



SNAP Feeds New Jersey

Pumping \$1.2 billion into New Jersey's local economies each year, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps feed tens of thousands of low-income workers, children, senior citizens and people with disabilities.

This critical federal aid, commonly known as food stamps, helped about 800,000 New Jersey residents afford healthy, nutritious food, including nearly 300,000 children in July 2017, according to state data.

The majority of households receiving this aid have at least one working family member and almost all are scraping by on poverty wages or income.

Most working NJ SNAP recipients labor at jobs with little or no benefits and unsteady hours or work seasonally, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP). For the elderly and disabled, many subsist on meager incomes that can force the unthinkable choice between food and medicine, worsening health problems and costing more in medical expenses.

The number of people relying on SNAP rises during economic downturns and falls when the economy improves, according to the CBPP. After unemployment insurance, SNAP historically has been the most responsive federal aid in assisting families and communities when the economy sours.

NJ SNAP, then, serves as a critical safety net, strengthening our children, families, workers, elderly and communities across the state.



Quick SNAP Facts

- NJ SNAP helps 1 in 11 households afford healthy, nutritious meals.¹
- NJ SNAP helps 1 in 7 households in metro areas afford healthy, nutritious meals.²
- More than 2 in 5 NJ SNAP households include children.³

NJ SNAP Recipients Work

- Most people who receive SNAP work. But they labor at low-paying jobs with little or no benefits.
- 1 in 15 New Jersey workers benefit from SNAP.⁴
- More than three-quarters of NJ SNAP families had at least one working adult in the past 12 months.⁵

Hunger Pervasive in the Garden State

Despite being one of the richest states in the nation, hunger is pervasive across New Jersey. Children, working parents, senior citizens, veterans, people with disabilities and others all face hunger. Hunger strikes nearly 1 million New Jersey residents, including 298,000 children, according to Feeding America’s Map the Meal Gap 2017.⁶

When factoring in the real cost of living in New Jersey, an estimated one in four residents earns too little to meet their basic needs and put nutritious food on the table every day, according to the New Jersey Anti-Poverty Network.

Who does SNAP help in New Jersey?

One in five New Jersey children benefits from SNAP.

Nearly all of these families — 81 percent — struggle to survive on income below the poverty line, according to CBPP.⁷ In New Jersey’s 12 Congressional



districts, roughly half of all NJ SNAP households included children.⁸

NJ SNAP’s benefits extend far beyond filling small, empty bellies. When these children receive adequate nutrition, they are more likely to have better health, be more successful in school and are more likely to graduate high school, research shows.

In short, SNAP is one of the most important sources of federal nutrition assistance for children.

Children and SNAP In NJ Congressional Districts

	Number of Children Below Poverty	Number of Children Without Enough to Eat	Share of SNAP Households With Children
Congressional District 1	26,761	28,040	.52
Congressional District 2	31,609	26,240	.51
Congressional District 3	15,201	23,260	.54
Congressional District 4	18,988	26,160	.54
Congressional District 5	10,862	18,820	.41
Congressional District 6	21,978	22,730	.52
Congressional District 7	8,677	19,620	.45
Congressional District 8	40,303	30,140	.52
Congressional District 9	38,883	25,730	.51
Congressional District 10	43,939	36,300	.50
Congressional District 11	7,862	17,180	.44
Congressional District 12	20,416	23,790	.54

Source: USDA Congressional Profile of SNAP Households by Congressional District.

NJ SNAP Helps the Neediest Families

A typical New Jersey household receiving SNAP earns far below the federal poverty line.

In New Jersey’s 12 Congressional districts, the 10th District, which includes parts of Essex, Hudson, and Union counties, had the lowest median NJ SNAP household income at just \$16,495. The 11th District, which includes parts of Morris, Essex, Sussex and Passaic counties, was the highest, but still reached only \$26,781.⁹

NJ SNAP helps working families make ends meet. For a family of three with one full-time worker who earns \$10 an hour, SNAP boosts the family’s take-home income by roughly 14 to 21 percent, depending on the number of hours worked, according to CBPP. For instance, a mother with two children who works 35 hours a week increases her monthly income by 21 percent when adding SNAP benefits.



Families and SNAP in NJ Congressional Districts

	Number of Households Receiving NJ SNAP	Median Income NJ SNAP Households
Congressional District 1	.30,308	..\$19,860
Congressional District 2	.31,643	..\$19,926
Congressional District 3	.16,872	..\$21,966
Congressional District 4	.18,234	..\$25,099
Congressional District 5	.11,860	..\$22,715
Congressional District 6	.19,175	..\$25,903
Congressional District 7	.10,454	..\$22,500
Congressional District 8	.46,768	..\$21,460
Congressional District 9	.42,391	..\$17,247
Congressional District 10	.49,907	..\$16,495
Congressional District 11	.8,059	..\$26,781
Congressional District 12	.15,537	..\$21,706

Source: USDA Congressional Profile of SNAP Households by Congressional District.



