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The Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape: Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report

Saied Toossi, Jordan W. Jones, and Leslie Hodges



The U.S. Department of Agriculture typically administers 15 domestic food and nutrition assistance programs that account for roughly two-thirds of the Department's annual budget. These programs-which vary by size, type of benefits, and target population-form a nutritional safety net for millions of children and low-income adults.



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The Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape: Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report

Saied Toossi, Jordan W. Jones, and Leslie Hodges

Abstract

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) typically administers 15 domestic food and nutrition assistance programs that together affect the lives of millions of people and account for roughly two-thirds of USDA's annual budget. In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, USDA launched two new programs, Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) and the Farmers to Families Food Box Program (Food Box Program). Additionally, USDA implemented numerous policy changes that expanded the scope and coverage of existing programs. Together, these initiatives contributed to an increase in expenditures on food and nutrition assistance programs, which amounted to a historical inflation-adjusted high of \$122.1 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2020 (October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020). This report uses preliminary data from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to examine program trends in the largest U.S. food and nutrition assistance programs through FY 2020 and documents the many policy changes implemented since March 2020. It also summarizes a recent USDA, Economic Research Service report examining the prevalence of household food insecurity in the United States in 2019 and a working paper examining Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and P-EBT benefit redemptions during the pandemic.

Keywords: food and nutrition assistance programs; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); National School Lunch Program (NSLP); School Breakfast Program (SBP); Seamless Summer Option (SSO); Summer Food Service Program (SFSP); Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP); Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT); Farmers to Families Food Box Program; emergency allotments; food security; coronavirus; COVID-19 pandemic; economic conditions.

Note: This report, though renamed, is a continuation of the "Food Assistance Landscape" annual series published by USDA, Economic Research Service.

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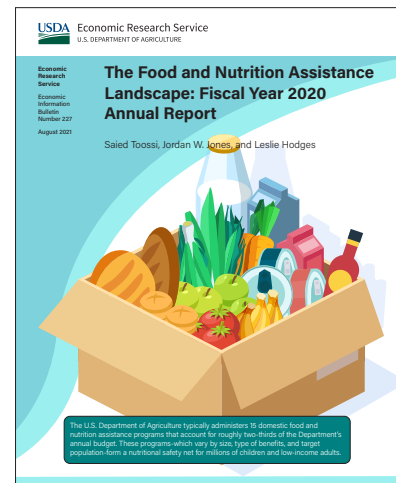
Saied Toossi, Jordan W. Jones, and Leslie Hodges

What Is the Issue?

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) typically administers 15 domestic food and nutrition assistance programs that together affect the lives of millions of people and account for roughly two-thirds of USDA's annual budget. In response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, USDA launched two new programs, Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) and the Farmers to Families Food Box Program (Food Box Program). P-EBT reimbursed qualifying households for the value of school meals forgone due to COVID-19 related disruptions to in-person school attendance. Through the Food Box Program, USDA purchased food products from U.S.-based producers and donated them to food banks and other charitable organizations for distribution to households in need. Additionally, USDA implemented numerous policy changes that expanded the scope and coverage of existing programs. As a result, participation in and expenditures on these programs changed substantially. This report uses preliminary data from USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to examine trends in the largest U.S. food and nutrition assistance programs through fiscal year (FY) 2020 (October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020). This report also documents policy changes that took effect since March 2020 and trends in economic and social indicators affecting participation in and spending on food and nutrition assistance programs. It also summarizes two recent USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) studies: one that examines the prevalence of household food insecurity in the United States in 2019; and another that examines Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and P-EBT benefit redemptions during the pandemic.

What Did This Study Find?

Spending on USDA's domestic food and nutrition assistance programs in FY 2020 reached a historical high of \$122.1 billion, 32 percent greater than the previous year. Spending surpassed the previous inflation-adjusted historical high of \$119.8 billion in FY 2013 (\$109.2 billion in 2013 dollars). SNAP accounted for 65 percent of these expenditures (see figure below).



ERS is a primary source of economic research and analysis from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, providing timely information on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America.

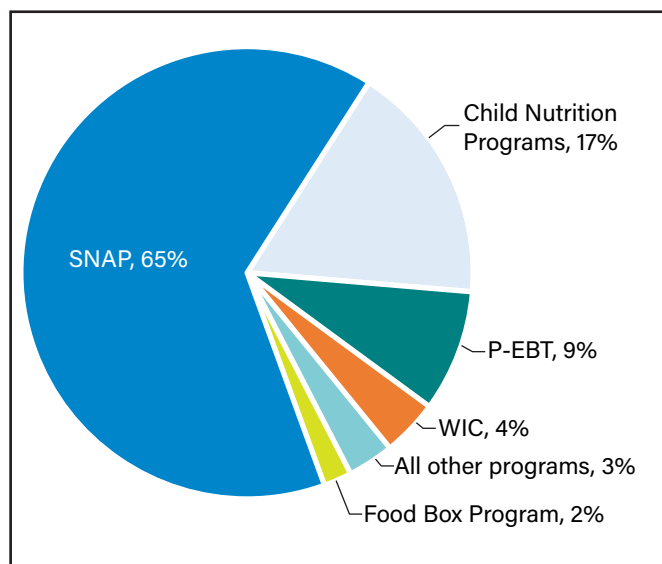
- On average, 39.9 million people participated in SNAP each month, 12 percent more than in the previous fiscal year. Additionally, emergency SNAP allotments were issued in the second half of FY 2020, supplementing the regular benefits of 60 percent of recipients. Higher participation and larger benefits translated to greater Federal spending on the program, which totaled \$78.9 billion, a 31-percent increase over the previous fiscal year.
- On average, 6.2 million people participated in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children each month, 2 percent fewer than the previous fiscal year. Total WIC spending was \$4.9 billion, 6 percent less than in FY 2019.
- Pandemic-related disruptions to child nutrition programs resulted in 7.9 billion total meals being served across the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), down 17 percent from FY 2019. While meals served through NSLP, SBP, and CACFP declined, the number of meals served through SFSP increased to 1.3 billion, nearly nine times greater than in FY 2019.
- P-EBT benefits reimbursed eligible families for missed school meals due to school closures at a cost of \$10.7 billion. The Food Box Program distributed 92 million boxes of produce, dairy, and meat products to food banks and other charitable organizations nationwide at a cost of \$2.5 billion.

How Was the Study Conducted?

This report uses preliminary data as of January 2021 from USDA, FNS and USDA, AMS to examine program trends through FY 2020. It also includes trends in economic and social indicators that affect program participation and spending and highlights recent USDA, ERS research.

USDA food and nutrition assistance expenditures by program, FY 2020

SNAP accounted for nearly two-thirds of food and nutrition assistance spending



Note: Figure based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021 and information provided by USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

FY = Fiscal year. SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. Child Nutrition Programs = National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program. P-EBT = Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer. All other programs = nutrition family assistance grants to Puerto Rico, the Northern Marianas, and American Samoa; the Commodity Supplemental Food Program; the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations; the Nutrition Services Incentive Program; the Special Milk Program; Disaster Feeding; The Emergency Food Assistance Program; and nutrition programs administration. Food Box Program = Farmers to Families Food Box Program.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service and Agricultural Marketing Service.

The Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape: Fiscal Year 2020 Annual Report

Introduction

In a typical year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers 15 food and nutrition assistance programs, accounting for two-thirds of USDA's annual budget. Together, these programs—which vary by size, type of benefits provided, and target population—form a nutritional safety net for tens of millions of children and low-income adults, including the elderly and those with disabilities. In fiscal year (FY) 2020 (October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020), millions more relied on them amidst the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and its impact on the economy. In response to rising need, USDA expanded the scope and coverage of existing programs and launched two new ones, Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) and the Farmers to Families Food Box Program (Food Box Program).

This report uses preliminary data (subject to change as data become final) from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released in January 2021 by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)—which administers most food and nutrition assistance programs—and information provided by USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)—which administers the Food Box Program—to examine trends in the largest food and nutrition assistance programs through FY 2020. It also provides an overview of new USDA programs and documents policy changes to existing programs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, this report examines trends in economic and social indicators that affect participation in and spending on food and nutrition assistance programs. Lastly, it summarizes two recent USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) studies: a report that examines the prevalence of household food insecurity in the United States in 2019; and a working paper that examines benefit redemptions during the pandemic.

Domestic Impact of COVID-19 and USDA Food and Nutrition Assistance

In late January 2020, the Federal Government declared a national public health emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Beginning in March 2020, the pandemic necessitated a shutdown of schools, child and adult care facilities, businesses, and many other activities to limit the spread of the virus. As a result, the unemployment rate rose sharply from 3.5 percent in February to 14.7 percent in April before decreasing to 7.9 percent by September. In response to the economic downturn, Congress passed, and the President signed, several pieces of legislation into law, including the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Among their many provisions, these acts allowed USDA to meet the rising need for food and nutrition assistance by expanding the scope and coverage of existing programs through greater administrative flexibilities, higher benefits, and greater access. Additionally, the FFCRA authorized and USDA implemented two new programs: Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT)—which reimbursed eligible families for missed school meals due to COVID-19-related school closures—and the Farmers to Families Food Box Program—which purchased agricultural products for distribution to families in need.

