



The Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape: Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report

Leslie Hodges and Jordan W. Jones



The U.S. Department of Agriculture administers 16 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 2025 Annual Report

Leslie Hodges and Jordan W. Jones

Abstract

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers 16 domestic food and nutrition assistance programs that affect the lives of millions of people and represent roughly two-thirds of USDA's annual budget. Together, these programs accounted for \$147.9 billion in USDA spending in fiscal year (FY) 2025 (October 1, 2024–September 30, 2025). This report provides an overview of program trends and policy changes in USDA's largest domestic food and nutrition assistance programs through FY 2025 based on preliminary data from the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). It also includes a summary of recent USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) research reports relevant to these programs.

Keywords: food and nutrition assistance programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), child nutrition programs, fiscal year 2025 spending

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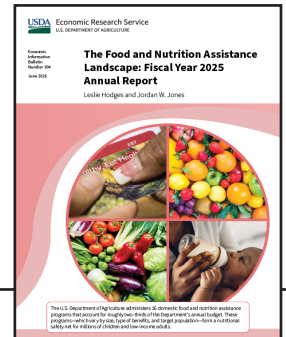
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A report summary from the Economic Research Service

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Key Points

- Total Federal spending on USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs increased by 1.5 percent from \$145.6 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2024 to \$147.9 billion in FY 2025. Adjusted for inflation, annual spending was 1.1 percent lower than in FY 2024.
- Spending on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) totaled \$101.7 billion in FY 2025, more than two-thirds of total USDA food and nutrition assistance spending. SNAP spending was up 2 percent from FY 2024. SNAP participation increased by 1 percent to an average of 42.1 million people per month.
- Participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) averaged 6.9 million women, infants, and children per month in FY 2025, and participation among all three groups increased from FY 2024. WIC spending totaled \$7.7 billion, up 6 percent from FY 2024, reflecting increases in participation (2 percent) and food costs per participant (6 percent) from FY 2024.
- In FY 2025, 9.3 billion meals were 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), about the same number of meals as in FY 2024. Combined spending on these programs totaled \$29.9 billion, up 5 percent from FY 2024.
- FY 2025 was the second year of operation of the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (Summer EBT) Program. Spending on Summer EBT totaled \$2.7 billion in FY 2025, down 7 percent from FY 2024.

Why Does This Matter?

USDA administers 16 domestic food and nutrition assistance programs that affect the lives of millions of people and account for roughly two-thirds of USDA's annual budget. These programs include SNAP, WIC, the school meal programs, and other smaller programs. Over a typical year, about one in four people in the United States participates in at least one of these programs. This annual report provides updated information that can be used to monitor

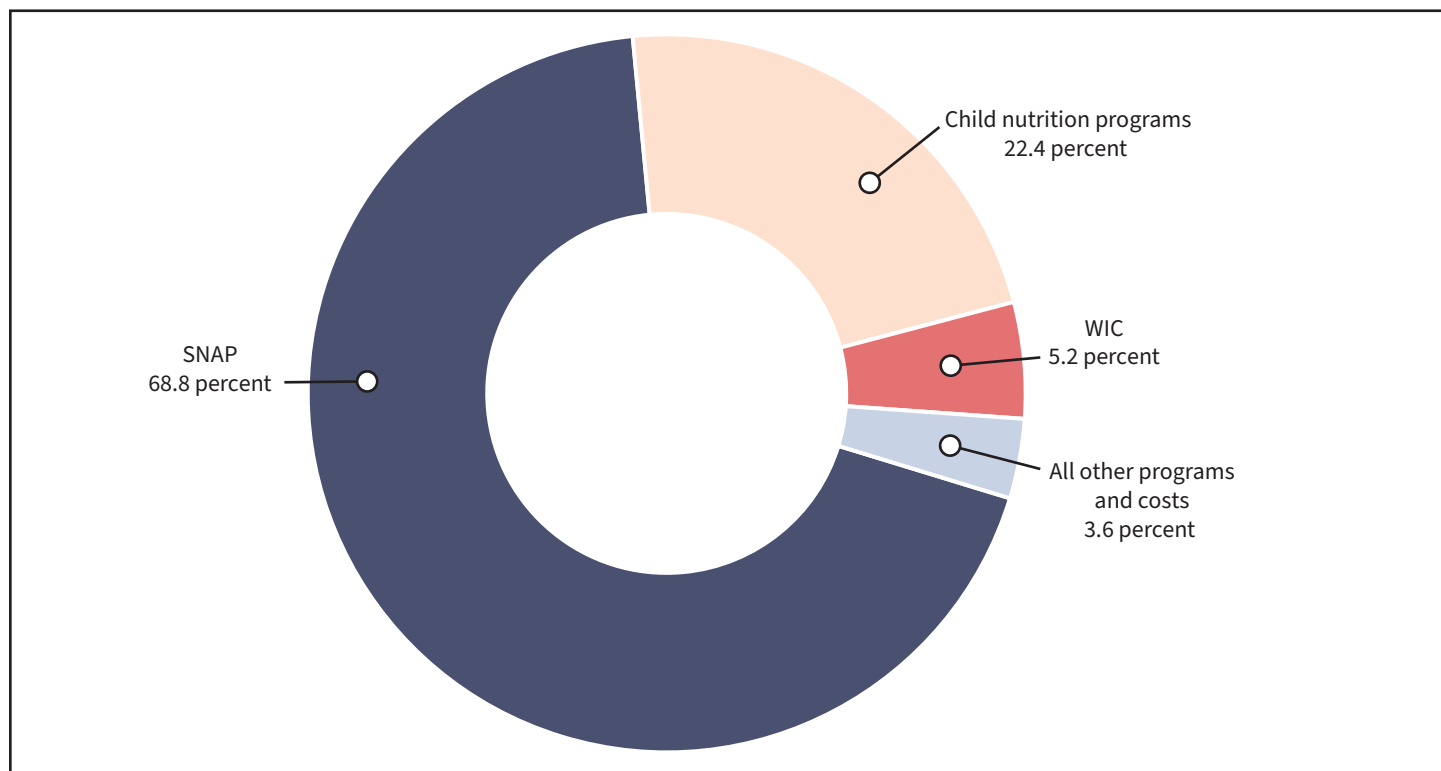
the changing landscape for USDA's largest domestic food and nutrition assistance programs, including trends in program participation and spending, relevant policy changes, and trends in economic and social indicators that affect these programs. In addition, this report includes a summary of recent USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) research relevant to these programs.

