



SNAP Works in Montana

Food and Economic Insecurity in Montana

- Economic insecurity, lack of food access, and the underutilization of public food programs all contribute to increased rates of hunger in our state.
- Montana has among the lowest wages in the nation and one of the highest rates of people working multiple jobs.
- We have 54,000 job seekers, but only about 17,000 total job openings.
- More than 1 in 7 Montanans live in poverty, including 42,800 children.
- Thirteen percent of Montanans live in households that struggle with hunger.
- Agencies of the Montana Food Bank Network served nearly 95,000 individuals in 2016.

“We have not had to pay for rent or utilities instead of food because of SNAP. SNAP helps us feed our family, choose healthier foods, and purchase items not available at the food pantry. Because of SNAP we rarely need to come to the pantry at all.”

*Woman from Kalispell,
recently laid off*

Current SNAP participation: Approximately 122,000 Montanans

- In Montana, more than 68% of SNAP participants are in families with children, 29% are in families with members who are elderly or have disabilities, and 44% are in working families.
- Nationally, more than half of SNAP households with a non-disabled, non-elderly member worked while receiving benefits and more than 80% worked in the year prior to or the year after receiving benefits.
- Children constitute nearly half of all SNAP participants.

SNAP Supports the Local Economy

- SNAP brings \$170 million into Montana every year, to be spent at local grocery stores, supermarkets, and farmer’s markets throughout the state.
- SNAP is an effective economic stimulus, generating \$1.70 in local economic activity for every \$1.00 spent in benefits.
- SNAP kept 27,000 people out of poverty each year between 2009 and 2012.

SNAP is Not Fully Utilized

- 1 in 4 Montanans likely eligible for SNAP is not participating.
 - Participation for seniors is even lower with just 1 in 3 eligible seniors participating in SNAP.
- Common barriers include a lack of understanding of eligibility guidelines, misconceptions of how the program works, challenges with the application process, and stigma or embarrassment.

SNAP Supports Health, Education, and Work

- SNAP reduces rates of food insecurity and hunger among participating households.
- Children with access to SNAP have improved health outcomes as adults and are more likely to graduate high school.
- SNAP helps low-wage workers make ends meet, boosting the income of a single parent earning \$10/hour by 14-21%.

“My SNAP benefit is only \$22 but I don’t know what I’d do without it. That \$22 makes a big difference in the amount and quality of food I am able to eat.”

70 year old woman from Helena