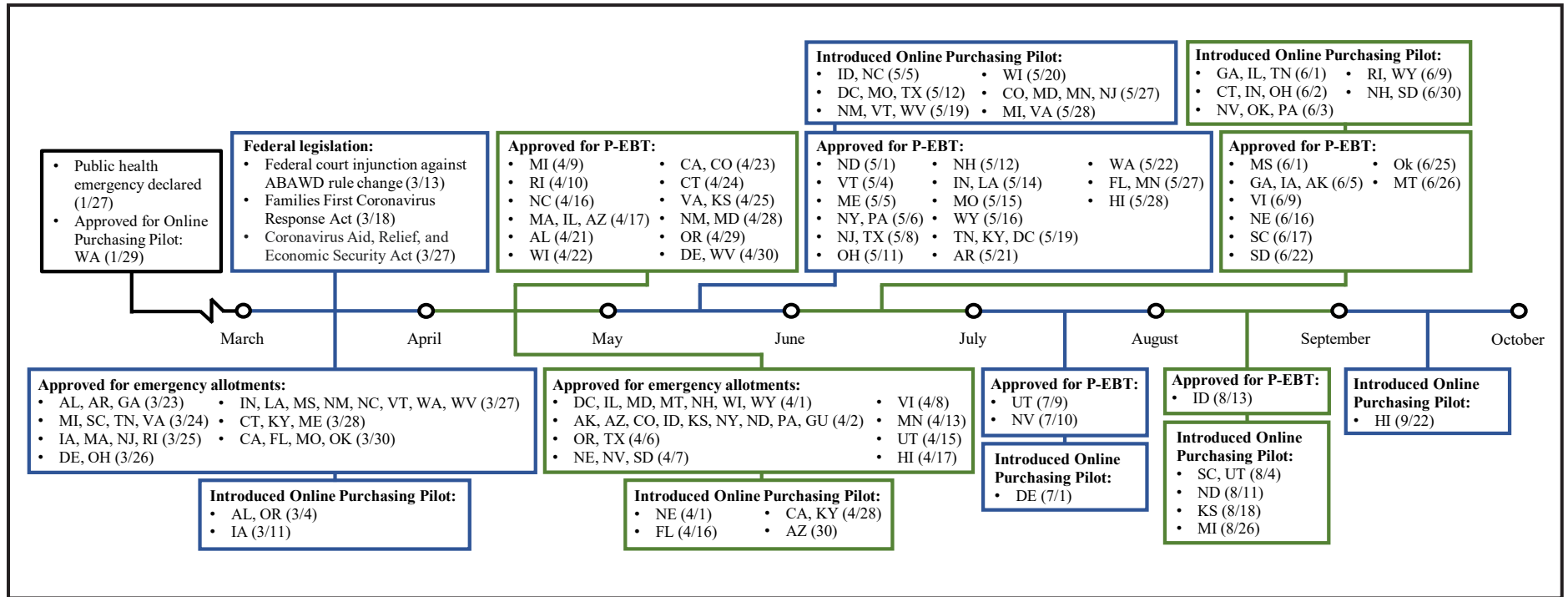
Changes to the food and nutrition assistance landscape were, in some cases, staggered across States. Initial State plans to provide emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) allotments—which increased benefits for households enrolled in the program to the maximum allowable for their size—were approved over the period from late March to mid-April. The adoption of P-EBT and rollout of the Online Purchasing Pilot—which allowed SNAP beneficiaries to use their benefits for online grocery purchases—were also staggered, though over a more extended period (figure 1).

Previous research has shown that program caseloads and expenditures are responsive to economic conditions and the policy environment. Future USDA, ERS research will explore the implications of changes to the food and nutrition assistance landscape in response to the pandemic for outcomes such as food acquisition patterns and food insecurity.

Source: Unemployment rate information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Figure 1

State rollout of SNAP emergency allotments, P-EBT, and the SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot, FY 2020



Note: State disbursements of emergency SNAP allotments and P-EBT benefits, and the introduction of the Online Purchasing Pilot, were subject to USDA approvals. Dates shown for emergency SNAP allotments indicate the date that USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) approved a State's initial emergency allotment waiver. Dates shown for P-EBT indicate the date that FNS first approved a State's plan to issue emergency benefits through P-EBT for the 2019-20 school year. Dates shown for SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot indicate the date that online SNAP transactions first became available in a State.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; P-EBT = Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

Total Food and Nutrition Assistance Expenditures

Spending on food and nutrition assistance reached a historical high in 2020

Federal expenditures for USDA’s domestic food and nutrition assistance programs—including P-EBT and the Food Box Program—totaled \$122.1 billion in FY 2020, or 32 percent greater than the previous fiscal year (table 1), reversing a recent downward trend in expenditures (figure 2). The largest food and nutrition assistance programs in FY 2020—the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); the National School Lunch Program (NSLP); the School Breakfast Program (SBP); the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP); the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP); P-EBT; and the Food Box Program—accounted for 96.7 percent of total USDA expenditures for domestic food and nutrition assistance.

Table 1
USDA food and nutrition assistance at a glance, FY 2019 and FY 2020

Program		FY 2019	FY 2020	Percent change
SNAP	Average monthly participation (millions)	35.7	39.9	11.7
	Average benefit per person (dollars per month)	129.83	154.99	19.4
	Total annual expenditures (billions of dollars)	60.4	78.9	30.7
WIC	Average monthly participation (millions)	6.4	6.2	-2.3
	Women	1.5	1.4	-4.6
	Infants	1.6	1.6	-3.7
	Children	3.3	3.2	-0.7
	Food cost per person (dollars per month)	40.90	38.22	-6.5
	Total expenditures (billions of dollars)	5.3	4.9	-6.0
NSLP, SBP, CACFP, SFSP	Total meals served (billions)	9.5	7.9	-16.8
	Total expenditures (billions of dollars)	23.0	21.1	-8.1
P-EBT*	Total expenditures (billions of dollars)		10.7	
Food Box Program*	Number of food boxes delivered (millions)		92	
	Total expenditures (billions of dollars)		2.5	
All programs	Total expenditures (billions of dollars)	92.5	122.1	31.9

Note: FY 2020 figures based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021 and information provided by USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service. Expenditures are in nominal terms, and total expenditures in the last row includes the cost of programs not shown in the table. Average SNAP benefit per person is calculated as total annual benefits divided by average monthly participation, divided by 12; WIC food cost per person is calculated the same way.

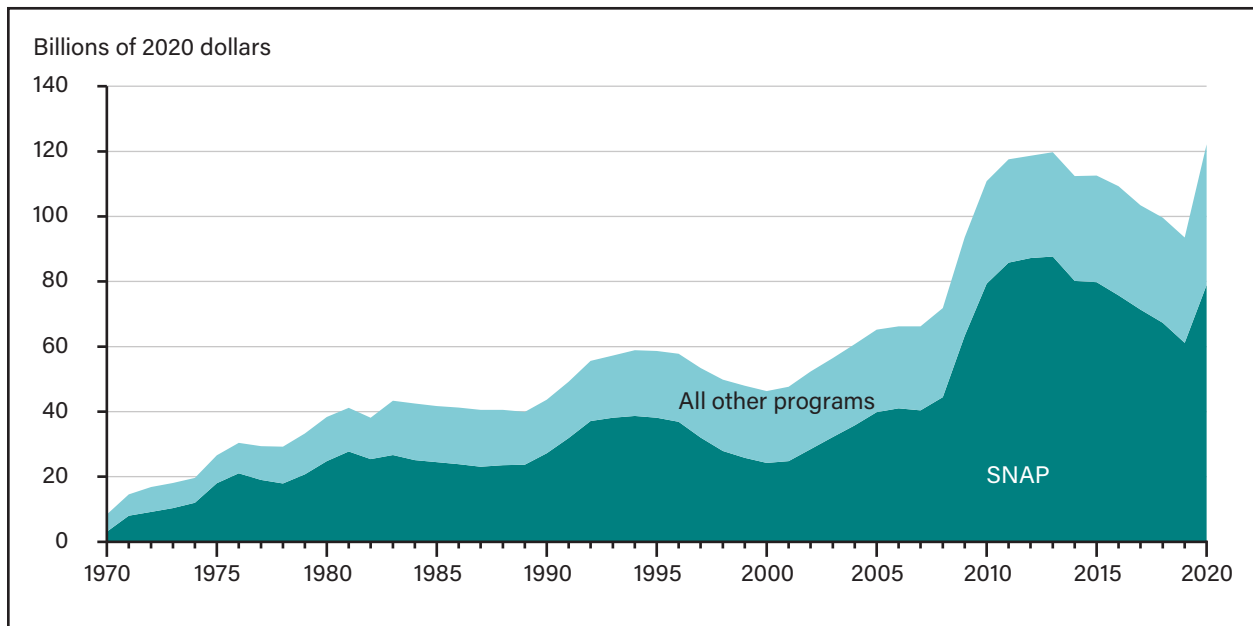
*Program did not exist in FY 2019.

FY = Fiscal year; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children; NSLP = National School Lunch Program; SBP = Special Breakfast Program; CACFP = Child and Adult Care Food Program; SFSP = Summer Food Service Program; P-EBT = Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer; Food Box Program = Farmers to Families Food Box Program.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service and USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Expenditures in FY 2020 increased for SNAP and decreased for WIC. Combined expenditures on what are typically the four largest child nutrition programs (NSLP, SBP, CACFP, and SFSP) also decreased. New expenditures on P-EBT and the Food Box Program totaled \$13.2 billion. Federal expenditures on food and nutrition assistance in FY 2020 were at their highest ever inflation-adjusted level, 2 percent higher than the previous inflation-adjusted high of \$119.8 billion set in FY 2013 (adjusted from the nominal value of \$109.2 billion in 2013 dollars using the Personal Consumption Expenditures price index from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis).