A Few More Details

We used preliminary data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to examine program trends through FY 2025. We compared spending amounts to previous years using nominal dollar values when considering a shorter timespan or using inflation-adjusted dollars when looking back over a longer period of time. Program data for FY 2025 came from the October 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released in January 2026. Program data for FY 2024 came from the September 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released in December 2025. Program data for prior fiscal years came from historical program data released in December 2025. We also examined economic and demographic indicators using supplementary data.

Share of USDA food and nutrition assistance spending by program, fiscal year 2025

SNAP accounted for more than two-thirds of spending



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; Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program; related State administrative expenses; and other related child nutrition costs.

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

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.

Glossary

Food and nutrition assistance program names:

- CACFP:** Child and Adult Care Food Program
- CSFP:** Commodity Supplemental Food Program
- FDPIR:** Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations
- NAP:** Nutrition Assistance Program for Territories
- NSIP:** Nutrition Services Incentive Program
- NSLP:** National School Lunch Program
- P-EBT:** Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer
- SBP:** School Breakfast Program
- SFSP:** Summer Food Service Program
- SMP:** Special Milk Program
- SNAP:** Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- SSO:** Seamless Summer Option of the National School Lunch Program
- Summer EBT:** Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program
- TEFAP:** The Emergency Food Assistance Program
- WIC:** Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

Other terms:

- ABAWD(s):** Able-bodied adult(s) without dependents
- Census Bureau:** U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census
- CEP:** Community Eligibility Provision
- COVID-19:** Coronavirus disease
- CPI:** Consumer Price Index
- CVV:** Cash-Value Voucher
- EBT:** Electronic Benefit Transfer
- ERS:** Economic Research Service
- FNS:** Food and Nutrition Service
- FY(s):** Fiscal year(s)
- ITO:** Indian Tribal Organization
- LIHEAP:** Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program
- OBBA:** One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Public Law No. 119-21)
- SNAP-Ed:** Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program
- SUA:** Standard utility allowance
- TFP:** Thrifty Food Plan
- USDA:** U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape: Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Report

Introduction

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers 16 domestic food and nutrition assistance programs, representing 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. Over the course of a typical year, about one in four people in the United States participates in at least one of these programs (USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), 2025).

USDA food and nutrition assistance programs are designed to support the nutrition and health of low-income families, school-aged children, and other populations. These programs support the direct purchase and distribution of U.S. commodities, they subsidize or reimburse the costs of meals provided by schools and care centers, and they provide benefits that households redeem at food retailers for groceries. Together these programs stimulate national spending and generate farm sector and other jobs in both rural and urban areas (Canning & Stacy, 2019; Pender et al., 2019; Vogel et al., 2021). Through these direct and indirect effects, these programs support households, U.S. agriculture, the food industry, and the economy at large.

