Characteristics of SNAP Households: Fiscal Year 2023

We release annual reports describing the persons and households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). This report uses the fiscal year (FY) 2023 SNAP Quality Control data to examine the demographic characteristics and economic circumstances of SNAP households at the national and state level.

Key Findings

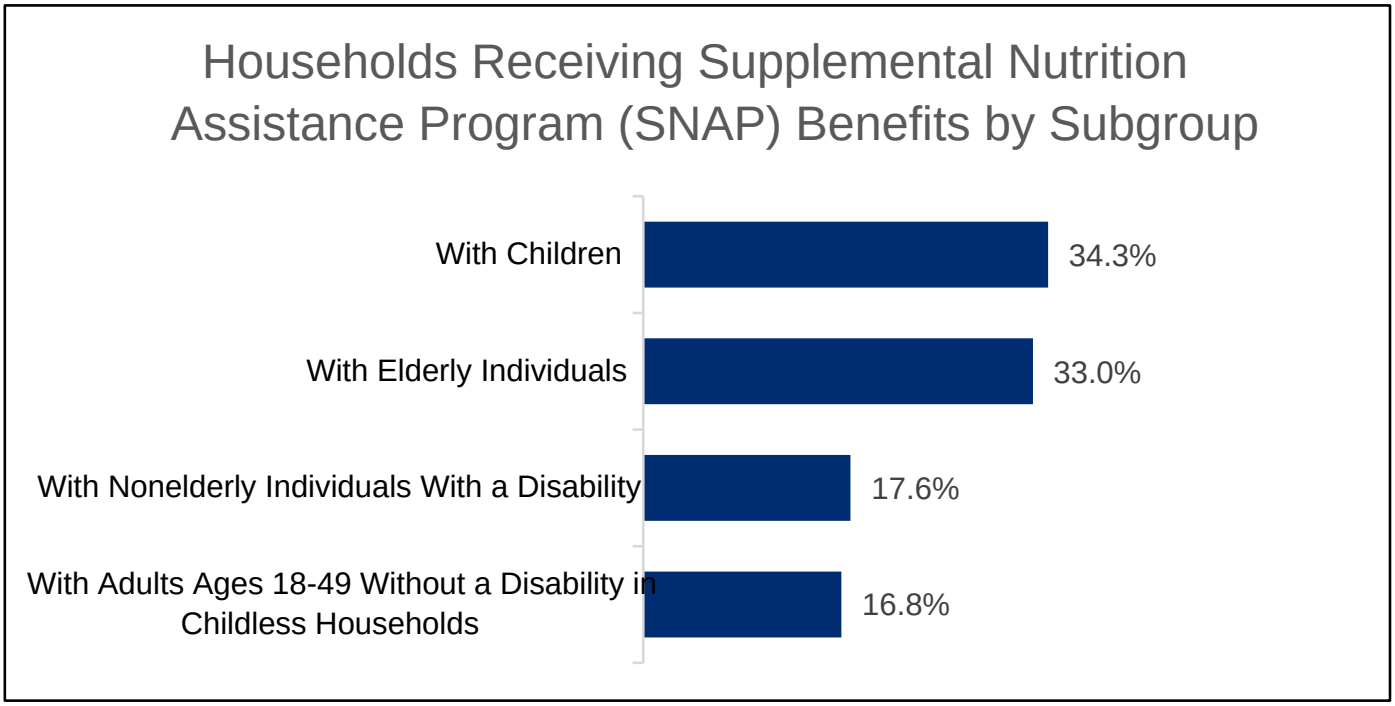
Why

How

Additional Information

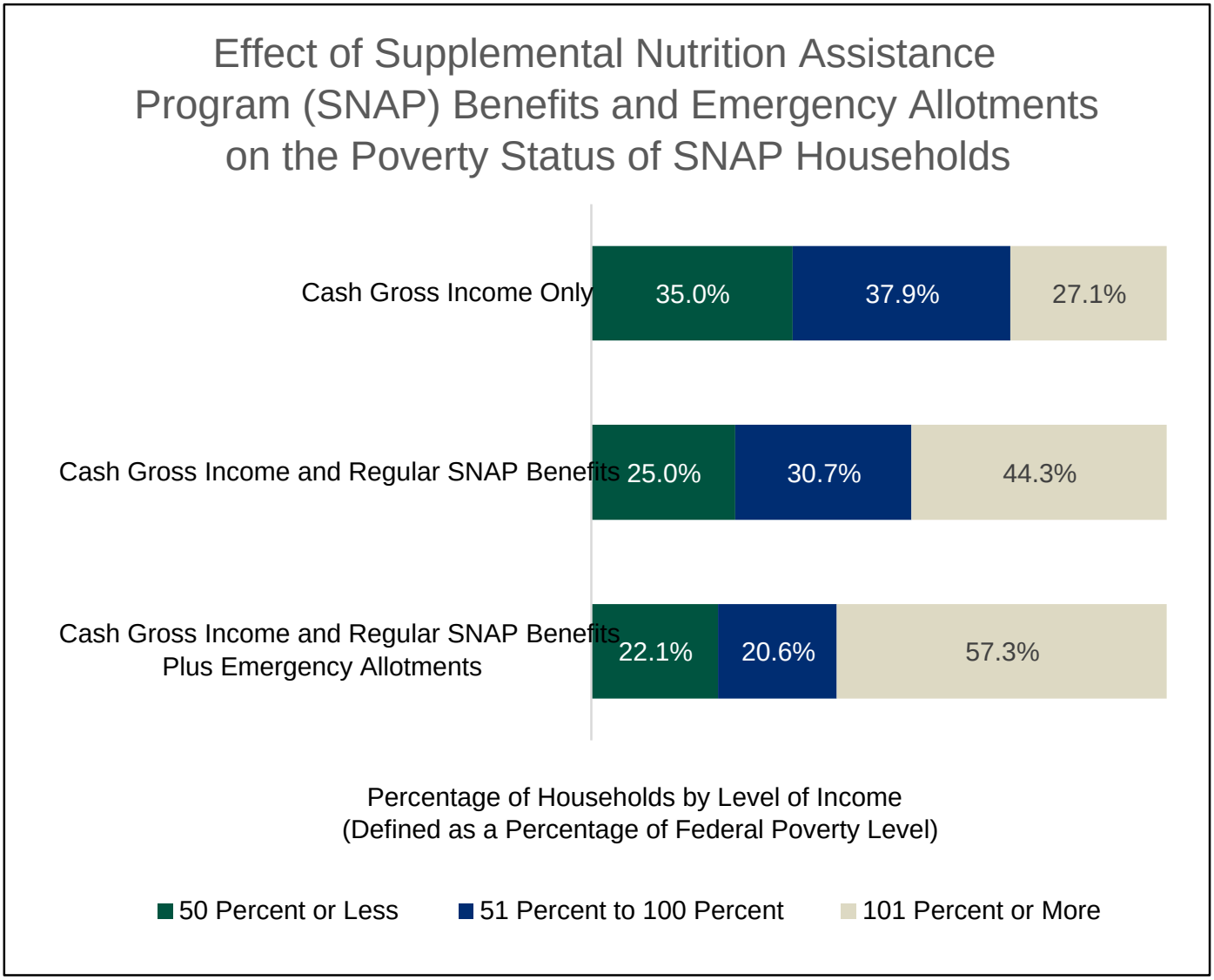
SNAP supports children, the elderly, and individuals with a disability.

- In FY 2023, four in five (79%) SNAP households included either a child, an elderly individual, or a nonelderly individual with a disability. These households contained 88% of all SNAP participants and received 83% of all SNAP benefits. See figure below.
- About 39% of SNAP participants were children, 20% were elderly, and 10% were nonelderly individuals with a disability.



SNAP supports households in poverty.

- Most SNAP households lived in poverty. Seventy-three percent had a gross monthly income at or below 100% of the poverty level.
- Most SNAP benefits go to the poorest households. Eighty-six percent of all SNAP benefits go to households with gross monthly income at or below the poverty level and 51% of benefits go to those with gross monthly income at or below 50% of the poverty level. In contrast, 27% of households with a gross monthly income above the poverty level received 14% of all benefits.
- When added to households' gross incomes, SNAP benefits raised the incomes of 17% of SNAP households above the poverty level. Pandemic-related supplemental benefits, known as emergency allotments, raised the incomes of an additional 13% of households above the poverty level. When including both SNAP benefits and emergency allotments, the percentage of SNAP households living above the poverty level increased from 27% to 57%.



The average SNAP benefit varied by household.

