

SNAP IN TENNESSEE

The Tennessee Department of Human Services administers SNAP in Tennessee. In 2015, 405,730 Tennessee households (16%) received SNAP compared to 13% of households nationally (**Figure 3**). (14)

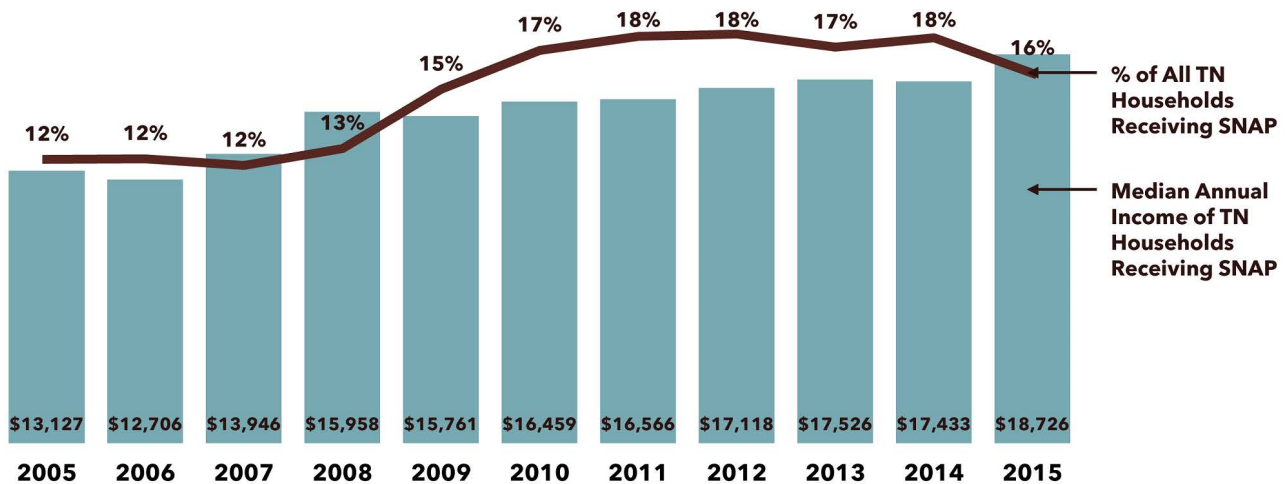
- 50% were households with children under the age of 18.
- 52% were households with incomes below the poverty level.
- 50% were households with 1 or more people with a disability.
- 76% of households had 1 or more people who worked in that past 12 months. (14)

SNAP participation varies throughout the state, ranging from 4% of households in Williamson County to 37% of households in Lake County (**Figure 4**).

In 2014, an estimated 94 -100% of all Tennesseans eligible for SNAP participated in the program. This is significantly higher than the U.S. participation rate of 82-84%. Participation rates among working poor people (defined as people with incomes below the poverty level who spend 27 weeks or more each year in the labor force) are lower. In 2014, about 71-86% of the working poor in Tennessee were eligible for and participated in SNAP. (3)

On average, Tennessee households participating in SNAP received \$254 a month, which amounts to 39% of the maximum benefit amount (**Figure 5**).