We used preliminary data (subject to change as the data become final)¹ from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to examine spending and participation trends in USDA's largest food and nutrition assistance programs through fiscal year (FY) 2025 (October 1, 2024–September 30, 2025). These programs include 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); and the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program (Summer EBT).² We compared spending amounts in FY 2025 to previous years using either nominal dollar values (generally when considering a shorter timespan) or inflation-adjusted dollar values (generally when considering a longer timespan). Inflation adjustments to 2025 dollar values were made using the Personal Consumption Expenditures price index (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2026). FY 2025 data for USDA, FNS programs were from the October 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, FNS in January 2026 (USDA, FNS, 2026). FY 2024 data for USDA, FNS programs were from the September 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, FNS in December 2025 (USDA, FNS, 2025a).³ Data for prior fiscal

¹ Because preliminary data are sometimes revised, program participation and spending numbers reported for a given year in a previous report in this series may differ from the numbers reported for the same year in this report.

² This report does not focus on other USDA, FNS programs, including the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program; Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program; Patrick Leahy Farm to School Program; Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program; Special Milk Program; Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations; Commodity Supplemental Food Program; The Emergency Food Assistance Program; and USDA Foods in Schools. Interested readers can learn more about the programs on their respective USDA, FNS webpages.

³ We used two Keydata releases because the September 2025 Keydata contained known errors in program information for FY 2025. The October 2025 Keydata corrected most errors, but it does not include FY 2024 data. Accordingly, we use FY 2024 data from the September 2025 Keydata and FY 2025 data from the October 2025 Keydata.

years were from historical program data released by USDA, FNS in December 2025 (USDA, FNS, 2025b, 2025c, 2025d). We used publicly available supplementary data to report on economic and demographic indicators.

This report provides an overview of USDA food and nutrition assistance programs, documents program policy changes during FY 2025, and examines trends in economic and demographic indicators that provide context for program participation and spending. It also summarizes recent research from USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) relevant to these programs, focusing on a study which summarized trends in infant formula rebate contracts from 2013 to 2023 and estimated the impacts of changes in net wholesale prices on total infant formula costs to WIC (Hodges et al., 2025).

Total Food and Nutrition Assistance Spending

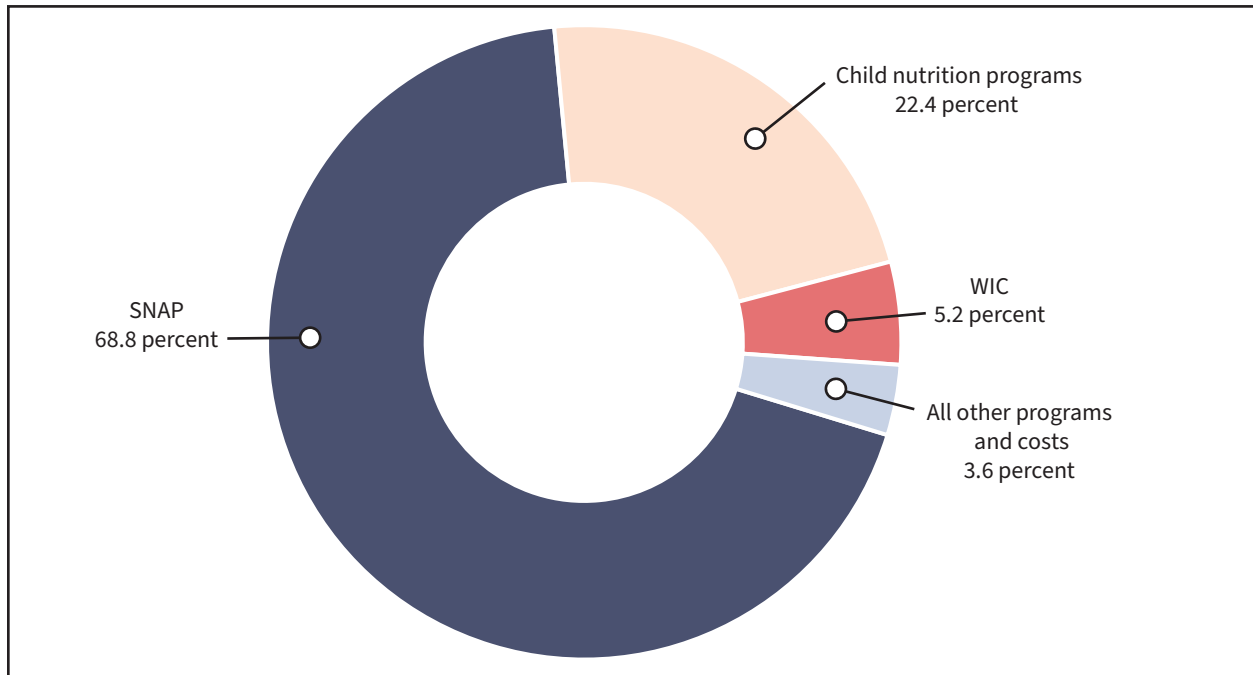
Inflation-adjusted Spending Fell for a Fourth Fiscal Year

