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. Tennessee ended emergency allotments starting in January 2022.

**Whom Does SNAP Reach?**

In fiscal year 2022, it helped:

- **825,300** Tennessee residents, or **12%** of the state population (**1 in 9**)
- **41,206,900** participants in the United States, or **12%** of the total population (**1 in 8**)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TENNESSEE</th>
<th>more than 71% of SNAP participants are in families with children</th>
<th>more than 35% are in families with members who are older adults or are disabled</th>
<th>more than 37% are in working families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NATIONALY</td>
<td>more than 65% of SNAP participants are in families with children</td>
<td>more than 36% are in families with members who are older adults or are disabled</td>
<td>more than 41% are in working families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Most SNAP Participants in Tennessee Have Incomes Below the Poverty Line**

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

- Income at or below 50% of poverty line: 43%
- Income between 51-100% of poverty line: 46%
- Income above 100% of poverty line: 11%

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

**Many Tennessee households struggle to put food on the table.**

The most recent data show:

- **11.2%** of households were “food insecure,” meaning that their access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources.
- **13.6%** of the population lived below the poverty line.
- **18.1%** of children lived below the poverty line.
- **10.2%** of older adults lived below the poverty line.

**SNAP reaches populations in need:** 90% of eligible individuals participated in SNAP in Tennessee in 2018, and 78% of eligible workers participated.

SNAP lifted **140,000** people above the poverty line in Tennessee, including **58,000** children, per year between 2014 and 2018, on average. (These figures adjust for households’ underreporting of benefits.)

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This page includes an image and contains a mix of text and tables. The main content is focused on the impact of SNAP in Tennessee, with specific details on participation rates and the demographics of those who benefit from the program. The text also highlights the challenges faced by households in Tennessee, emphasizing the importance of SNAP in providing assistance to those in need.
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 Tennessee received $1.31 billion in benefits in 2019, $1.77 billion in 2020, $3.09 billion in 2021, and $1.8 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average SNAP benefit in nominal dollars, fiscal year 2023 (estimated, after all pandemic measures expire)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For each household member per month:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For each household member per day:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Group</th>
<th>Benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All households</td>
<td>$249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with children</td>
<td>$401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working households</td>
<td>$327</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with older adults</td>
<td>$86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with non-elderly disabled individuals</td>
<td>$197</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 6,400 in Tennessee.

For more information on SNAP, including Tennessee-specific information, please see:
Tennessee SNAP program: [https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap.html](https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/for-families/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap.html)

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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.