- The average SNAP household received a monthly benefit of $332. That's $177 per person based on the average SNAP household size of 1.9 people.
- Households with children received a larger average monthly benefit of $574 due to the larger average household size of 3.3 people. The average benefit per person for these households was $174.

SNAP households had different sources of income.

- Social Security was the most common source of income among SNAP households. Thirty-three percent of SNAP households received Social Security benefits (an average of $1,096 monthly).
- Earnings from work and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) were the next most common sources of income. Twenty-eight percent of households had earnings (an average of $1,548 monthly) and 23% of households received SSI benefits (an average of $723 monthly).
- General Assistance (GA) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits were less common sources of income. About 4% of SNAP households received GA (an average of $380 monthly) and 3% received TANF benefits (an average of $573 monthly).

Why FNA Did This Study

This study is part of the annual SNAP Characteristics Report series. Its purpose is to describe the characteristics and economic circumstances of SNAP households and participants in FY 2023 (October 2022 through September 2023).

How FNA Did This Study

The study team analyzed FY 2023 SNAP Quality Control (QC) data for this report.

State agencies send administrative data for a representative sample of SNAP households to us for QC purposes every year. State agencies verify SNAP household information in these data to complete the QC reviews. We refer to these data as the SNAP QC data. You may read more about the SNAP QC system online.

Study Data and External Publications

- SNAP QC Data
- SNAP in Action Dashboard
- SNAP Characteristics Report Series

Program This Study Evaluates

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Suggested Citation

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