In FY 2025, seven of the largest USDA nutrition assistance programs (by cost) were the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program (Summer EBT). Together, these programs accounted for about 96 percent of total USDA spending on domestic food and nutrition assistance (figure 1). SNAP accounted for about 69 percent of this spending, the five largest child nutrition programs together accounted for about 22 percent, and WIC accounted for about 5 percent.

Figure 1

Share of USDA food and nutrition assistance spending by program, fiscal year 2025

SNAP accounted for more than two-thirds of spending



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; Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program; related State administrative expenses; and other related child nutrition costs. All other programs and costs = nutrition family assistance grants to Puerto Rico, the Northern Marianas, and American Samoa; Commodity Supplemental Food Program; the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations; the Emergency Food Assistance Program; Disaster Feeding; the Nutrition Services Incentive Program; the Special Milk Program; the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program; and nutrition programs administration.

Note: The figure is based on preliminary data from the October 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in January 2026.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, FNS data.

Federal spending for USDA's domestic food and nutrition assistance programs totaled \$147.9 billion in FY 2025. Nominal spending in FY 2025 was 1.5 percent higher than the \$145.6 billion spent in FY 2024, driven by increases in spending on SNAP, WIC, and most child nutrition programs (table 1). Spending on Summer EBT decreased, as did spending on other programs and costs from \$6.5 billion in FY 2024 to \$5.3 billion in FY 2025 (table 1) (see box, "Spending on Other Programs and Costs in FY 2024–25").

Table 1

USDA food and nutrition assistance at a glance, fiscal years (FYs) 2024 and 2025

Program		FY 2024	FY 2025	Percent change
SNAP	Average monthly participation (millions of people)	41.7	42.1	1.0
	Participation rate (percent)	12.3	12.3	0.5
	Average benefit per person (dollars per month)	186.17	187.94	0.9
	Total spending (billion dollars)	99.8	101.7	1.9
WIC	Average monthly participation (millions of people)	6.7	6.9	2.4
	Women	1.5	1.5	1.7
	Infants	1.5	1.5	0.3
	Children	3.7	3.8	3.5
	Food cost per person (dollars per month)	61.05	64.71	6.0
	Total spending (billion dollars)	7.3	7.7	6.0
Child nutrition programs	Total spending (billion dollars)	31.9	33.1	3.7
NSLP	Total meals served (billions)	4.9	4.9	0.0
	Total spending (billion dollars)	17.8	18.9	5.7
SBP	Total meals served (billions)	2.6	2.6	0.5
	Total spending (billion dollars)	5.8	6.1	5.3
CACFP	Total meals served (billions)	1.7	1.7	-0.6
	Total spending (billion dollars)	4.1	4.2	3.3
SFSP	Total meals served (billions)	0.2	0.2	1.3
	Total spending (billion dollars)	0.7	0.7	4.9
Summer EBT	Total spending (billion dollars)	2.9	2.7	-7.0
State administrative and other expenses	Total spending (billion dollars)	0.7	0.6	-14.4
Other programs and costs	Total spending (billion dollars)	6.5	5.3	-19.0
All programs	Total spending (billion dollars)	145.6	147.9	1.5

SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. NSLP = National School Lunch Program. SBP = School Breakfast Program. CACFP = Child and Adult Care Food Program. SFSP = Summer Food Service Program. Summer EBT = Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program. Other programs and costs = nutrition family assistance grants to Puerto Rico, the Northern Marianas, and American Samoa; Commodity Supplemental Food Program; the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations; the Emergency Food Assistance Program; Disaster Feeding; the Nutrition Services Incentive Program; the Special Milk Program; the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program; and nutrition programs administration.

Note: The FY 2025 information is based on preliminary data from the October 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in January 2026. The FY 2024 information is based on preliminary data from the September 2025 Keydata released by USDA, FNS in December 2025. Dollar values are in nominal terms (i.e., not inflation-adjusted). Percent changes were calculated using unrounded values (not shown). The SNAP participation rate was calculated as average monthly participation divided by the estimated U.S. resident population in July. The average SNAP benefit per person was calculated as total annual benefits divided by average monthly participation, divided by 12. The WIC food cost per person was calculated as total food costs divided by average monthly participation, divided by 12.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, FNS data and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census population data.

