

The New Hampshire Food Stamp Program

The New Hampshire Food Stamp Program, also known by the federal designation Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), provides resources to eligible individuals to purchase certain food items at grocery stores and other participating food retailers. SNAP benefits are designed to provide the difference between the cost of a nutritionally adequate food plan (as designed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture) and 30 percent of the net household income, which is the portion expected to be used on food. The federal government funds 100 percent of SNAP benefits, and the cost of state-level administration is shared with the state government.

Eligibility

SNAP eligibility is determined based on income, expenses, assets, and the number of members within a household. New Hampshire households may be eligible under a few key circumstances, primarily based on their gross income (which is income before allowable expenses), net income (gross income minus allowable expenses, including child care, housing, and utility costs within certain parameters), and assets (excluding certain assets, including a primary residence and vehicle). Not all members of a household may qualify; in certain circumstances, the number of qualified individuals receiving assistance may be smaller than the total household size. Generally, households qualify if:

- ◆ gross income is less than or equal to 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (\$27,732 for a household of three in 2019), or 165 percent for an older adult or a person with a disability;
- ◆ net income is less than or equal to 100 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (\$21,336 for a household of three in 2019); and
- ◆ assets total no more than \$2,250, or \$3,500 for households with an older adult or a person with a disability.

Households may also qualify under categorical eligibility. These households qualify if:

- ◆ all members qualify for receiving public assistance through Supplemental Security Income, Financial Assistance to Needy Families, Old Age Assistance, Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled, or Aid to the Needy Blind; or
- ◆ they meet New Hampshire's expanded categorical eligibility criteria, meaning they earn gross income less than or equal to 185 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (\$39,468 for a household of three in 2019) and have a dependent child with a relative in the household.

New Hampshire opted, amid the Great Recession in 2009, to expand categorical eligibility, which is a portion of the federal SNAP program that allows New Hampshire to bring in additional

New Hampshire Food Stamp Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) Thresholds for Selected Household Sizes, Annualized, 2019			
Household Size	Net Income 100 Percent FPG	Gross Income 130 Percent FPG	Gross Income 185 Percent FPG
1	\$12,492	\$16,248	\$23,112
2	\$16,920	\$21,984	\$31,284
3	\$21,336	\$27,732	\$39,468
4	\$25,752	\$33,480	\$47,640

Source: N.H. Department of Health and Human Services Food Stamp Manual, accessed October 2019

federal money to supply nutrition aid to more individuals. This expanded categorical eligibility allows New Hampshire to provide federally-funded SNAP benefits to households with incomes beyond the federal 130 percent gross income standard and permitted benefit-eligible individuals to access benefits without the asset test. Expanded categorical eligibility only applies to households with children living

with a parent or other specified relative, a restriction New Hampshire imposes that no other states with expanded categorical eligibility, which included 39 states in August 2019, have imposed.

Certain SNAP beneficiaries must work to obtain benefits. Individuals aged 18 to 49 years who have no dependents, are not pregnant, have not been medically-certified as physically or mentally unfit for employment, and do not reside in certain designated areas lacking available jobs, must work, be involved in a work activity, or be in a work training program for at least 80 hours per month to receive benefits for more than three months in a 36-month period. In New Hampshire, no areas of the state had a waiver from this requirement as of October 1, 2019.

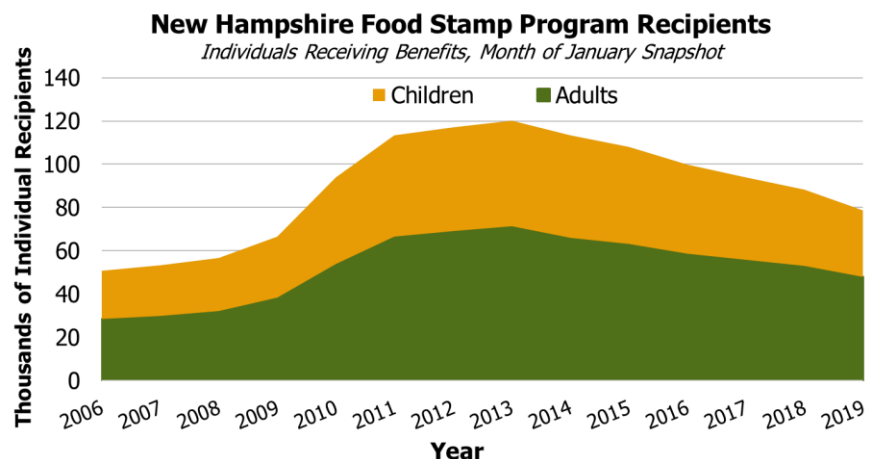
Benefits

Benefits are provided based on a sliding scale calculated using a household's size and net income. The benefit size is calculated by subtracting 30 percent of the household income from the maximum monthly benefit, which adjusts for size and provides a sliding scale benefit up to 100 percent of federal poverty guidelines. Those with net incomes above 100 percent of the federal poverty guidelines are not eligible for benefits. SNAP benefits are provided through Electronic Benefit Transfer cards, which act like debit cards and can only be used to purchase food items intended for human consumption and use. Specifically, benefits may not be used to purchase hot foods, vitamins, paper products, soap, alcohol, or tobacco. Benefits may not be traded or sold.

The 2019 maximum benefit permitted for an eligible household of three, with no net income, is \$509 per month, which is approximately \$5.47 per person per day (with 31 days per month) or \$1.82 per person per meal (with three meals per day). Monthly benefits decline as net income increases from zero. In January 2019, approximately six percent of New Hampshire's population received SNAP benefits, and 30,729 (39.1 percent) of the recipients were children.

Maximum Assistance Through N.H. Food Stamp Program	
Household Size	Maximum Monthly Food Stamp Allotment
1	\$194
2	\$355
3	\$509
4	\$646

Source: N.H. Department of Health and Human Services Food Stamp Manual, accessed October 2019



Source: N.H. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Division of Family Assistance, Data Provided September 2019

Sources and Additional Resources

Sources used for this document and additional resources include:

- ◆ New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, *Food Stamp Manual*.
- ◆ The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), *Policy Basics: Introduction to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*, June 25, 2019.
- ◆ CBPP, *SNAP: State by State Data, Fact Sheets, and Resources*, June 26, 2019.
- ◆ Congressional Research Service, *The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): Categorical Eligibility*, August 1, 2019.
- ◆ New Hampshire Fiscal Policy Institute, *The Potential Impacts of Proposed SNAP Eligibility and Work Requirement Changes on Food Insecurity*, October 9, 2019.