SNAP Nourishes

SNAP aid pays for nutritious foods, including breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, meats, fish and poultry and dairy products. SNAP does NOT pay for beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco, nonfood items, including pet foods, soaps, paper products, or food that will be eaten in a store.

SNAP Helps Workers

The vast majority of New Jersey residents who receive SNAP work. More than three-quarters of NJ SNAP families had at least one working adult, according to the Food Research & Action Center, while 1 in 15 workers benefit from NJ SNAP, according to CBPP.

In New Jersey Congressional districts 2 and 4, 86 percent of NJ SNAP households included at least one worker. Even in the 9th District — the lowest among the 12 districts — 70 percent of households included working people.¹⁰

Most of these working adults labor at low-paying jobs with little or no benefits, unpredictable hours or seasonal work. According to CBPP, New Jersey workers who participate in NJ SNAP most commonly have jobs in service occupations, (i.e. cooks or home health care aides), transportation and material moving, (i.e. laborers and drivers) and in office and administrative support occupations, such as customer service representatives. These occupations had average hourly wage far below the state average of \$26.94 in 2016.

SNAP plays a crucial role in helping these struggling workers afford nutritious food for themselves and their families.

Workers and SNAP in NJ Congressional Districts

	Number of Households Receiving SNAP	Share of SNAP Households With Workers
Congressional District 1	.30,308	.72
Congressional District 2	.31,643	.86
Congressional District 3	.16,872	.77
Congressional District 4	.18,234	.86
Congressional District 5	.11,860	.81
Congressional District 6	.19,175	.81
Congressional District 7	.10,454	.77
Congressional District 8	.46,768	.82
Congressional District 9	.42,391	.70
Congressional District 10	.49,907	.75
Congressional District 11	.8,059	.81
Congressional District 12	.15,537	.81

Source: USDA Congressional Profile of SNAP Households by Congressional District.



SNAP in Dollars and Cents

- \$1.2 billion NJ SNAP benefits goes to local businesses.
- The average NJ SNAP benefit is \$238 per household.
- Every NJ SNAP dollar returns \$1.70 to the local economy.



NJ SNAP Helps Low-Income Seniors

In New Jersey, about 142,000 senior citizens receive SNAP — or roughly 8 percent of the population 60 and older. In the 11th Congressional District, 56 percent of NJ SNAP households include seniors — the highest among the 12 districts. District 12 had the lowest share of seniors in SNAP households at 37 percent.

These elderly residents live in 127,100 households — most of which struggle to get by with income below the poverty line and receive average monthly SNAP aid of about \$129, according to a CBPP analysis of federal data.¹¹

Even with SNAP, seniors, often on fixed incomes, struggle to afford housing, health care, medicine, transportation and food. In fact, the average national annual income for couples 65 and over who are both eligible for SNAP is just \$5,860, according to Benefits Data Trust’s recent report, *Access to Public Benefits among Dual Eligible Seniors Reduces Risk of Nursing Home and Hospital Admission and Cuts Costs*.

SNAP not only helps feed hungry seniors, it reduces the odds that an elderly person will be admitted to a nursing home and a hospital, the report found, saving \$2,100 per senior annually in Medicare and Medicaid costs.

Senior Citizens and SNAP in NJ Congressional Districts

	Number of Households Receiving NJ SNAP	Share of SNAP Households With Senior Citizens
Congressional District 1	30,308	.34
Congressional District 2	31,643	.34
Congressional District 3	16,872	.37
Congressional District 4	18,234	.33
Congressional District 5	11,860	.48
Congressional District 6	19,175	.40
Congressional District 7	10,454	.37
Congressional District 8	46,768	.39
Congressional District 9	42,391	.37
Congressional District 10	49,907	.32
Congressional District 11	8,059	.56
Congressional District 12	15,537	.31

Source: USDA Congressional Profile of SNAP Households by Congressional District.





SNAP Helps Local Grocers, Economies

Nearly 7,000 New Jersey retailers participated in SNAP in 2016, receiving a combined \$1.2 billion dollars in NJ SNAP benefits,¹³ according to CBPP.