Spending on Other Programs and Costs in Fiscal Years 2024–25

The “other programs and costs” category listed in table 1 and figure 1 includes spending on an array of other nutrition assistance, child nutrition, and food distribution programs beyond the major programs typically covered in depth in this report.

The Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) for Territories includes annual block grants funding food assistance in Puerto Rico, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands receive food assistance via the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP]). Spending on NAP totaled \$3.0 billion in FY 2025. FY 2025 spending on the Nutrition Assistance Program for Territories is estimated using available information in the October 2025 Keydata on benefit costs in Puerto Rico and the Northern Marianas.

Spending (million dollars) on other programs and costs, fiscal years (FYs) 2024 and 2025

Program	FY 2024	FY 2025	Percent change
Nutrition Assistance Program for Territories (NAP)	3,007.4	2,979.2	-0.9
Food distribution/donation programs			
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	384.6	350.0	-9.0
Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)	188.9	143.6	-23.9
The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and administrative expenses	2,430.3	1,660.7	-31.7
Ad hoc disaster assistance	0.0	0.1	NA
Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP)	2.2	2.7	18.0
Child nutrition programs			
Special Milk Program (SMP)	4.7	4.2	-9.6
Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT)	361.6	2.1	-99.4
Nutrition programs administration	168.7	163.9	-2.9
Total	6,548.4	5,306.5	-19.0

NA = not applicable; the percent change is undefined due to zero spending in FY 2024.

Note: The FY 2025 information is based on preliminary data from the October 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in January 2026. The FY 2024 information is based on preliminary data from the September 2025 Keydata released by USDA, FNS in December 2025. Dollar values are in nominal terms (i.e., not inflation-adjusted). Percent changes were calculated using unrounded values (not shown). FY 2025 spending on the Nutrition Assistance Program for Territories is estimated using available information in the October 2025 Keydata on benefit costs in Puerto Rico and the Northern Marianas.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, FNS data.

USDA’s food distribution programs for households include the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). CSFP provides supplementary food to low-income adults aged 60 or older. FDPIR provides supplementary food to income-eligible households living on Indian reservations and to Native Americans living in other designated areas. TEFAP provides supplementary food to low-income households at no cost via agencies selected by States—usually food banks, which distribute food to local organizations like food pantries and soup kitchens to distribute to eligible individuals. State agencies and/or Indian Tribal Organizations (ITOs) operate CSFP, FDPIR,

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and/or TEFAP with domestically grown and produced USDA Foods and administrative funding provided by USDA. USDA also supports disaster assistance on an ad hoc basis to provide USDA Foods to populations affected by natural disasters and other emergencies. USDA Foods refers to the foods purchased by USDA for distribution through nutrition assistance programs. USDA also donates commodities to the Nutrition Services Incentive Program (NSIP), which is a program administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Community Living. USDA spending on these food distribution programs totaled \$5.3 billion in FY 2025.

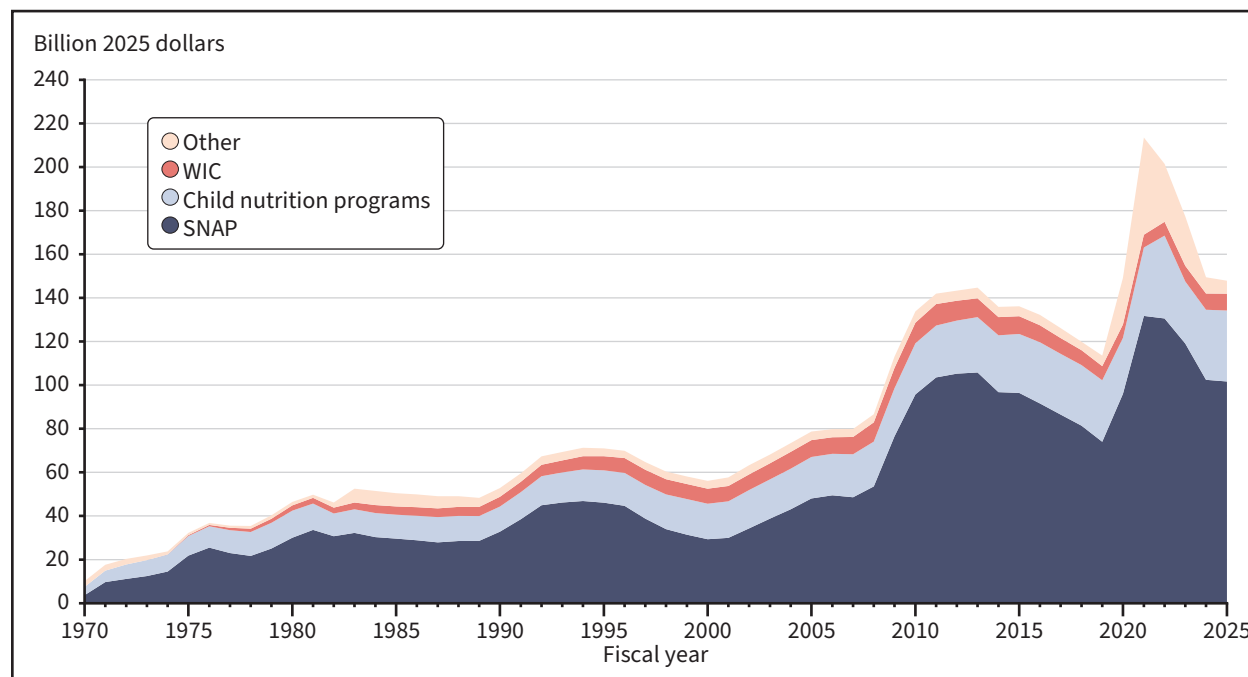
Other child nutrition-related program spending in FY 2025 included the Special Milk Program (SMP) and the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer Program (P-EBT). SMP provides milk to children who are without access to USDA school meal programs via their school or childcare institution. SMP spending totaled \$4.2 million in FY 2025. Participating schools are reimbursed by USDA for milk served through the program. Spending on P-EBT in FY 2025 was residual, as the program ended new benefit issuance in September 2023. FY 2025 spending on P-EBT was \$2.1 million compared to peak annual spending of \$28.4 billion in FY 2021 (Jones et al., 2022).

