



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SNAP in Connecticut

Over **431,000** people (in almost **244,000** households) in Connecticut received SNAP in 2016.

Over **\$685 million** worth of federally funded SNAP benefits were issued in Connecticut in 2016.

The average monthly benefit per person in 2016 was about **\$132**.

The average monthly benefit per household in 2016 was about **\$233**.

According to OFA, the state's share of expenses related to administering federal SNAP benefits was about **\$53.4 million** for federal FY 16.

Program Structure

SNAP, formerly or colloquially known as food stamps, is a program administered at the federal level by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), an office within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Retailers who wish to accept SNAP benefits as payment for food must apply to the USDA, demonstrate that they sell food for home preparation and consumption, and meet certain other criteria.

At the state level, the Department of Social Services (DSS) administers the program, making eligibility determinations and managing benefit distribution, among other things. Federal law provides a framework for the program, though states have certain policy options. In Connecticut, DSS distributes SNAP benefits on electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards that also may carry cash benefits from other social services programs.

Program Financing

Generally, SNAP benefits are 100% federally financed, though some states opt to fund benefits for people not eligible under federal law. According to the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA), for Connecticut's state-funded SNAP program, FY 16 expenditures totaled approximately \$512,340, which supported an average of 303 cases per month.

Who is Eligible for SNAP in Connecticut?

Categorically Eligible

In Connecticut, most SNAP recipients must meet a gross income limit of 185% Federal Poverty Limit (FPL) and a net income limit (i.e., gross income after certain deductions) of 100% FPL. For this group, there is no asset test.

Elderly and Disabled

Under federal rules, seniors and those living with a disability with a gross income over 185% FPL may also qualify for SNAP in some cases, but they must meet an asset limit of \$3,250.

Citizenship Status

Certain immigrants must meet additional requirements to be eligible for SNAP (e.g., 5 years of legal residency, disability, or refugee status). Immigrants who have legal status but have been in the country less than 5 years may be eligible for state-funded SNAP benefits. Undocumented immigrants are not eligible.

In 2017, for a family of three, 100% FPL is \$20,420 and 185% FPL is \$37,777 per year.

Work Requirements

Under federal law, most able-bodied adult SNAP recipients must, among other things, register for work (usually with the SNAP state agency or the state employment office) and accept a suitable job if offered one. Some adult SNAP recipients are also subject to a time limit for receiving SNAP benefits unless they meet certain additional work requirements. These adults, known as able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWD), can only receive three months of SNAP benefits in a 36-month period unless they work or participate in other work activities for at least 20 hours per week.

Federal law allows states to waive ABAWD work requirements for areas that have high unemployment rates or otherwise lack sufficient jobs to provide employment. In Connecticut, work requirements are waived in some towns but not others. (As of June 2017, ABAWD work requirements were effective in 46 towns and waived in 123 towns.)

Allowed and Prohibited Purchases

According to FNS, generally, SNAP benefits can be used to buy (1) food and beverages for the household to eat (e.g., breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, meat and dairy) and (2) seeds and plants that produce food.

SNAP benefits cannot be used to purchase:

- beer, wine, liquor, or tobacco;
- nonfood items, including pet food;
- vitamins, medicines, or supplements;
- food to be eaten in the store; or
- hot food.

Towns and Cities with a High Percentage of SNAP Recipients (2015)

Hartford (39%), Waterbury (34%), New Haven (31%),
New Britain (31%), Windham (31%), and New London (30%)

Learn
More

Food and Nutrition Service: [SNAP Tables](#)

“SNAP Financial Eligibility and Benefits” [2016-R-0106](#)

“SNAP Work Requirements and Enrollment by Town” [2016-R-0107](#)

Food and Nutrition Service: [2015 State Activity Report](#)

