

Massachusetts

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

February 13, 2023



The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the nation's most important and effective anti-hunger program. Congress made many temporary improvements to SNAP during the COVID-19 pandemic to take advantage of the program's ability to deliver benefits quickly in response to job and income losses, including by authorizing emergency allotments and certain eligibility and administrative changes. These changes have either already ended or will expire when the public health emergency ends on May 11, 2023. Massachusetts ended emergency allotments starting in February 2023.

Whom Does SNAP Reach?

In fiscal year 2022, it helped:

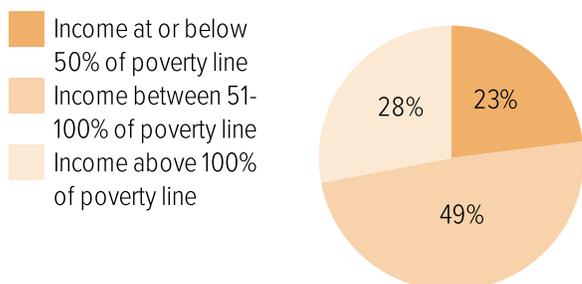
- **1,024,400** Massachusetts residents, or **15%** of the state population (**1 in 7**)
- **41,206,900** participants in the United States, or **12%** of the total population (**1 in 8**)

MASSACHUSETTS	more than 51% of SNAP participants are in families with children	more than 51% are in families with members who are older adults or are disabled	more than 33% are in working families
NATIONALLY	more than 65% of SNAP participants are in families with children	more than 36% are in families with members who are older adults or are disabled	more than 41% are in working families

Source: CBPP analysis of data from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, fiscal year 2020 (pre-pandemic period)^a

Most SNAP Participants in Massachusetts Have Incomes Below the Poverty Line

Share of participants by household income, fiscal year 2020 (pre-pandemic period)



Source: CBPP analysis of data from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, fiscal year 2020 (pre-pandemic period)^b

Many Massachusetts households struggle to put food on the table. The most recent data show:

- **8.4%** of households were “food insecure,” meaning that their access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources.
- **10.4%** of the population lived below the poverty line.
- **12.6%** of children lived below the poverty line.
- **10.6%** of older adults lived below the poverty line.

SNAP reaches populations in need: 94% of eligible individuals participated in SNAP in **Massachusetts** in 2018, and **65%** of eligible workers participated.

SNAP lifted **112,000** people above the poverty line in **Massachusetts**, including **37,000** children, per year between 2014 and 2018, on average. (These figures adjust for households' underreporting of benefits.)

What Benefits Do SNAP Participants Receive?

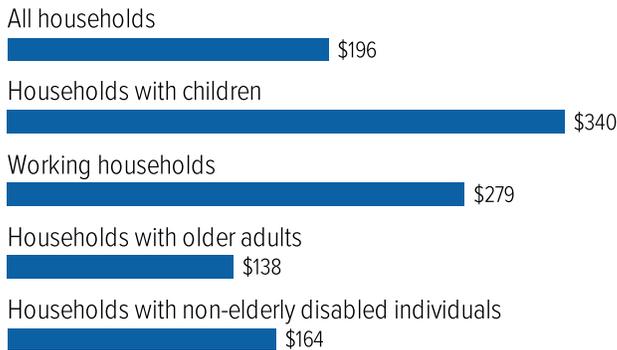
SNAP targets benefits according to need. Households with very low incomes receive more SNAP benefits than households closer to the poverty line because they need more help affording adequate food. SNAP participants in [Massachusetts](#) received **\$1.13 billion** in benefits in 2019, **\$1.47 billion** in 2020, **\$2.35 billion** in 2021, and **\$3.14 billion** in 2022 (including temporary pandemic relief in 2020 through 2022).

SNAP benefits since early 2020 have been affected by temporary pandemic-related benefit increases; an adjustment to the Thrifty Food Plan, upon which SNAP benefits are based; and higher-than-normal cost-of-living adjustments to reflect high food price inflation.



	Average SNAP benefit in nominal dollars, fiscal year 2023 (estimated, after all pandemic measures expire)
For each household member per month:	\$188
For each household member per day:	\$6.20

Average Monthly SNAP Benefit By Demographic Group, Fiscal Year 2020 (pre-pandemic period), Massachusetts



Source: CBPP analysis of data from USDA Food and Nutrition Service, fiscal year 2020 (pre-pandemic period)

How Does SNAP Benefit the Economy?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that in a weak economy, \$1 in SNAP benefits generates \$1.50 in economic activity. Households receive SNAP benefits on electronic benefit transfer cards, which can be used only to purchase food at one of about **254,400** authorized retail locations around the country, including some **1,400** in [Massachusetts](#).

For more information on SNAP, including Massachusetts-specific information, please see:

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities Chart Book: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/chart-book-snap-helps-struggling-families-put-food-on-the-table>

USDA SNAP data: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>

Massachusetts SNAP program: <http://www.mass.gov/snap>

Advocates: Massachusetts Law Reform Institute, www.mlri.org, Children's HealthWatch, www.childrenshealthwatch.org

^a Shares are for the pre-pandemic period of fiscal year 2020, from October 2019 to February 2020. Administrative data on the pandemic period of fiscal year 2020 (March 2020 through September 2020) are not presented, because state data are not available for every month during this period. The COVID-19 pandemic limited data collection in the months of March through September 2020.

^b Ibid.