



Fact Sheet

SNAP: A Lifeline for Struggling Americans

Who benefits from SNAP?

In FY 2023, SNAP is helping **over 42 million people** in the United States afford a nutritionally adequate diet each month. **More than 250,000 retailers** accept SNAP as payment, which brings resources into local grocery stores and in turn **also benefits store employees, truck drivers, and the farmers who raise food.**

SNAP provides important nutrition support for **low-paid working families, older adults, and people with disabilities** living on limited fixed incomes. Before the pandemic, [over 81 percent of SNAP](#) households included a child, elderly person, or person with disabilities.

During the pandemic, [SNAP helped](#) ensure hunger and hardship—while still profound—were not as widespread as they could have been.

SNAP is also a powerful economic stimulus, expanding during times of increased need and generating \$1.54 in economic activity for every additional \$1 spent during a downturn.

SNAP is a key support for workers and incentivizes work

Most SNAP participants who [can work already do](#)—often holding frontline roles in essential industries like retail, hospitality, and health care. For these workers, SNAP is critical to helping them put food on the table, as their jobs often pay low wages, offer unreliable hours, and don't provide benefits like paid sick leave—some of the many ways these jobs are unstable.

Other SNAP participants are only temporarily between jobs, turning to SNAP after a job loss. SNAP serves as a de facto unemployment support to many low-wage workers, as state rules sometimes exclude these workers from unemployment insurance. Before the pandemic, in a typical month, [about 65 percent of SNAP households](#) with children and at least one working-age, non-disabled adult earned income from work that month. Almost 90 percent of such households had earnings in the year prior or the year after, reflecting that joblessness is temporary.

SNAP is also designed to support and incentivize work. For example, for each additional dollar SNAP participants earn, their benefits decline by only 24 to 36 cents, so that participants see an overall increase in resources when they earn more.

SNAP already has work requirements

The general [work requirements](#), which apply to many SNAP participants aged 16-59, mean they must register for work, participate in SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) if assigned by the state SNAP agency, take a suitable job if offered, and not voluntarily quit a job or reduce work

hours below 30 a week without a good reason. Individuals aged 18-49 who are able to work and don't have dependents are held to an even tougher standard. In addition to the overall work requirements, they generally must work—or participate in a jobs program—at least 20 hours per week or lose SNAP benefits completely after three months in any three-year period (this policy is known as the time limit). Congress temporarily suspended the time limit during the federal public health emergency.

There is no evidence to suggest that the SNAP time limit helps move people to work or higher earnings. Instead, it cuts off people—including people experiencing homelessness, veterans, youth aging out of foster care, and people with health conditions—from assistance they need to buy food. Proposals to expand SNAP's [time limit](#) to more participants, including parents, are misguided and not based in evidence. They will harm workers, not help them. Expanding the time limit to parents would also put children at risk of not having the food they need to thrive.

The Administration wants to help workers succeed, not punish them

Work is a powerful pathway out of poverty, and we should advance policies that will support workers. The Biden-Harris Administration wants to help workers succeed, not punish them for being trapped in a low-wage labor market that makes it hard to get by and get ahead.

The President's economic plan builds from the bottom up and will support workers by improving job quality through improved basic pay and benefits. The Administration has proposed raising the minimum wage, expanding worker and child tax credits, and establishing basic paid family leave so that workers do not have to risk losing their job when they or their children are sick.

The President would also expand the availability of affordable childcare which is so often out of reach for low-wage workers. In addition, the Administration proposes to ensure that low-wage workers have access to basic health coverage by expanding Medicaid coverage to adults in the 10 states that haven't taken the expansion. The Administration is also calling for robust investments in job training and career pathways to support workers in obtaining and keeping good jobs. USDA will continue our efforts to strengthen job training offered through SNAP's [Employment and Training](#) programs with the goal of more meaningful connections to employer-driven local workforce efforts.

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