



SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

Helping low-income New Jerseyans buy healthy food for their families

- ❖ The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal program offering food-purchasing assistance to low- and no-income persons.
- ❖ Despite the existence of federal assistance programs such as SNAP, which New Jersey supplements by providing expanded SNAP benefits and emergency food assistance, **13.5% of the state's population was food insecure** in 2010.
- ❖ New Jersey has one of the lowest SNAP participation rates in the nation, as **only 60% of all New Jersey SNAP-eligible individuals participated** in the program in 2010.

What is Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)?

SNAP is the largest federal nutrition assistance program, and it serves to provide food for many New Jersey residents struggling to put food on the table due to economic constraints. New Jersey has expanded the program to reach more New Jersey residents in need of this support by raising the monthly income limit threshold to 185% of the federal poverty level and by eliminating the asset test. However, New Jersey faces significant hurdles in SNAP participation rates, and 13.5% of New Jersey residents remain food insecure.

Check out SNAP in the
New Jersey PATHS Report:
pp. 24–28, 67–71

What are the benefits of SNAP?

A lack of resources to obtain healthy food can have serious consequences for the health and well-being of New Jersey residents. SNAP provides an important safety net for low-income families who face economic access problems to food, by providing them the means to purchase food.

What should New Jersey do?

1. New Jersey can **expand access to SNAP by raising the income threshold** from 185% to 200% of the federal poverty level.
2. New Jersey can **incentivize better food choices** with SNAP benefits through programs such as **Double Bucks**, which matches up to \$20 per market day any money that SNAP participants spend at farmers markets on fresh fruits and vegetables, or through increasing the use of **Electronic Benefit Transfers (EBT)**, which permits easier use of SNAP benefits at farmers markets.
3. New Jersey can **require a study** to identify and address barriers to SNAP participation, such as stigma, travelling concerns, lack of awareness about the program, and eligibility criteria.
4. New Jersey can reduce known barriers to SNAP access by **extending SNAP office hours** of operations to after business hours, thus meeting the needs of working families, and **improving online services** to include case management and online reporting.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

The Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation | Email: chlpi@law.harvard.edu