Figure 2
Inflation-adjusted USDA expenditures for food and nutrition assistance, FY 1970–2020
After 6 years of decline, expenditures rose to a new high in FY 2020



Note: FY 2020 figures based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021 and information provided by USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service. Expenditures in billions of 2020 dollars, adjusted using the Personal Consumption Expenditures price index, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

FY = Fiscal year; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service and USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Participation and benefits expanded during the pandemic

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—formerly the Food Stamp Program—is the largest of USDA’s food and nutrition assistance programs, accounting for 65 percent of Federal food and nutrition assistance spending in FY 2020. Unlike other food and nutrition assistance programs that target specific groups, SNAP is available to all households that meet the program’s income and asset criteria, subject to certain work and immigration status requirements. Participating households receive monthly benefits that can be used to purchase food items at authorized retailers via an electronic system known as electronic benefit transfer (EBT). Benefits increase with household size and decrease with household income and can be redeemed for most types of foods. Benefits cannot be spent on tobacco, alcohol, or non-food items. Benefits also cannot be spent on hot or prepared foods, except in some areas under certain conditions.

Prior to the pandemic, most States required in-person contact for SNAP’s eligibility review, certification, and/or quality control processes. Additionally, online redemption of SNAP benefits was only possible in two States prior to March 2020. In order to help State agencies meet the rising need for food and nutrition assistance during the pandemic and to support social distancing, several program changes were mandated by law or allowed by USDA:

- **Emergency allotments:** USDA granted waivers allowing States to issue emergency allotments to SNAP households not already receiving the maximum SNAP benefit, bringing their total monthly benefit up to the maximum amount allowed for their household size. Most States began supplementing SNAP benefits in this way in March, with the rest following in April (figure 1). All but two States supplemented benefits every month from April to September (Wisconsin did not in June and Nebraska did not in August and September).
- **Online purchasing:** The SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot (OPP), originally authorized in the 2014 Farm Bill, rapidly expanded in FY 2020, allowing households in participating States to purchase groceries online from authorized retailers with SNAP benefits. Online SNAP transactions are subject to the same requirements as in-person transactions and cannot be spent on tips or fees. The OPP was first implemented in New York in FY 2019, followed by five other States from January through April 1st 2020 (Washington, Alabama, Oregon, Iowa, and Nebraska). In response to the pandemic, USDA worked with State agencies and industry partners to rapidly expand OPP in FY 2020 to improve access to food for SNAP households while also supporting social distancing. By the end of the fiscal year, 45 States and the District of Columbia (DC) made online purchasing at select retailers available (figure 1).
- **ABAWD waivers:** Time limits on benefit receipt for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs) not meeting work requirements were suspended unless a State offered an ABAWD a slot in a work or workfare program.
- **Greater administrative flexibilities:** To facilitate providing assistance to those in need, USDA granted State agencies several administrative flexibilities. These included adjustments to interview requirements, certification periods, reporting requirements, recertification procedures, fair hearing and claims requirements, and quality control measures, among others.

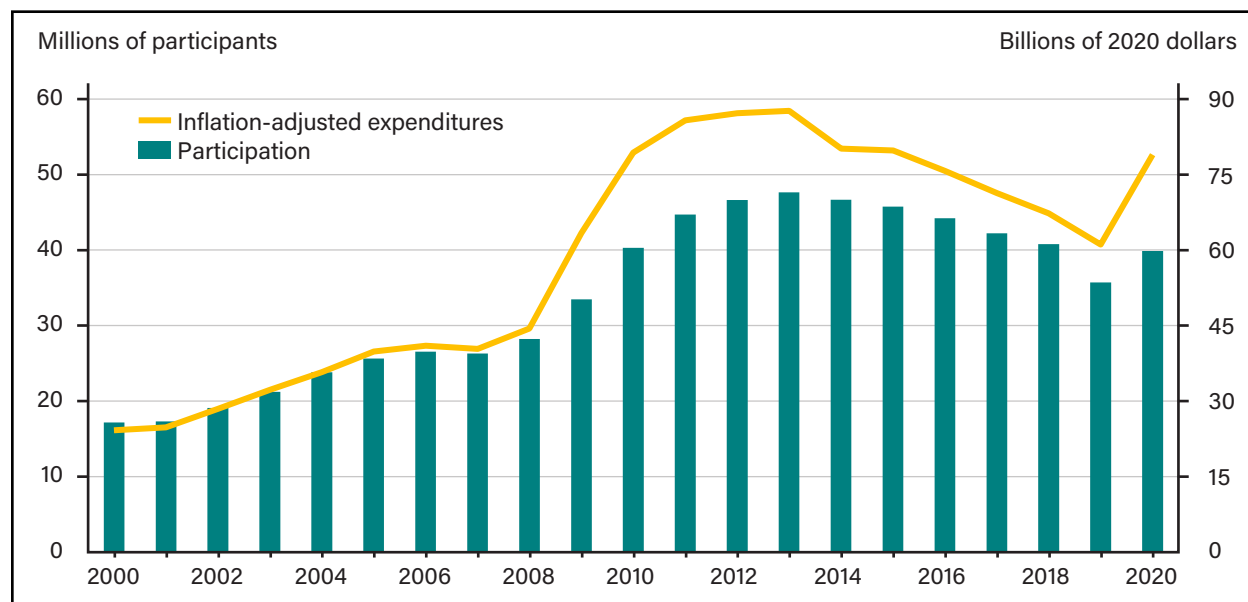
During FY 2020:

- Participation in SNAP averaged 39.9 million people per month, 12 percent higher than the previous fiscal year. Participation increased for the first time since FY 2013 but was still 16 percent lower than the historical high of 47.6 million set in FY 2013 (figure 3).
- Per person benefits—including emergency allotments—averaged \$154.99 per month, 19 percent higher than the previous fiscal year.
- Federal spending on SNAP totaled \$78.9 billion, 31 percent more than the previous fiscal year. Of this amount, \$59.4 billion funded regular SNAP benefits, \$14.6 billion funded emergency SNAP allotments, and the remaining \$4.9 billion funded the Federal share of administrative costs and other expenses. Spending on the program increased for the first time since FY 2013 but was still 10 percent lower than the inflation-adjusted historical high of \$87.7 billion set in FY 2013 (\$79.9 billion in 2013 dollars) (figure 3).
- Trends in monthly participation and benefits per person were similar to FY 2019 prior to March 2020. Growth in participation and benefits in FY 2020 was due to increases in the second half of the fiscal year (see box, “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Benefits in FY 2020”).
- Approximately 12 percent of the U.S. population participated in SNAP in an average month, 1.2 percentage points higher than the previous fiscal year (see box, “Share of U.S. Resident Population Participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program”).

Figure 3

SNAP average monthly participation and inflation-adjusted annual program expenditures, FY 2000–20

Participation and inflation-adjusted expenditures rose for the first time since FY 2013



Note: FY 2020 figures based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021. Expenditures in 2020 dollars, using the Personal Consumption Expenditures price index, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

FY = Fiscal year; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

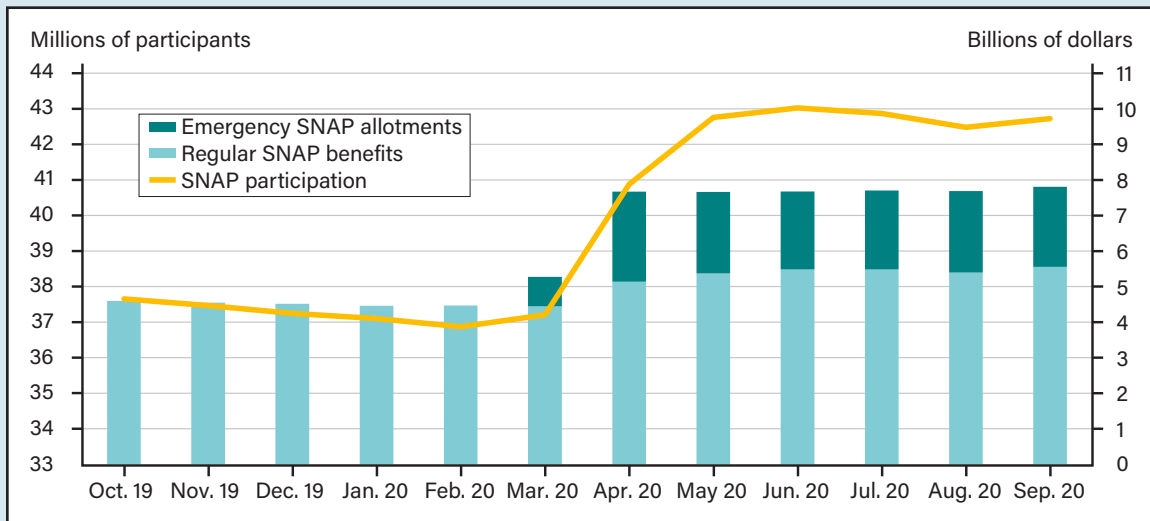
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Participation and Benefits in FY 2020

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation and benefit levels were mostly in line with the previous fiscal year (FY) in the first half of FY 2020, reflecting continued economic expansion. From October 2019 through March 2020, participation in SNAP averaged 37.3 million people per month, or about 11.3 percent of U.S. residents. Benefits (including emergency allotments in March) totaled \$27.9 billion. Per person benefits averaged \$124.61 per month.