Participating retailers include large chains, supermarkets, grocery stores, corner stores and farmers markets. Convenience stores are the largest single category, representing nearly half of all SNAP retailers nationwide, according to CBPP.

SNAP boosts local economies. Because most households redeem their monthly SNAP benefits quickly, SNAP is one of the most effective forms of economic stimulus during a downturn. Economists estimate that in a weak economy, every dollar that households redeem under NJ SNAP expands the economy by about \$1.70.

Retailers and SNAP in NJ Congressional Districts

	Number Retailers Accepting SNAP
Congressional District 1	.616
Congressional District 2	.639
Congressional District 3	.446
Congressional District 4	.410
Congressional District 5	.309
Congressional District 6	.462
Congressional District 7	.277
Congressional District 8	.749
Congressional District 9	.638
Congressional District 10	.794
Congressional District 11	.256
Congressional District 12	.476

Source: USDA Congressional Profile of SNAP Households by Congressional District.



SNAP Helps People with Disabilities

In New Jersey, 113,000 non-elderly residents with disabilities receive SNAP. In fact, nearly one-quarter — 22-percent — of SNAP households include a non-elderly person with a disability, according to CBPP.¹²

These 98,000 New Jersey households, on average, receive \$196 in monthly aid. People with disabilities are more likely to live in poverty, struggle to make ends meet and face hunger. Low income, high medical expenses and the challenges of providing care to disabled family members make it even more likely that these families struggle to put food on the table.

For more information, visit NJABC.org

or contact NJABC Director Adele LaTourette at alatourette@cfanjer.org.

New Jersey's Congressional Districts

- District 1:** U.S. Representative Donald Norcross *Counties:* Camden, parts of Burlington, Gloucester
- District 2:** U.S. Representative Frank LoBiondo *Counties:* Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland, Salem, parts of Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, Ocean
- District 3:** U.S. Representative Tom MacArthur *Counties:* Burlington, parts of Ocean
- District 4:** U.S. Representative Chris Smith *Counties:* Parts of Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean
- District 5:** U.S. Representative Josh Gottheimer *Counties:* Parts of Bergen, Passaic, Sussex, Warren
- District 6:** U.S. Representative Frank Pallone *Counties:* Parts of Middlesex, Monmouth
- District 7:** U.S. Representative Leonard Lance *Counties:* Hunterdon, parts of Essex County, Morris, Somerset, Union, Warren
- District 8:** U.S. Representative Albio Sires *Counties:* Parts of Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Union
- District 9:** U.S. Representative Bill Pascrell *Counties:* Parts of Bergen, Hudson, Passaic
- District 10:** U.S. Representative Donald Payne, Jr., *Counties:* Parts of Essex, Hudson, Union
- District 11:** U.S. Representative Rodney Frelinghuysen, *Counties:* Parts of Essex, Morris, Passaic, Sussex
- District 12:** U.S. Representative Bonnie Watson Coleman *Counties:* Parts of Mercer, Middlesex, Somerset, Union

For a quick look-up of your Congressional representatives, visit: www.house.gov/htbin/findrep

End Notes:

- ¹ Food Research & Action Center SNAP State Fact Sheet, <http://www.frac.org/wp-content/uploads/snap-facts-nj.pdf>.
- ² Ibid
- ³ Ibid
- ⁴ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities SNAP State Fact Sheet, https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_new_jersey.pdf
- ⁵ Food Research & Action Center SNAP State Fact Sheet, <http://www.frac.org/wp-content/uploads/snap-facts-nj.pdf>.
- ⁶ Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap, 2017, www.feedingamerica.org/mapthegap.
- ⁷ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, SNAP Helps Millions of Children, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-helps-millions-of-children>
- ⁸ United States Department of Agriculture, Profile of SNAP Households, by Congressional District, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/ops/NewJersey.pdf>
- ⁹ Ibid
- ¹⁰ Ibid
- ¹¹ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, SNAP Helps Millions of Low-Income Seniors. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-helps-millions-of-low-income-seniors>
- ¹² Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, SNAP Helps People with Disabilities. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/snap-provides-needed-food-assistance-to-millions-of-people-with>
- ¹³ SNAP is Important Public Private Partnership, New Jersey, https://www.cbpp.org/snap-is-an-important-public-private-partnership#New_Jersey; Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, Retail fact sheet by congressional district, https://www.cbpp.org/snap-is-an-important-public-private-partnership#New_Jersey@1, Retail database, <https://www.cbpp.org/snap-retailers-database/#us>
- ¹⁴ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, <https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/presidents-budget-would-shift-substantial-costs-to-states-and-cut-food>

Note: Unless otherwise noted, all data in this report is from 2015.



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