USDA spending on nutrition programs administration totaled \$163.9 million in fiscal year 2025—which includes those administrative costs not directly tied to the programs listed in table 1 or box table 1.

Figure 2

Inflation-adjusted USDA spending on food and nutrition assistance, fiscal years (FYs) 1970–2025

Spending continued to fall in FY 2025



SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Child nutrition programs = National School Lunch Program; School Breakfast Program; related commodity costs; Child and Adult Care Food Program; Summer Food Service Program; and Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program. WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. Other = All other program and administrative spending, including Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) in FYs 2020–25 and the Farmers to Families Food Box Program in FYs 2020–21.

Note: The figure is based on preliminary data from the October 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in January 2026 and the September 2025 Keydata released by USDA, FNS in December 2025. Spending was adjusted for inflation to 2025 dollars using the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis’s Personal Consumption Expenditures price index.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, FNS and USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service data.

Adjusted for inflation, total USDA food assistance spending in FY 2025 was down 1.1 percent from \$149.4 billion in FY 2024 and down 31 percent from a peak of \$213.5 billion in FY 2021⁴ (figure 2). FY 2025 spending was 30 percent higher than inflation-adjusted spending of \$113.5 billion in FY 2019, the last full fiscal year before the Coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency and associated Federal nutrition assistance response, and 2 percent higher than inflation-adjusted spending of \$144.7 billion in FY 2013, the prepandemic high following the Great Recession of 2007–09.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Participation and Spending Were Similar to Previous Year

SNAP is USDA’s largest food and nutrition assistance program, accounting for 69 percent of USDA food and nutrition assistance spending in FY 2025 (figure 1). Unlike other 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 electronic benefit transfer (EBT). Benefits increase with household size, decrease with household income, and cannot be spent on tobacco, alcohol, or nonfood items. With some exceptions, benefits cannot be spent on foods that are sold hot.

Several aspects of Federal SNAP policy changed in FY 2025. The Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 expanded the age range for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs)—also called time-limited adults—to 18–54 in FY 2025. The age range was previously 18–49 in FY 2023 and 18–52 in FY 2024. Most working-age adults are subject to general work requirements to receive SNAP benefits. ABAWDs are additionally required to work, volunteer, or participate in a work program for 80 hours per month. If they do not meet these work requirements, they are subject to a time limit restricting SNAP benefit receipt to any 3 months out of a 3-year period. The Fiscal Responsibility Act also exempted certain groups of adults from these time limits, including veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, and young adults aging out of foster care, and it modified how States can use discretionary exemptions from the time limit.

