

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) is the nation's most important anti-hunger program. SNAP benefits are 100% federally funded. SNAP benefits pumped about \$3.0 billion into Illinois' economy in 2016.

Whom Does SNAP Reach?

In Fiscal Year 2016, it reached:

- **1,914,000** Illinois residents, or **15%** of the state population (**1 in 7**)
- **44,219,000** participants in the United States, or **14%** of the total population (**1 in 7**)

ILLINOIS

almost
65%

of SNAP participants are in families with children

almost
28%

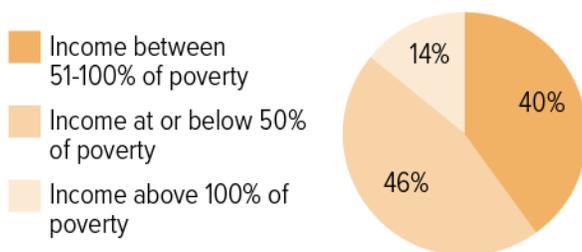
are in families with members who are elderly or have disabilities

almost
41%

are in working families

Most SNAP Participants in Illinois Are Poor

Share of participants by household income, FY 2015



Source: CBPP analysis of FY 2015 USDA SNAP Household Characteristics data

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

- **11.1%** of households were “food insecure,” or struggled to afford a nutritionally adequate diet.
- Median income was **3.7% below** the 2007 level, after adjusting for inflation.
- **13.6%** of the population lived below the poverty line.
- **18.9%** of children lived below the poverty line.
- **8.5%** of elderly lived below the poverty line.

SNAP reaches needy populations: Between **95** and **100%** of eligible individuals participated in SNAP in Illinois in 2014, and **81%** of eligible workers participated.

SNAP kept **379,000** people out of poverty in Illinois, including **187,000** children, per year between 2009 and 2012, on average. (These figures adjust for households' underreporting of benefits.)



What Benefits Do SNAP Recipients Receive?

SNAP targets benefits according to need. Very poor households receive more SNAP benefits than households closer to the poverty line since they need more help affording an adequate diet.

Households receive SNAP benefits on the Link electronic benefit transfer card. They can be used only to purchase food at one of the 260,100 authorized retail locations around the country, including 9,400 in Illinois.



Average monthly SNAP benefit for each household member:

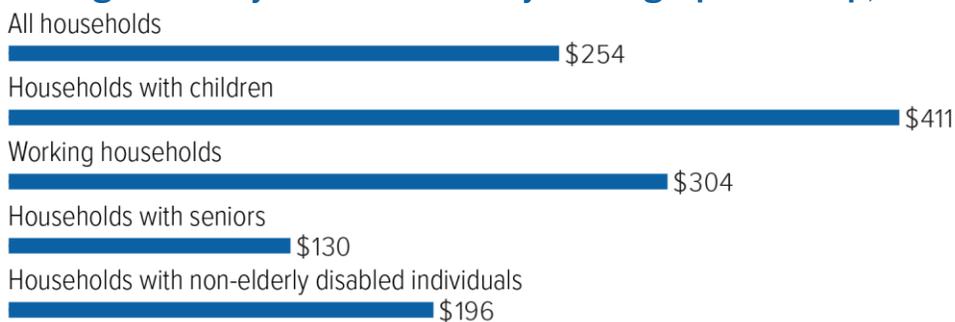
Fiscal Year 2016

\$132

Average SNAP benefit per person per meal:

\$1.47

Average Monthly SNAP Benefit By Demographic Group, FY 2015, Illinois



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Research and Analysis, "Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2015"

How Does SNAP Benefit the Economy?

Moody's Analytics estimates that in a weak economy, \$1 in SNAP benefits generates \$1.70 in economic activity.

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Why would a Block Grant undermine SNAP?

SNAP is a counter-cyclical program – when need increases, such as during an economic downturn or a natural disaster, SNAP responds. When the economy improves or disaster victims no longer need assistance, SNAP enrollment goes down.

If SNAP is turned into a block grant, Illinois would receive a fixed sum from the federal government that would be unresponsive to increased need. Even if unemployment increases, disasters strike, or the population grows, Illinois would receive the same, fixed amount of federal funding.

A block grant simply shifts the risk of an increase in need from the federal government to the states. It is a bad deal for the State of Illinois – that only gets worse over time.