



Common Cents

New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute Blog

SNAP Works for New Hampshire's Children

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The Food Stamp Program helps New Hampshire families put food on the table. But we know now that it accomplishes much more than that.

Research increasingly shows that the Food Stamp Program can ward against the long-term effects on children of experiencing poverty, abuse or neglect, parental substance misuse or mental illness, and exposure to violence — events that can take a toll on their well-being as adults. As a new Center on Budget and Policy Priorities [report](#) finds, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps form a strong foundation of health and well-being for low-income children by enhancing economic stability of families, improving food security, and helping improve health and academic achievement with long-lasting consequences.

It's doing all that across New Hampshire. The Food Stamp Program is improving our children's lives today while increasing their opportunities for future success.

SNAP delivers more nutrition assistance to low-income children than any other program. In 2016, SNAP will help about 20 million children each month — about one in four U.S. children — while providing about \$30 billion in nutrition benefits for children over the course of the year. In New Hampshire, SNAP helps about 44,700 children each month, or about one in six of our state's kids.

SNAP's benefits are modest, but they're well-targeted to the families that need them the most. Ten percent of households in New Hampshire are "food insecure", or struggle to afford a nutritionally adequate diet. While participating families with children in our state receive an average of \$321 each month, those with incomes below 50 percent of the poverty line receive \$486. That's one reason why SNAP helps lift more children out of deep poverty than any other government assistance program. It's important to remember that SNAP is merely a supplement to a family's overall food

budget, as the maximum allotment for a family of three with no other income is \$5.68 per person per day.

These SNAP dollars also help to boost our local economy. In fact, in 2015 SNAP pumped \$132 million into the state's economy. These dollars are spent in local stores participating in SNAP, where low-income families use their benefits to purchase food.

Much of SNAP's success can be attributed to its design, which includes a consistent national structure that effectively targets food benefits to those with the greatest need, as well as eligibility rules and a funding structure that make benefits available to children in almost all families with little income and few resources. SNAP is designed to automatically respond to changes in the economy, and rigorous requirements ensure a high degree of program integrity.

SNAP is helping to give thousands of New Hampshire's children the foundation they need to succeed. Efforts to reform or enhance it should build on its effectiveness in protecting the well-being of Granite State children — and those nationwide — and preserve the essential program features that contribute to that success.