The economic downturn and Federal pandemic response collectively resulted in higher SNAP participation and benefits through the rest of the fiscal year. From April through September 2020, participation in SNAP averaged 42.5 million people per month, or about 12.9 percent of U.S. residents—an increase of 14 percent from the first half of FY 2020. On average, 25.5 million—or 60 percent—of these people received emergency allotments. The remainder were already receiving the maximum amount for their household size or did not receive emergency allotments due to limited interruptions in their issuance in some States. Benefits totaled \$46.2 billion, up 66 percent from the first half of FY 2020. Emergency allotments accounted for \$13.8 billion—or 30 percent—of this amount. Per person benefits averaged \$181.37 per month, up 46 percent from the first half of FY 2020. Regular SNAP benefits averaged \$127.29 per person, while emergency allotments averaged \$54.08 per person.

Monthly SNAP participation and benefits, FY 2020



Note: Figure based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021. SNAP participation and benefits shown in this figure and discussed in this box include only regular ongoing SNAP benefits and emergency allotments; totals exclude Disaster-SNAP and replacements.

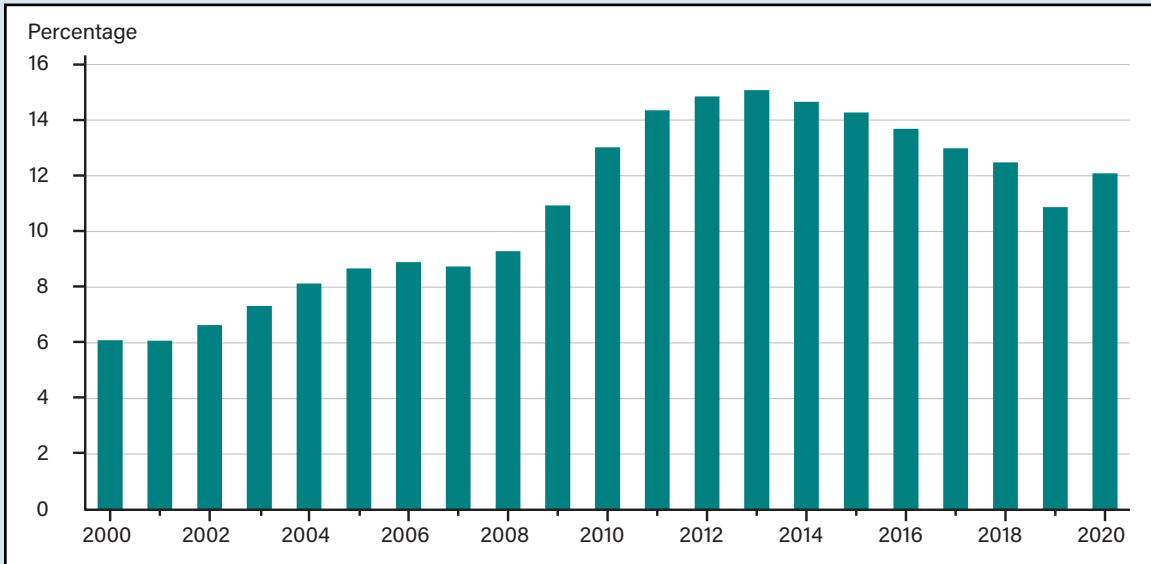
FY = Fiscal year; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

Share of U.S. Resident Population Participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

The share of the Nation's population participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the ratio of the number of SNAP participants to the number of U.S. residents. From 2000 to 2007, between 6 percent and 9 percent of U.S. residents participated in SNAP. As economic conditions deteriorated during and immediately after the Great Recession—which lasted from December 2007 to June 2009—the share of U.S. residents participating in SNAP rose, peaking in 2013 when over 15 percent of the U.S. population participated each month. From 2014 to 2019, SNAP's share of the population steadily fell each year as economic conditions improved. In fiscal year (FY) 2020, 12.1 percent of the population participated in SNAP. This is the first increase in the share since FY 2013, reflecting higher participation due to the pandemic-related economic downturn and subsequent Federal response.

Average monthly share of U.S. population participating in SNAP, FY 2000–20



Note: FY 2020 figures based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021.

FY = Fiscal year; SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data on SNAP participants from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, and data on U.S. resident population estimates from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

Participation continued to fall

The USDA Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) helps safeguard the health of low-income pregnant and postpartum women as well as infants and children up to 5 years of age who are at nutritional risk. It provides supplemental food packages, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and health care referrals at no cost to participants. WIC food packages are tailored to each group and designed to meet the nutritional needs of participants. To be eligible, applicants must meet categorical, residential, income, and nutrition risk criteria. A person who participates or who has certain family members who participate in other benefits programs such as SNAP, Medicaid, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families may automatically meet income eligibility requirements for WIC.

Prior to the pandemic, most WIC services—including certification, recertification, and issuance of food package vouchers—had to be provided in-person at WIC clinics. Participants were also required to redeem food package benefits in the presence of a cashier at WIC-approved retailers, most often grocery and convenience stores. In order to help State agencies meet the rising need for food and nutrition assistance during the pandemic and to support social distancing, several changes to the program were allowed by USDA:

- **Eligibility criteria and recertification:** USDA waivers allowed State agencies to conduct remote certifications for applicants and recertifications for WIC participants, to suspend medical documentation requirements for applicants who were unable to obtain documentation from their medical provider, and to extend certification periods for certain WIC participants by up to 3 months.
- **Benefits issuance:** USDA waivers allowed State agencies to suspend requirements that participants scheduled for nutrition education or a subsequent certification appointment pick up their food benefit in person and to extend the supply of benefits that WIC participants received at one time to a maximum of 4 months.
- **Food package substitutions:** USDA waivers allowed State agencies to accommodate pandemic-related food shortages by allowing participants to substitute specific food items. Examples include allowing for milk of any fat content and flexibility with package sizes (e.g., different sizes of whole grain breads, cheeses, and juices) regardless of the guidelines set for their food package.
- **Greater administrative flexibilities:** To expedite providing assistance to those in need, USDA waivers allowed State agencies to extend existing WIC vendor agreements, suspend routine monitoring of vendors, and conduct vendor trainings and local agency monitoring reviews remotely.

During FY 2020:

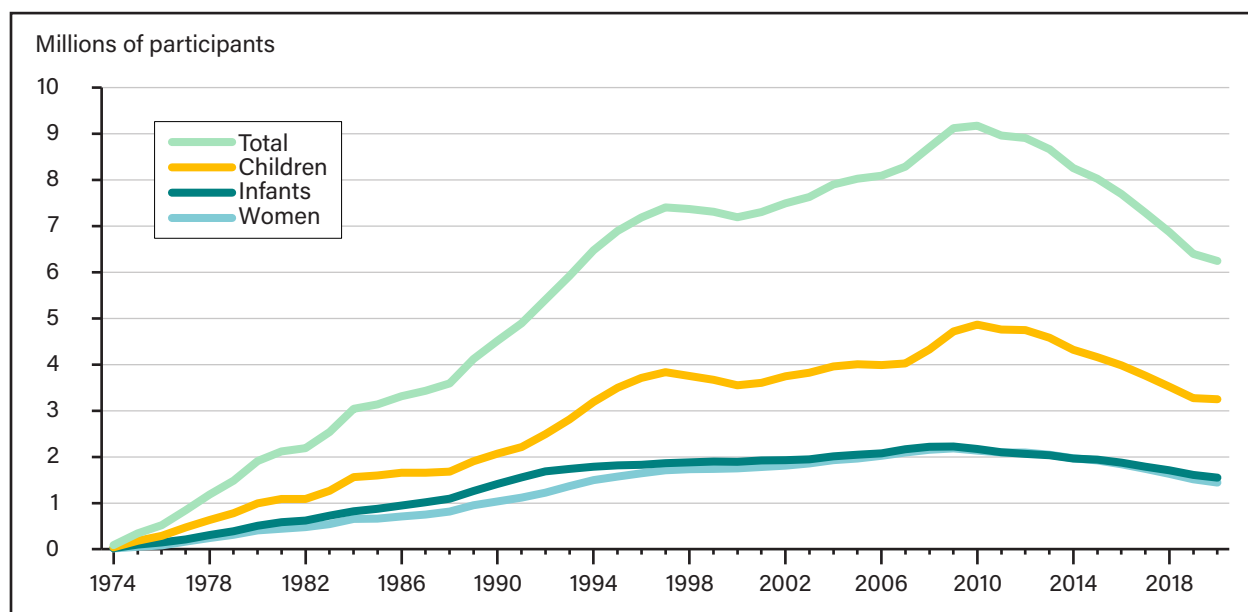
- Participation in WIC averaged 6.2 million people per month, 2 percent fewer than the previous fiscal year. Participation decreased in the first half of FY 2020 and increased in the second half following the onset of the pandemic. Monthly participation was 32 percent below the historical high of 9.2 million set in FY 2010 (figure 4).
- Children 1–4 years of age made up about half (52 percent) of all participants, while infants constituted 25 percent and women 23 percent.

