

Unemployed adults without children who need help buying food only get SNAP for three months

In most of the country, unemployed adults without children in the household can only receive SNAP for three months unless they have at least a half-time job or participate in job training for at least 20 hours a week, even if they are looking for work but jobs and job training slots aren't available.



Who are they?

Childless Adults are a Diverse Group

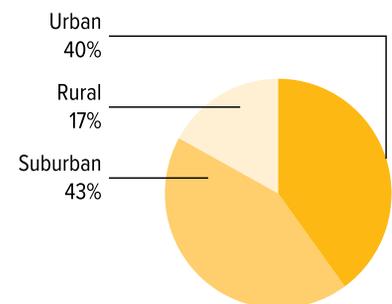
The three-month limit applies to adults aged 18-49 who aren't physically or mentally unable to work, pregnant, or in a household with a minor child. States can request a temporary waiver of the time limit in areas with persistently high unemployment, and most have done so since the late 1990s.

Nearly every state received a statewide waiver during and after the Great Recession. Most of these waivers have expired at least in parts of the state. Over two-thirds of states are imposing the time limit in at least some areas.

Childless adults don't fit a particular stereotype.

Residence (for those who have indicated status)

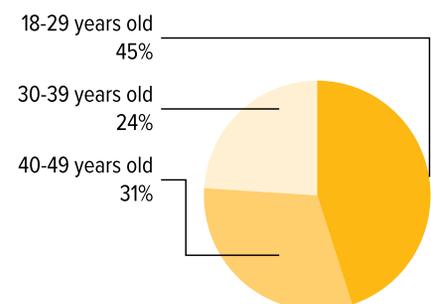
They live in all areas of the country.



Source: CBPP analysis of Census Bureau data from the March Current Population Survey

Age

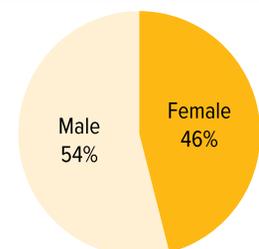
The time limit applies to people aged 18-49. Close to a quarter are in their thirties, and close to a third are in their forties.



Source: CBPP analysis of 2016 USDA SNAP household characteristics data

Gender

Over 40 percent are female.



Source: CBPP analysis of 2016 USDA SNAP household characteristics data

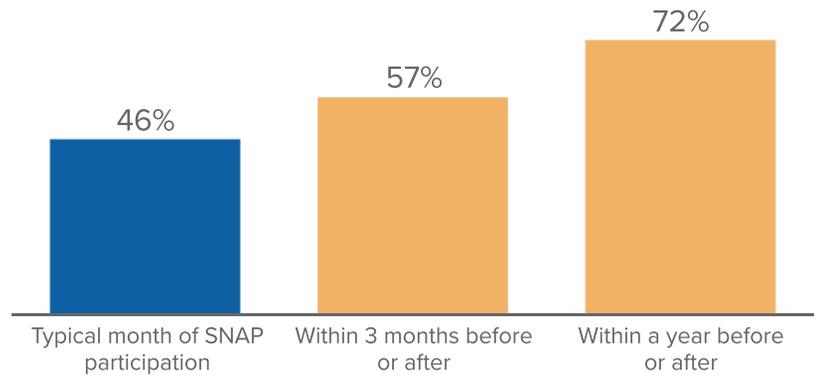
Barriers to work

Many Work When They Can

Research shows that many childless adults are connected to the labor force and turn to SNAP during periods of unemployment. At least a quarter and perhaps as many as half of all SNAP households with childless adults work in a typical month of SNAP receipt. Close to three-quarters of childless adults work within 12 months before or after receiving SNAP.

Many SNAP Households with Childless Adults Work

Work participation rate



Note: Households are those who were participating in SNAP at a point in time in mid-2012 and that include someone aged 18-49 who did not receive disability benefits from Social Security or Supplemental Security Income.

Source: CBPP analysis of Survey of Income and Program Participation data from 2011-2013.

They often face barriers to work

While many childless adults work, many cycle in and out of jobs or remain jobless, often due to barriers to work. Many face one or more barriers that can make finding and keeping jobs challenging, including unstable living situations, mental and physical health problems, and lack of transportation, a detailed Ohio study found.

Unstable living situations



Mental and physical health problems



Lack of transportation

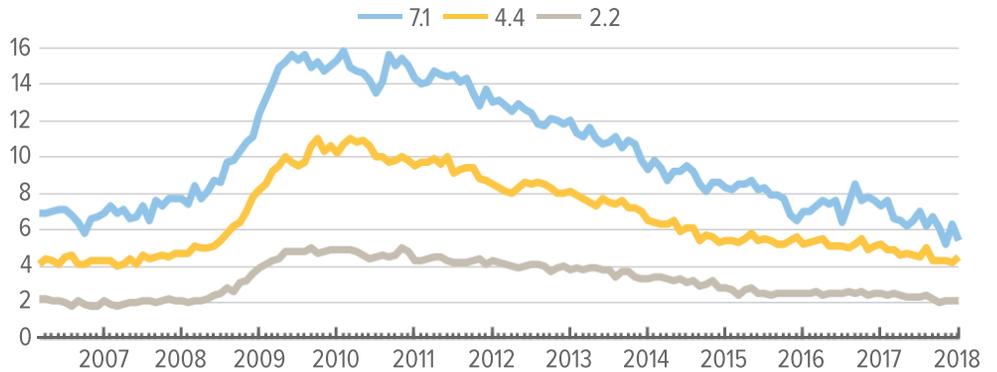


Finding a job can be hard, despite the economic recovery

While the economy has improved significantly since the deep recession and slow recovery, many childless adults are at a disadvantage. For example, most have less than a high school degree or a high school degree but no college – two groups with higher unemployment rates than college graduates.

Unemployment Higher Among Those With Less Education

Monthly unemployment rate of the civilian population 25 years and over by educational attainment



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey



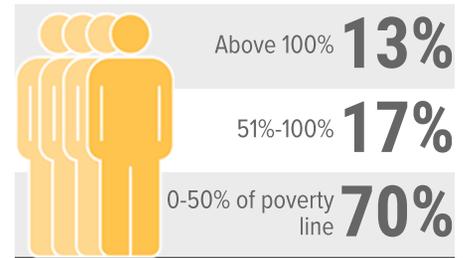
Importance of SNAP

They Get Little Other Support From the Safety Net

Most childless adults who receive SNAP don't qualify for any other assistance. While participating in SNAP, their income averages just 33 percent of the poverty line, or about \$3,900 per year for a single person household in 2018. On average, in 2016 they received a monthly benefit of \$163 per person.

Childless adults have very low incomes

Approximately 70 percent are below half of the poverty line.



Source: CBPP analysis of 2016 USDA SNAP household characteristics data

People who lose SNAP after three months often face serious challenges

After losing SNAP benefits, many people still struggle to afford adequate food and to pay bills, according to a comprehensive study of childless adults who lost SNAP when the time limit was in effect in the early 2000s.

Lack health insurance



Housing instability



Struggle to pay bills



Struggle to put food on the table