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA, or Public Law No. 119-21) was enacted in July 2025 and included multiple provisions modifying SNAP policy. Several of these provisions resulted in immediate program changes, while other changes will take effect in future fiscal years. Key provisions made changes to:

- **Work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs).** OBBBA expanded the ABAWD work requirements to additional adults, including those aged 55–64 and those whose child dependents are aged 14 or older (i.e., limiting the definition of qualifying child dependents to those aged 13 or younger). OBBBA also removed the ABAWD work requirement exemptions for veterans, individuals experiencing homelessness, and young adults aging

⁴ The increased annual spending levels in FYs 2020-23 largely resulted from the Federal response to the COVID-19 public health emergency, which especially increased spending on SNAP, the child nutrition programs, and certain temporary programs such as P-EBT and the Farmers to Families Food Box Program. For more information, see editions in this report series covering these years (Toossi et al., 2021; Jones et al., 2022; Toossi & Jones, 2023; Jones & Toossi, 2024).

out of foster care and adds exemptions for Indians, Urban Indians, and California Indians.⁵ Further, OBBBA modified the criteria States can use to request waivers of the ABAWD time limit. Previously, States were able to request waivers for areas with unemployment rates higher than 10 percent or at least 20 percent above the national rate. OBBBA limited waivers to areas with unemployment rates above 10 percent or, only for Alaska and Hawaii, at least 50 percent above the national rate.

- **Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) reevaluations.** The TFP is the USDA’s lowest-cost model for a nutritious, practical diet. The cost of the TFP serves as the basis for the maximum monthly SNAP benefit allotment. The TFP is annually adjusted for inflation and occasionally reevaluated by USDA, with the previous 2021 reevaluation increasing the inflation-adjusted purchasing power of benefits. OBBBA restricts future TFP updates to cost neutrality, meaning that future reevaluations cannot change the TFP (e.g., altering the composition of foods that are included based on new dietary guidelines) in a way that would increase its real cost—and subsequently increase the real purchasing power of SNAP benefits. The cost of the TFP will continue to be annually adjusted for inflation.
- **State benefit cost sharing based on payment error rates.** Pre-OBBBA, the Federal Government funded 100 percent of the cost of SNAP benefits. Beginning in FY 2028, OBBBA will require States to fund a share of benefit costs based on the State payment error rate. This error rate measures the extent to which SNAP benefits were improperly overpaid or underpaid beyond a tolerance threshold, relative to what program rules direct. States with an error rate below 6 percent will not contribute to benefit costs. States with error rates of 6 percent up to 8 percent, 8 percent up to 10 percent, or 10 percent or higher will be required to contribute 5 percent, 10 percent, or 15 percent of benefit costs, respectively.⁶
- **State administrative cost sharing.** Pre-OBBBA, the Federal Government reimbursed States for 50 percent of their administrative costs to operate SNAP, while States were responsible for covering the other 50 percent. Beginning in FY 2027, OBBBA will reduce the Federal share to 25 percent and increase the State share to 75 percent.
- **Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Grant Program (SNAP-Ed).** SNAP-Ed provided grant funding for States to deliver nutrition education and obesity prevention programs. OBBBA eliminated Federal funding for the program beginning in FY 2026.
- **Standard utility allowances (SUAs) and the excess shelter expense deduction.** States consider households’ shelter costs, including utility costs, to determine a household’s total shelter expenses. Households with shelter expenses in excess of half of their income qualify for a deduction, which reduces household net income, increases benefit size, and in marginal cases could make them eligible for SNAP. Some States use SUAs to stand in for actual household utility costs. Effective July 2025, internet costs cannot be included in a household’s allowable shelter costs for the purpose of calculating the excess shelter expense deduction. Internet costs similarly may not be included in calculating SUAs. Also effective July 2025, receipt of energy assistance payments (e.g., from the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program or LIHEAP) no longer qualifies households for a SUA, unless the household includes an elderly or disabled member.
- **Alien program eligibility.** Effective July 2025, noncitizen eligibility for SNAP is restricted to noncitizen U.S. nationals, lawful permanent residents (after a 5-year waiting period unless meeting certain criteria), Cuban and Haitian Entrants, and lawfully residing Compact of Free

⁵ “Indians, Urban Indians, and California Indians” refer to groups defined in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act.

⁶ In FY 2024 (the most recent year for which data are available), the national payment error rate was 10.9 percent, and nine States had error rates below 6 percent (USDA, FNS, 2025e).

