USDA Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Research Summary June 2024

Characteristics of USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Households: Fiscal Year 2022 (Summary)

Background

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, about 41.2 million people living in 21.6 million U.S. households participated in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in an average month. This report provides information about the demographic and economic circumstances of SNAP households in FY 2022 (October 2021 through September 2022).

This is the first report since FY 2020. There is no report for FY 2021 because data were incomplete due to COVID-19 pandemic-related administrative waivers in place through most of the year. Emergency allotments[1] were in place for 45 States and territories at the start of FY 2022 and 36 States by the end of FY 2022. However, emergency allotments were not reported in the SNAP Quality Control (QC) data, so the benefit amounts discussed in this report do not include them, unless otherwise specified.

Key Findings

- Four-in-five (79 percent) SNAP households included either a child, an elderly individual, or a nonelderly individual with a disability.
- The average SNAP household received a monthly benefit of $297.
- Most SNAP households (75 percent) lived at or below the poverty level.
- When added to households' gross incomes, SNAP benefits and emergency allotments raised 30 percent of SNAP households above the poverty level.
- Social Security benefits were the most common source of income among SNAP households.

Methods

Analyses in this report utilize SNAP QC data,[2] which is an annually collected sample of SNAP administrative data from State agencies. The sampled data undergo a QC review in which States verify case information.

Findings

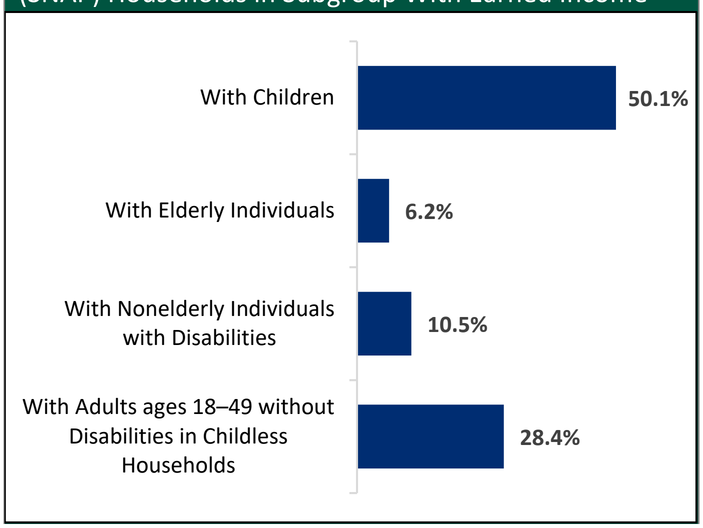
Four-in-five (79 percent) SNAP households included either a child younger than age 18, an elderly individual (aged 60 or over), or a nonelderly individual with a disability. These households contained 88 percent of all participants and received 84 percent of all SNAP benefits, excluding emergency allotments.

Forty percent of SNAP participants were children. Eighteen percent were elderly and 11 percent were nonelderly individuals with disabilities. Nine percent of SNAP participants were adults ages 18–49 without disabilities in a childless household.

Earnings from employment varied among SNAP household subgroups. Half (50 percent) of households with children had earned income from employment, while 6 percent of SNAP households with elderly individuals had earned income. See Figure 1.

Most SNAP households were small. The average SNAP household size was 1.9 people, with 58 percent of SNAP households containing only one person. Forty percent of

Figure 1: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Households in Subgroup With Earned Income



[1] The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 authorized States to provide emergency allotments to supplement SNAP benefits.

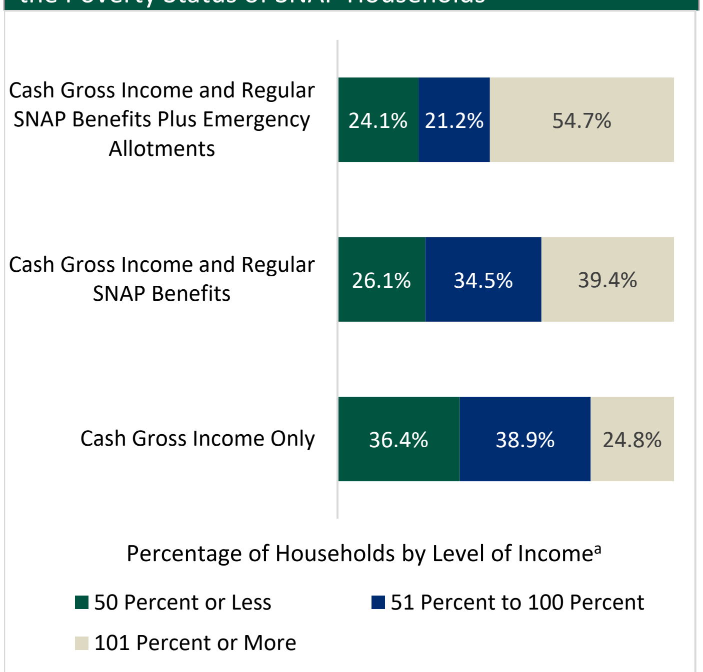
[2] Available online at: https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/qc/database.

individuals in a single-person household were elderly, and 21 percent were nonelderly individuals with disabilities. Households with children were larger, averaging 3.3 members, while households without children were smaller, averaging 1.1 members.

Most SNAP households (75 percent) lived at or below the poverty level. Seventy-five percent of households had gross monthly income—cash income without SNAP deductions—less than or equal to the Federal poverty level. Thirty-six percent of SNAP households had gross monthly income that was less than or equal to half of the poverty level for their household size, and these households received 54 percent of all SNAP benefits.

When added to households' gross incomes, SNAP benefits and emergency allotments raised 30 percent of SNAP households above the poverty level. When including SNAP benefits with gross income, 15 percent of SNAP households were lifted above the poverty level. When emergency allotments are included, an additional 15 percent of households moved above the poverty level (30 percent, combined). That is, when including SNAP benefits and emergency allotments, the percentage of SNAP households living at less than or equal to the poverty level for their household size decreases from 75 to 45 percent. See Figure 2.

Figure 2: Effect of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits and Emergency Allotments on the Poverty Status of SNAP Households



[a]Defined as a percentage of Federal poverty level.

Table 1: Percent of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Households Receiving Select Income Sources and Average Amount Received

Income Source	Percent of households	Average income from source ($/month)
Social Security	32.3	1,011
Countable Earned Income	25.7	1,454
SSI	23.1	681
GA	3.4	326
TANF	2.7	527
Unemployment Income	1.9	1,057
Veterans' Benefits	0.7	655
Workers' Compensation	0.2	1,223

The average SNAP household received a monthly benefit of $297. Households with children received a larger average monthly benefit of $515 due to their larger average household size. About 37 percent of SNAP households received the maximum benefit for their household size. Ten percent received the minimum benefit ($20), which is only available to households with one or two members.

Average gross income for all SNAP households was $969 per month, and the average net income was $489. Just over 20 percent of SNAP households reported no countable income. Nearly 26 percent of SNAP households had countable earned income from employment and received an average of $1,454 in monthly earnings.

Social Security benefits were the most common source of income among SNAP households. Thirty-two percent of SNAP households received an average of $1,011 in Social Security monthly. Twenty-three percent of households received Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits (an average of $681 monthly), about 3 percent received Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits (an average of $527 monthly), and about 3 percent received State General Assistance (GA) benefits (an average of $326 monthly). See Table 1.

For More Information:
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Office of Policy Support,
Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2022,
by Mia Monkovic. Project Officer, Aja Weston. Alexandria, VA, 2024. Available online at: https://www.fns.usda.gov/research-analysis

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.