- The number of women and infants participating in WIC fell by 5 and 4 percent from the previous fiscal year, respectively, whereas the number of child participants fell by only 1 percent. This marked the tenth consecutive fiscal year that participation fell for all three groups. Declines in participation were concentrated in the first half of the fiscal year, prior to the pandemic (see box, “Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Participation and Food Costs in FY 2020”).
- Food costs per person averaged \$38.22 per month, the lowest in program history after accounting for inflation and a \$2.68 (or 7-percent) decrease from the prior fiscal year. This was the second largest single-year decrease in the program’s history. Food costs per person were lowest in May 2020 (see box, “Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Participation and Food Costs in FY 2020”).
- Federal spending on WIC totaled \$4.9 billion, 6 percent less than the previous fiscal year and 39 percent less than the inflation-adjusted historical high of \$8.1 billion set in FY 2011 (\$7.2 billion in 2011 dollars).

Figure 4

Average monthly WIC participation by group, FY 1974–2020

Participation for all three participant groups fell for the tenth consecutive year in FY 2020



Note: FY 2020 figures based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021.

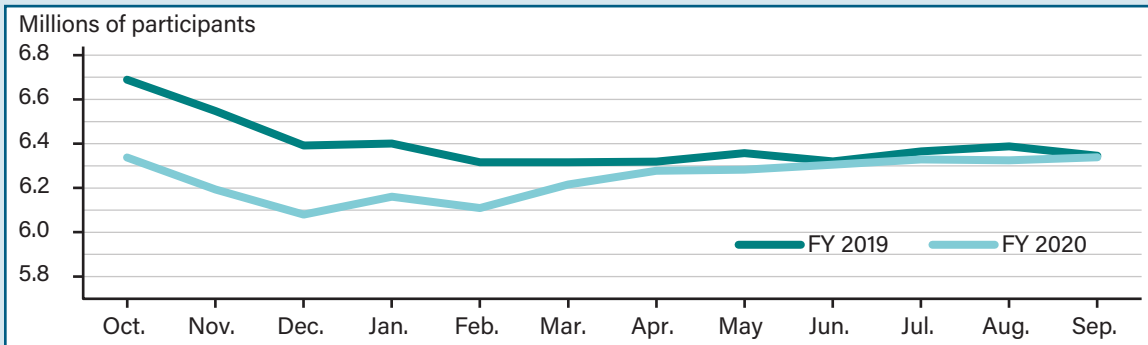
FY = Fiscal year; WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children Participation and Food Costs in FY 2020

Participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) increased in the months following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although WIC participation was lower in fiscal year (FY) 2020 compared to FY 2019 overall, participation decreased from October 2019 through February 2020, much like the prior year, and then increased from March through September 2020.

Monthly participation in WIC, FY 2019 and FY 2020



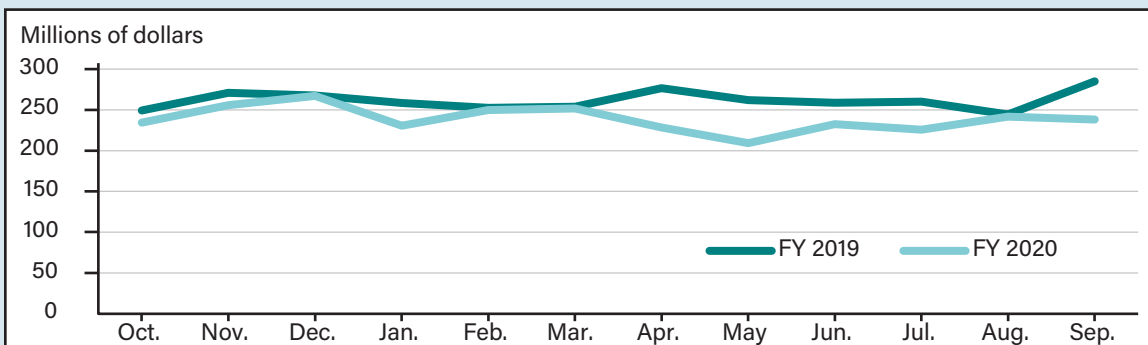
Note: Figure based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021.

FY = Fiscal year; WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

USDA spending on WIC food package redemptions, referred to as WIC food costs, declined in the months following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Food costs in the second half of FY 2020 were lower than food costs in the second half of FY 2019, despite similar rates of participation over the same months in both years. Food costs averaged \$248 million per month from October 2019 to February 2020 and \$229 million per month from March to September 2020. They were the lowest in May 2020 at \$209 million.

Monthly WIC food costs, FY 2019 and FY 2020



Note: Figure based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021.

FY = Fiscal year; WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

Child Nutrition Programs

Total number of meals served across the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program declined

In a typical year, the three largest USDA child nutrition programs are the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). In FY 2020, expenditures on the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) exceeded those on either SBP or CACFP.

NSLP and SBP provide nutritious meals and snacks at low or no cost to children in participating schools and childcare centers. Schools participating in the programs receive Federal subsidies for reimbursable meals served and some commodities (or cash in lieu of commodities) from USDA. In return, they must serve breakfasts and lunches that meet Federal nutrition requirements and offer free or reduced-price meals to qualifying students. While all students can participate in the programs, meals are provided through a three-tiered system wherein those from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty line are eligible for free meals, those from families with incomes between 130 and 185 percent are eligible for reduced-price meals, and those from families with incomes over 185 percent pay full price, though these meals are also subsidized to a small extent. Additionally, schools can provide free meals to all students regardless of their household income through several provisions. Most notably, the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) allows an individual school, groups of schools, or school districts in low-income areas to provide school meals at no charge to all students if at least 40 percent are directly certified to be categorically eligible for a free lunch through participation in SNAP or other specific means-tested programs.

CACFP subsidizes healthy meals and snacks in participating childcare centers, daycare homes, and adult daycare facilities. The program primarily serves children and youth, as well as disabled or elderly adults in adult daycare facilities. All participating providers must be licensed or approved according to Federal, State, or local standards. Care providers are reimbursed for each type of qualifying meal they serve (breakfast, lunch, dinner, or snack). In addition to cash reimbursements, USDA makes donated foods, or cash in-lieu of donated foods, available to institutions participating in CACFP.

SFSP allows schools and other participating organizations—such as community centers, churches, camps, or other public sites where children gather—to provide free meals to children when school is not in session (e.g., summer months) or during unanticipated school closures between October and April. Schools operating on a continuous year calendar may serve meals through SFSP when school is out of session for 15 days or more. SFSP operates in areas or sites where at least 50 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price school meals.

The onset of the pandemic forced the closure of many schools and child and adult care centers nationwide, disrupting the provision of meals through NSLP, SBP, and CACFP. By the end of FY 2020, many remained closed for in-person learning while some schools adopted a variety of hybrid learning models that allowed for partial reopening. In response to these disruptions, USDA allowed program changes to facilitate the continued provision of meals to those in need. These included:

- **Changes to program rules:** USDA waived Federal requirements pertaining to meal patterns, meal-times, non-congregate feeding, parent or guardian meal pick-up, wellness programs, after school activities, and “offer versus serve” guidelines.
- **Free meals:** NSLP’s Seamless Summer Option (which functions like SFSP), as well as SFSP, were expanded to provide free meals to students in all areas, regardless of income, and throughout the year.

- **Greater administrative flexibilities:** To allow schools and child and adult care centers to prioritize the service of safe, accessible meals during the pandemic, USDA extended or waived a range of Federal reporting and onsite monitoring requirements. These included waivers for meal pattern and food service management requirements, among other changes.

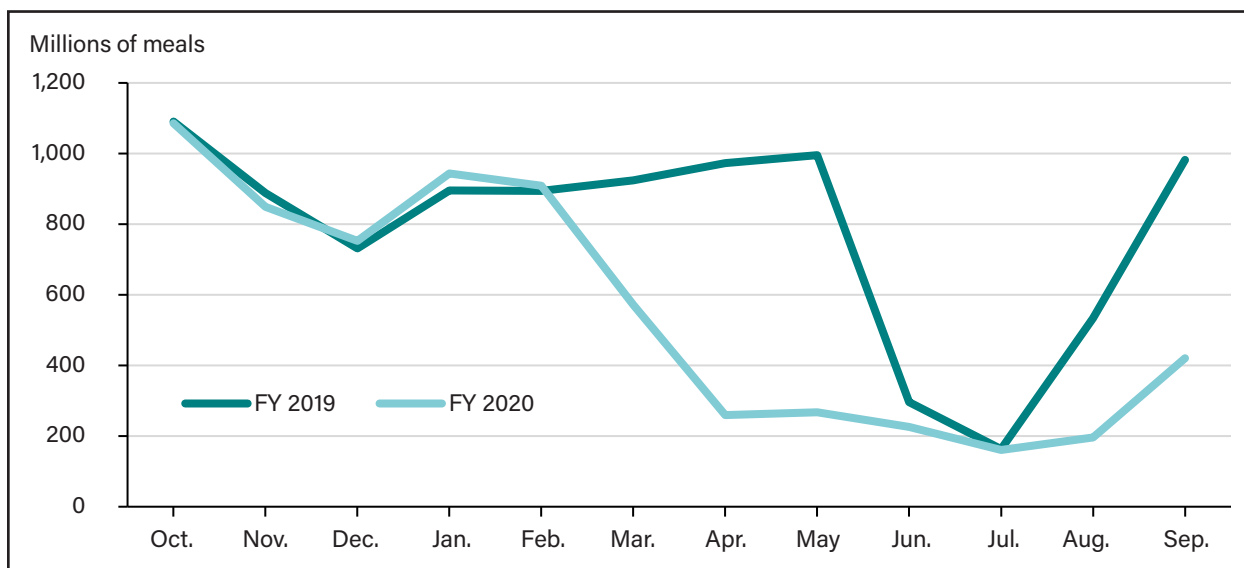
During FY 2020:

