.9%).

Fast Facts:

- Most people want to make it easier for SNAP recipients to eat healthier.
- Most people support limiting the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to SNAP recipients.
- Stakeholders—including SNAP participants, retailers, and the public—support exploring healthy retail marketing strategies.
- Recommendations for healthy retail marketing strategies include:
 - Evidence-based product placement
 - Restrictions on marketing unhealthy products
- A national survey of SNAP participants found:
 - 80.6% support placing healthy foods and drinks in checkout areas
 - 76.9% support shelf labels indicating healthfulness
- If 80% of SNAP shoppers want healthier checkout options, that's about 32 million people calling for change.

Sources:

Buckingham-Schutt L, Johnson J, Schwartz C, Uram J, Daly E, Ramos C. Strategies to Improve Healthy Eating in SNAP: An Iowa Perspective. The Harkin Institute, Drake University and Center for Science in the Public Interest; 2021. Available at: <https://harkininstitute.drake.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/103/2021/01/SNAP-in-Iowa.pdf>.

Bresnahan C, Tucker AC, John S, Johnson J, Wolfson JA. Support for Policies and Strategies to Promote Healthy Food Retail In-Store and Online: Perspectives From a National Sample of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participants. J Nutr Educ Behav. 2024;56(10):681-693. doi:10.1016/j.jneb.2024.06.001.

FACT 43

Research shows that stores that participate in WIC, or both WIC and SNAP, offer greater availability and better quality of healthy foods than SNAP-only stores in California neighborhoods. WIC-certified retailers must meet specific stocking criteria, including a variety of healthy foods that meet strict nutrition requirements tailored to pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and young children, whereas SNAP-certified stores have less stringent requirements that can result in more limited access to healthy options compared to stores that participate in WIC.

Fast Facts:

- Stores that participate in WIC—or both WIC and SNAP—offer more and better-quality healthy foods than SNAP-only stores.
- Why? WIC-certified retailers must meet strict nutrition standards, stocking a variety of healthy foods for pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and young children. SNAP-only stores have less stringent requirements, often resulting in limited access to fresh produce and nutritious options.
- Thousands of SNAP-only stores could improve healthy food access if they adopted WIC-like standards—impacting millions of families nationwide.
- Even small changes in stocking requirements could mean billions of healthier meals every year.

Sources:

Pulvera R, Hewawitharana SC, Thompson HR, Leung CW, and Gosliner W. Availability and Quality of Healthy Foods Vary by Store Participation in SNAP and WIC in Low-Income California Neighborhoods. 2023. *Journal of Hunger & Environmental Nutrition*, 19(6), 1165–1180. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/19320248.2023.2285922>.

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