

The Face of SNAP Participants

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** provides food purchasing power to eligible low-income individuals and families during tough economic times, freeing up other family funds to pay for necessities such as housing and utilities as families work toward self-sufficiency.

A clear picture of SNAP clients may surprise some people. In FY 2010:

SNAP clients were as diverse as America. SNAP clients may report their race and ethnicity as part of the application process, though it is not required. In 2010, application data showed that

- 34% were whites;
- 22% were African-Americans;
- 16% were Hispanic;
- 3% were Asian; and
- 4% were Native American.
- For 20%, race/ethnicity was not reported.

Many SNAP participants had jobs. Nearly 30 percent of SNAP households had earnings and 41 percent of all SNAP participants lived in a household that had earnings. Jobs were the primary source of income for most of these households.

Most SNAP participants were children, elderly or disabled.

- Nearly half (47 percent) were under age 18;
- 8 percent were age 60 or older.
- Nearly 20 percent of SNAP households contained a person with disabilities.

One of the most important transformations over the last 20 years is a fundamental shift in income from welfare to work. In 1990, 42 percent of all SNAP households received cash welfare benefits and only 19 percent had earnings. In 2010, only 8 percent received cash welfare, while 30 percent had earnings.