- On average, 22.6 and 12.4 million children participated in NSLP and SBP each school day, respectively. Compared to FY 2019, NSLP participation declined by 23 percent and SBP participation by 16 percent. Reflecting the drop in participation, the total number of meals served across the NSLP and SBP throughout the fiscal year declined by 33 percent and 25 percent relative to FY 2019, respectively.
- The number of meals served through CACFP totaled about 1.6 billion in FY 2020, a decline of 23 percent compared to FY 2019.
- Monthly participation in NSLP and SBP prior to March—when many schools and child and adult care facilities began limiting their operations—averaged 29.7 million and 15.1 million, respectively, and was similar to FY 2019. Of these participants, 73.1 percent received a free or reduced-price lunch and 84.1 percent received a free or reduced-price breakfast, both down about 1 percentage point relative to the same period the previous year. Trends in the number of meals served across NSLP, SBP, and CACFP were also similar to FY 2019 prior to March (figure 5).
- Declines in participation and meals served across NSLP, SBP, and CACFP translated to lower spending on the programs. Expenditures on NSLP declined from \$14.2 billion to \$10.4 billion (-27 percent), on SBP from \$4.5 billion to \$3.6 billion (-21 percent), and on CACFP from \$3.7 billion to \$3.0 billion (-19 percent).
- Participation in, the number of meals served through, and expenditures on SFSP increased, reflecting a shift in meal provision away from NSLP, SBP, and CACFP beginning in March. Participation in SFSP was 4.7 million in July (when participation in the program typically peaks), 76 percent higher than in July of FY 2019. In total, throughout FY 2020, the program served 1.3 billion meals at a cost of \$4.1 billion. The number of meals served and expenditures on the program were nearly 9 times greater than the previous year.
- In total, 7.9 billion meals were served across all 4 programs, down from 9.5 billion the prior year and the lowest number since FY 2001 (figure 6).

COVID-19 and School Meals

The closure of schools and need for social distancing presented significant challenges to the distribution of meals despite increased flexibilities afforded by USDA. Substantial variation existed across school districts in how meals were distributed, hours of operation, number of meal hubs available, and eligibility. Some districts, for example, opted to deliver meals to students at their home or at specified drop-off sites, while others designated certain schools as hubs where meals could be picked up by students, parents, or legal guardians during specific hours throughout the week. To reduce the need for multiple visits, some distributed several days' worth of meals at a time. Eligibility for school meals also varied. In some districts, meals were only provided to, or for, students. In others, all children, adolescents, and adults were eligible for meals, with the adult meals being funded through sources other than the Federal school meal programs.

Figure 5
Total meals served across NSLP, SBP, and CACFP, FY 2019 and FY 2020

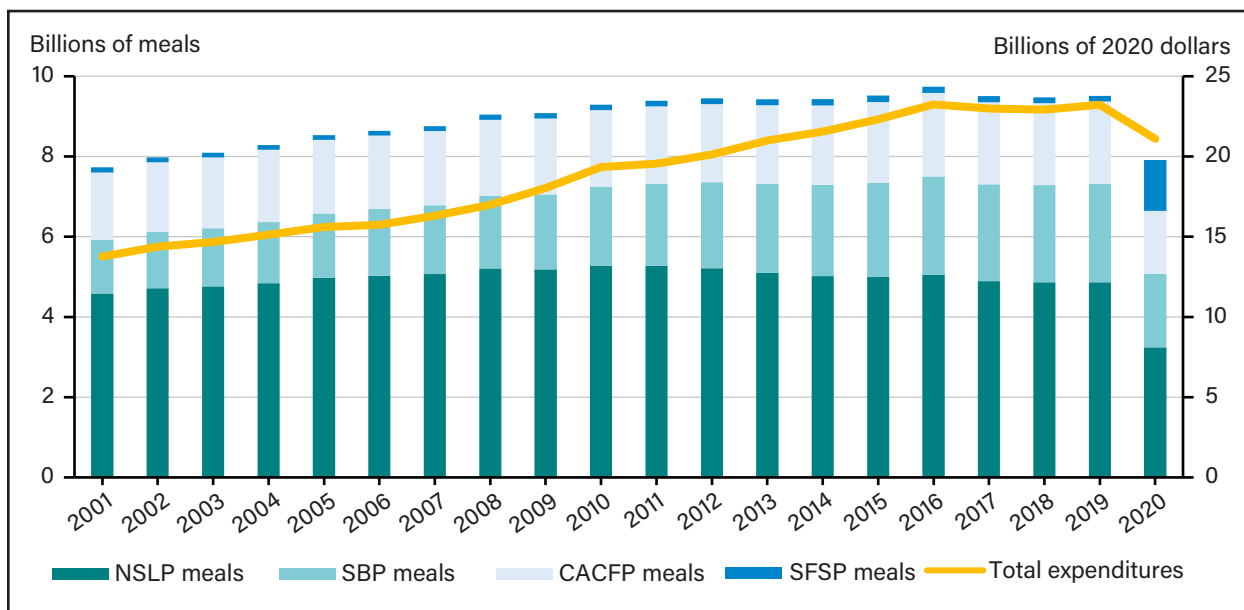


Note: Figure based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021. Most schools are closed for instruction in June and July.

FY = Fiscal year; NSLP = National School Lunch Program; SBP = School Breakfast Program; CACFP = Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

Figure 6
Total meals served and total expenditures across NSLP, SBP, CACFP, and SFSP, FY 2001–20



Note: FY 2020 figures based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021. Expenditures in billions of 2020 dollars, adjusted using the Personal Consumption Expenditures price index, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

FY = Fiscal year; NSLP = National School Lunch Program; SBP = School Breakfast Program; CACFP = Child and Adult Care Food Program; SFSP = Summer Food Service Program.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act provided States, DC, Guam, and the Virgin Islands the option of submitting requests to USDA for reimbursements to qualifying households for the value of school meals forgone due to COVID-19 related disruptions to in-person learning at school through a new program called Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT). To be eligible for P-EBT benefits, households must have had children who were receiving, or were newly eligible for, free or reduced-price school meals.

Within FY 2020, all States, DC, and the Virgin Islands submitted requests to provide P-EBT benefits for the value of meals missed during the 2019–20 school year, and 18 States (California, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, Montana, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Virginia), DC, and the Virgin Islands received extensions to provide benefits for meals missed during August and September of the 2020–21 school year. Most States issuing P-EBT did so in one lump-sum payment while others made multiple payments, and benefits were provided retroactively in cases where implementation delays hindered their immediate distribution. Initially set to expire at the end of FY 2020, the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act extended the program through September 2021. The law also expanded the program's coverage to include all U.S. territories, households with children attending schools operating under a hybrid learning model, and low-income households with children in childcare settings.

From March through September 2020, States reported issuing about \$10.7 billion in P-EBT benefits.

Farmers to Families Food Box Program

Using flexibilities afforded by the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, USDA also created the Farmers to Families Food Box Program. Through this program, USDA purchased fresh produce, dairy, and meat products from U.S.-based producers of all sizes, which distributors packaged into family-sized boxes and transported to food banks and other charitable organizations for distribution to households in need. From May through September of FY 2020, USDA purchased nearly \$2.5 billion in food products, amounting to about 92 million food boxes.

USDA, ERS Report Summary: Prevalence of Food Insecurity

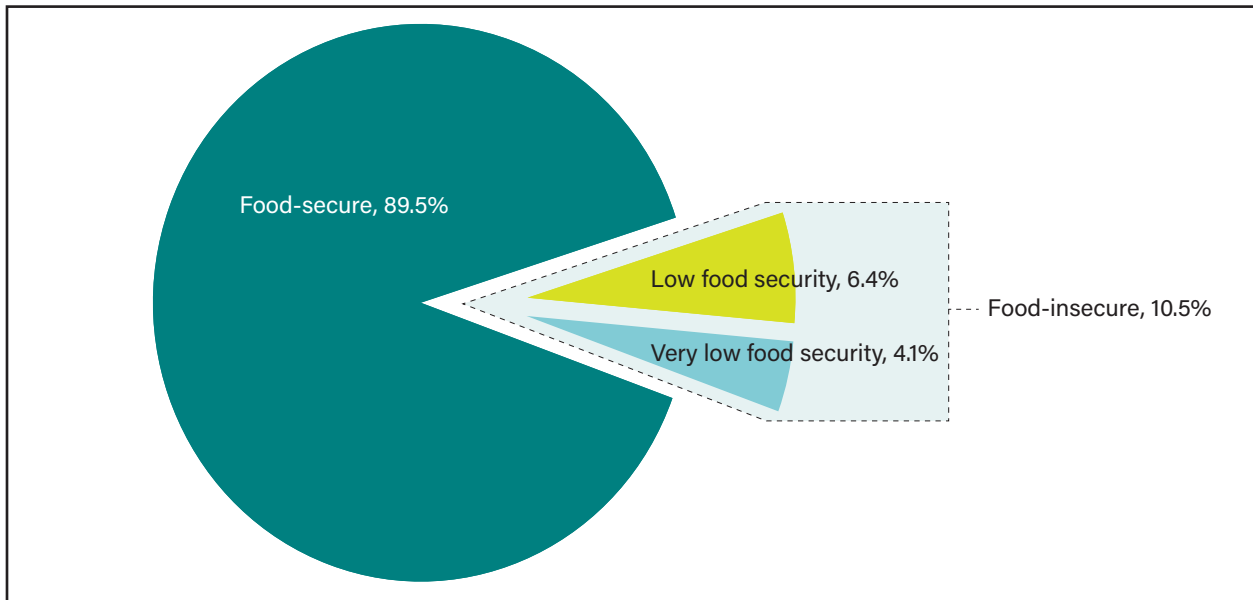
Households in the United States are categorized as food secure if all members have consistent and dependable access to enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle. Households are food insecure if, at times during the year, they struggled to afford adequate food for one or more members. The latter are further classified as having either low food security or very low food security. In households with very low food security, the eating patterns of one or more household members are disrupted and their food intake reduced at some point during the year. USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs increase food security by providing low-income households access to food, a healthy diet, and nutrition education.