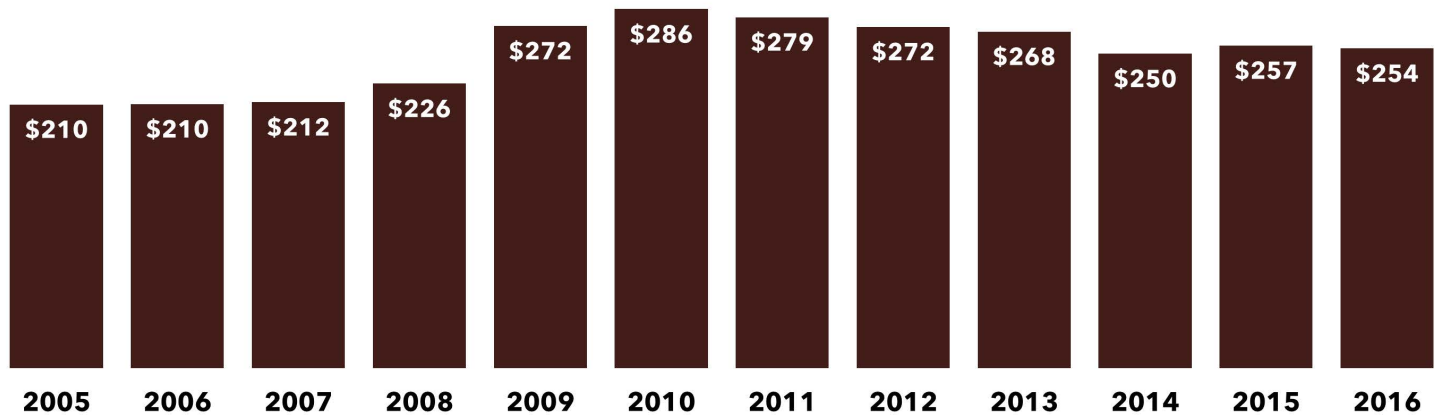
FIGURE 3. TENNESSEE HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING SNAP



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2015 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates

FIGURE 4. SHARE OF TENNESSEE HOUSEHOLDS RECEIVING SNAP BY COUNTY (2015)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE 5. AVERAGE MONTHLY SNAP BENEFITS PER HOUSEHOLD IN TENNESSEE

Source: Official USDA Food Plans: Cost of Food Report for June 1996-2016, Maximum allotments: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (16), Cost of Living Adjustment Information, Maximum Allotments and Deductions, FY 2005 - 2017 (17); California Department of Social Services, Food Stamps, Maximum Allotment (18)

Note: Thrifty Plan amounts are based on the cost of the TFP in June of the prior year for a family of four with children 6-9 and 9-11 years old.

DOES SNAP WORK?

Congress created SNAP with the goal of helping low-income households experience food security and eat a nutritious diet. **Evaluations of the program show that SNAP has been more effective at reducing food insecurity than at improving the nutritional intake of participants.** Receiving SNAP benefits is also associated with improved child outcomes. (19) (20)

FOOD INSECURITY

- On average, households receiving SNAP benefits are 20% less likely to be food insecure than households that are eligible for SNAP but don't participate. (21) (22)
- Among people who receive SNAP, higher benefit amounts are associated with a decreased risk of food insecurity. (21)
- Households that participate in SNAP spend more on food than non-participant households with similar incomes. (23)

NUTRITION

- While few low-income households meet dietary guidelines for promoting health, SNAP households consume more red meat, potatoes, and sugar-sweetened beverages and have a lower quality diet than low-income households not receiving SNAP. (26)
- Financial incentives (i.e. rebates and coupons) to purchase fruits and vegetables are associated with increased fruit and vegetable consumption among SNAP participants. (27) (28)

CHILD OUTCOMES

- The introduction of the Food Stamp Program in 1962 reduced the incidence of low birthweight babies by 1% among Whites and 1.5% among African-Americans. The impact was particularly strong in counties with higher poverty rates. (24)
- Children living in households with SNAP benefits are less likely to be diagnosed with anemia and failure to thrive than children living in low-income, non-participant households. (25)
- The initial county-by-county rollout of SNAP provided a natural experiment to assess the effects of exposure to SNAP as a child. Among SNAP-eligible households, access to SNAP in childhood was associated with reduced incidence of obesity, high blood pressure, and diabetes as an adult. (1)

THE SYCAMORE INSTITUTE

Written By

Courtnee Melton, PhD

Policy Analyst

cmelton@SycamoreInstituteTN.org

Other TSI Staff

Laura Berlind

Executive Director

Mandy Pellegrin

Policy Director

Brian Straessle

Communications Director

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