USDA monitors household food insecurity in the United States through an annual nationally representative survey conducted in December, sponsored by USDA, ERS. A household's food security status is based on responses to a questionnaire about experiences and behaviors relating to food security in the prior 12 months, such as being unable to afford balanced meals or being hungry due to a lack of money for food. Results from the survey are published in annual USDA, ERS reports. The most recent uses data covering 34,334 sample households from the December 2019 survey and covers the period prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn.

Understanding trends in food insecurity provides historical context for developments in FY 2020. During 2019:

- An estimated 10.5 percent (13.7 million) of U.S. households were food insecure at least some time during the year, down from a high of 14.9 percent in 2011 and 11.1 percent in 2018. The prevalence of food insecurity fell significantly below the pre-recession level of 11.1 percent in 2007 for the first time since then (table 2).
- A total of 4.1 percent of all households (5.3 million households) had very low food security, not statistically different from the 4.3 percent in 2018 (figure 7). On average, households classified as having very low food security experienced the condition in 7 months of the year, for 1 to 7 days of the month.
- Among households with children under age 18, 13.6 percent (5.1 million households) were food insecure at some time during 2019, not statistically different from 13.9 percent in 2018. In about half of food-insecure households with children, only adults were food insecure (7.1 percent of households with children); in the rest (6.5 percent of households with children), children were also food insecure. In 0.6 percent of households with children (213,000 households), food insecurity was so severe that caregivers reported that children were hungry, skipped a meal, or did not eat for a whole day at some point during the year because there was not enough money for food.
- Rates of food insecurity were higher than the national average for households with income near or below the Federal poverty guidelines, all households with children (especially those headed by single women or single men), adults living alone, Black- and Hispanic-headed households, and households in principal cities and nonmetropolitan areas.
- The typical food-secure household spent 24 percent more on food than the typical food-insecure household of the same size and composition.
- About 58 percent of food-insecure households in the month before the survey participated in one or more of the three largest food and nutrition assistance programs—SNAP, WIC, and NSLP (receiving free or reduced-price lunch).

Figure 7
Food security status of U.S. households, 2019



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2019*, ERR-275, September 2020.

Table 2
U.S. food security at a glance, 2018-19

	2018		2019	
	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent
All households	129,245	100	129,621	100
Food-secure households	114,934	88.9	115,959	89.5
Food-insecure households	14,311	11.1	13,662	10.5
With low food security	8,730	6.8	8,340	6.4
With very low food security	5,581	4.3	5,322	4.1
All households with children	37,612	100	37,614	100
Food-secure households	32,369	86.1	32,480	86.4
Food-insecure households	5,243	13.9	5,134	13.6
With food-insecure children	2,658	7.1	2,434	6.5
With very low food security among children	220	0.6	213	0.6

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2019*, ERR-275, September 2020.

Economic and Social Indicators Related to Participation in Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs

Economic and demographic conditions affect participation in and spending on food and nutrition assistance programs by influencing the sizes of the eligible populations, the rates of participation among eligible people, and benefit levels.

Since USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs are means-tested, the number of people eligible to participate in the programs is linked to the strength of the economy. In particular, SNAP caseloads and expenditures are strongly associated with economic conditions. SNAP is one of the Nation's primary countercyclical programs, expanding during economic downturns and contracting during periods of economic growth. The number of SNAP participants generally tracks the number of unemployed people and the number of people in poverty (figure 8). However, improvement in economic conditions during the early stages of recovery may take longer to be felt by low-wage workers who are more likely to receive SNAP benefits, resulting in a lagged reduction in SNAP participation relative to reductions in unemployment.

In general, the U.S. economy expanded between 2017 and 2019 before contracting in 2020 (table 3). For example:

- The number of employed persons grew by 4.2 million between 2017 and 2019 before decreasing by 9.7 million in 2020. Similarly, the number of unemployed persons had declined by 1 million before increasing by 6.9 million.
- The unemployment rate grew to 8.1 percent in 2020, reversing 9 consecutive years of declining unemployment rates.
- After stabilizing around 63 percent since 2015, the labor force participation rate declined to 61.8 percent in 2020.

Additionally, the cost of food increased in 2020:

- The Consumer Price Index (CPI)—an indicator used to measure inflation—for food rose by 3.4 percent overall, the largest change since the 3.7 percent increase in 2011.

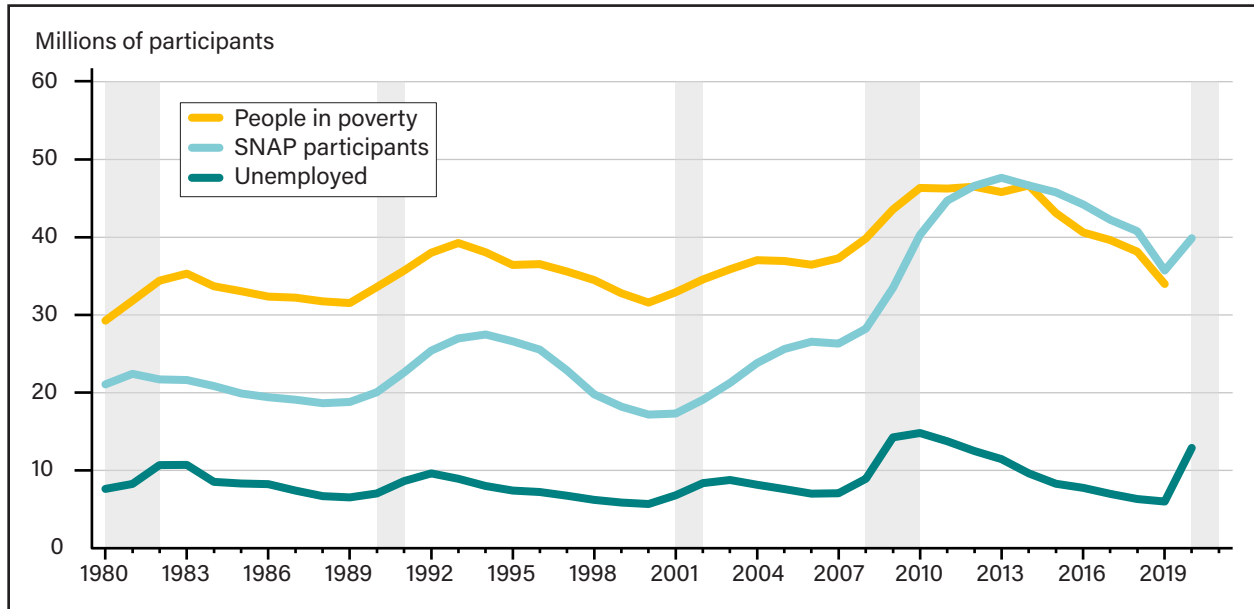
In line with the economic expansion prior to the pandemic, the latest income and poverty data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census indicate that in 2019:

- There were 33.9 million people, including 10.5 million children, living in households with income below the poverty line. Overall, the poverty rate of 10.9 percent was lower than the pre-Great Recession level of 12.5 percent in 2007.

Figure 8

Number of SNAP participants, unemployed, and people in poverty, 1980–2020

Economic conditions influence SNAP participation



Note: 2020 figures for SNAP participants based on preliminary data from the September 2020 Program Information Report (Key-data) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service in January 2021. Grey vertical bars indicate recessions (January–July 1980; July 1981–November 1982; July 1990–March 1991; March–November 2001; December 2007–June 2009; February–April 2020).

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service; U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Table 3

Selected economic and demographic indicators, 2017–20

Indicator	2017	2018	2019	2020
Population in July (millions)	325	326.7	328.2	329.9
Births (millions)	3.9	3.8	3.7	na
School enrollment (millions)*	56.4	56.4	56.4	56.4
Prekindergarten-grade 8	39.7	39.7	39.6	39.5
Grades 9–12	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.9
Employed persons (millions)	153.3	155.8	157.5	147.8
Unemployed persons (millions)	7.0	6.3	6.0	12.9
Unemployment rate (percent)	4.4	3.9	3.7	8.1
Labor force participation rate (percent)	62.9	62.9	63.1	61.8
Persons in poverty (millions)	39.698	38.146	33.984	na
Poverty rate (percent)	12.3	11.8	10.9	na
Children in poverty (millions)	12.808	11.869	10.466	na
Poverty rate for children (under 18)	17.5	16.2	14.1	na
Median household income (2019 dollars)	\$64,005	\$64,324	\$68,703	na
CPI for all items (annual percent change)	2.1	2.4	1.8	1.2
CPI for food (annual percent change)	0.9	1.4	1.9	3.4
CPI for food at home	-0.2	0.4	0.9	3.5
CPI for food away from home	2.3	2.6	3.1	3.4

Note: *School enrollment figures for 2019 and 2020 are projections.

CPI = Consumer Price Index. na = data not available.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (population, poverty, and household income); National Center for Health Statistics (births); National Center for Education Statistics (school enrollment); and the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (employment, unemployment, labor force participation, and CPI).

USDA, ERS Research Update

At USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS), research related to domestic food and nutrition assistance is conducted internally by staff as well as through a portfolio of USDA, ERS-funded extramural research projects and partnerships. USDA, ERS has compiled a database of more than 1,100 peer-reviewed reports based on this research (searchable on the USDA, ERS website by title, author, year of publication, and topic area). In response to the pandemic, USDA, ERS also began a COVID-19 Working Paper series to publicly release preliminary analyses relevant to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America in a timely manner. Among recently released USDA, ERS COVID-19 working papers, one examined the growth in combined SNAP and P-EBT redemptions during the pandemic in FY 2020.

COVID-19 Working Paper Summary: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Redemptions During the Coronavirus Pandemic

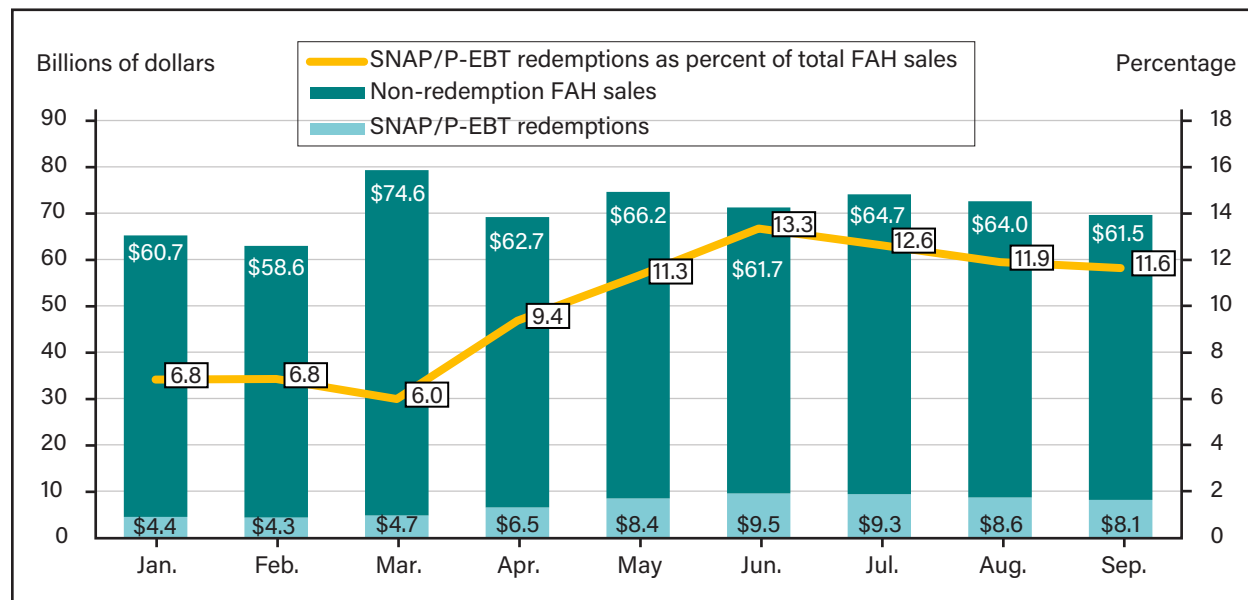
Limited precedent is available to understand growth in food and nutrition assistance benefits redeemed during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the sharp deterioration of economic conditions and the Federal pandemic response. A recent USDA, ERS study quantifies this growth through September 2020 using January 2021 data from the Store Tracking and Redemption System (STARS). The study examines monthly patterns in the value of combined SNAP and P-EBT benefit redemptions, in total and at specific types of retail stores, and compares these patterns during the pandemic to previous years.

The value of SNAP and P-EBT benefits redeemed doubled in the first 3 months of the pandemic, increasing from \$4.7 billion in March 2020 to a peak of \$9.5 billion in June 2020. Benefit redemptions peaked in June and fell the next 3 months to \$8.1 billion in September 2020—a decline roughly three-tenths of the size of the increase from March to June. Benefit redemptions in April through September 2020 averaged \$8.4 billion per month—74 percent higher than the monthly average of \$4.8 billion during the same period from 2017–19. The increase in redemptions reflected increases in participation and average household benefits, including the introduction of P-EBT.

The share of food-at-home (FAH) expenditures attributable to the redemption of SNAP and P-EBT benefits also increased during the pandemic (figure 9). SNAP benefits accounted for about 6.8 percent of FAH expenditures in January and February 2020. By June 2020, SNAP and P-EBT benefits accounted for 13.3 percent of FAH expenditures, and by September 2020, they accounted for 11.6 percent. FAH expenditures grew during the pandemic, and SNAP and P-EBT appear to have played a larger role in providing U.S. residents with resources to purchase food during this period.

Figure 9

Monthly SNAP and P-EBT redemptions as a percentage of food-at-home expenditures, January–September 2020



Note: Redemptions refers to the nominal value of combined SNAP and P-EBT redemptions. FAH expenditures include nominal FAH sales (including taxes and tips) and exclude FAH acquisition from home production and donations.

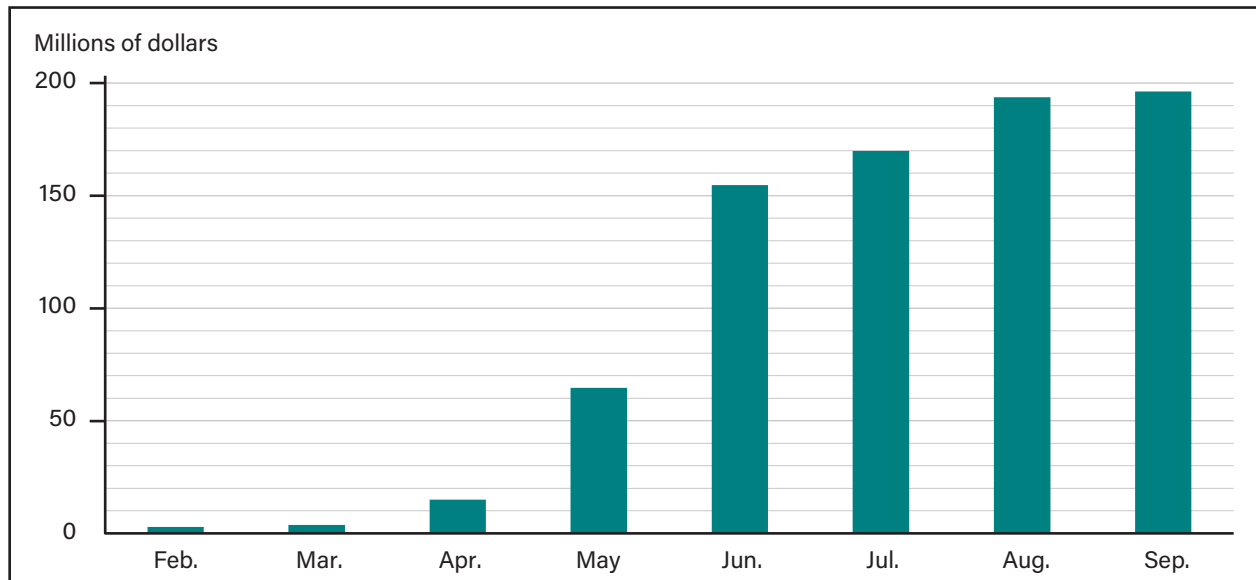
SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; P-EBT = Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer; FAH = food-at-home.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, *COVID-19 Working Paper: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Redemptions during the Coronavirus Pandemic*, AP-089, USDA, Economic Research Service, February 2021.

The USDA, ERS study also found that the shares of redemptions made at different retail store types changed during the pandemic. The average shares of benefits redeemed slightly increased at super stores and decreased at supermarkets/grocery stores during the pandemic. The share redeemed at convenience and combination grocery stores fell substantially from 11.5 percent during April to September 2019 to 10.3 percent during the same period in 2020. These changes in redemption shares may reflect changes in shopping behaviors during the pandemic as well as the long-term trend toward more benefits redeemed at super stores. They also reflect the increasing share of benefits redeemed online. The value of online redemptions increased each month from only \$3 million in February 2020 to \$196 million in September 2020 (figure 10). Despite this rapid growth, online transactions still made up a small share of total redemptions—2.4 percent in September.

Figure 10

Monthly online SNAP and P-EBT redemptions, February–September 2020



Note: Redemptions refers to the nominal value of combined SNAP and P-EBT redemptions.

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; P-EBT = Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, *COVID-19 Working Paper: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer Redemptions during the Coronavirus Pandemic*, AP-089, USDA, Economic Research Service, February 2021.

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