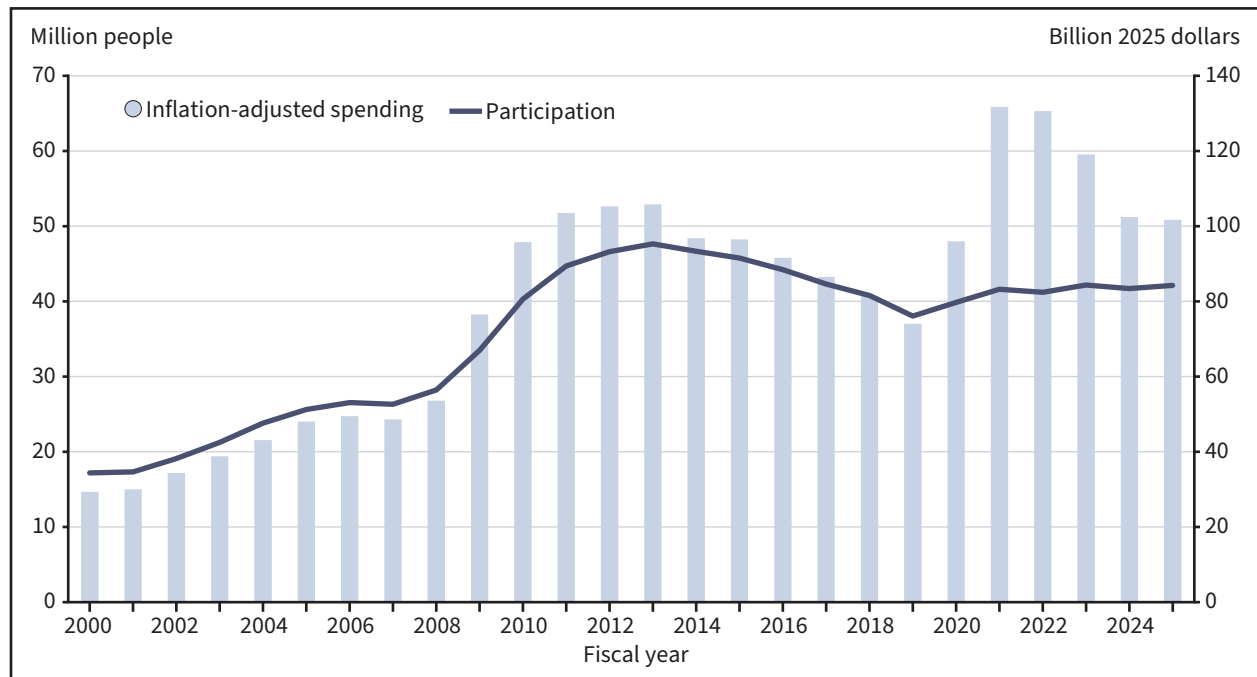
Association migrants. Certain previously eligible noncitizen groups, including refugees, asylees, and humanitarian parolees, are now ineligible. Other noncitizen groups that were previously eligible are now ineligible unless they meet the lawful permanent resident criteria.

States also had the option to apply for SNAP Food Restriction Waivers in FY 2025 and beyond. Throughout FY 2025, USDA approved 12 State waiver requests.⁷ These waivers will restrict the purchase of various items using SNAP benefits such as sugar-sweetened beverages and candy, with details varying by State. These restrictions will be implemented throughout 2026, with the earliest beginning in January.

Further, USDA proposed updated staple food stocking requirements for SNAP retailers in September 2025. To be approved to accept SNAP benefits, retailers are required to either carry a certain number and variety of staple foods or have more than 50 percent of gross sales in staple foods. The update proposes to codify a framework for determining distinct staple food varieties and to classify certain additional food categories as accessory foods that do not count towards the staple food requirement. Once finalized, this rule will allow USDA to implement a 2014 Farm Bill provision (codified in 2016) which increases the number of food varieties required per staple food category from three to seven and the number of perishable food varieties required from one variety in at least two staple food categories to one variety in at least three categories.

Figure 3
SNAP average monthly participation and inflation-adjusted annual program spending, fiscal years (FYs) 2000–25

Participation and inflation-adjusted spending were similar to FY 2024



SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Note: The figure is based on preliminary data from the October 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in January 2026 and the September 2025 Keydata released by USDA, FNS in December 2025. Spending was adjusted for inflation to 2025 dollars using the Personal Consumption Expenditures price index, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis. FY 2019 average monthly participation excludes January and February 2019 counts, which were affected by a partial Federal Government shutdown.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, FNS data.

⁷ USDA approved 6 more waiver requests in December 2025, for a total of 18 States in calendar year 2025.

In FY 2025, Federal spending on SNAP totaled \$101.7 billion, a 2-percent increase from the previous fiscal year in nominal terms (table 1).

- Although nominal spending was higher in FY 2025 than in FY 2024, inflation-adjusted spending was 0.7 percent lower than the total of \$102.4 billion in FY 2024 (figure 3). This is a relatively small annual change compared to recent years: Spending increased 78 percent from FY 2019 to FY 2021 and decreased 22 percent from FY 2022 to FY 2024.
- Inflation-adjusted spending was 23 percent lower than the peak of \$131.8 billion in FY 2021 and 4 percent lower than the pre-COVID-19 pandemic peak of \$105.8 billion in FY 2013 following the Great Recession of 2007–09 (figure 3).
- Of the total \$101.7 billion in Federal SNAP spending in FY 2025, \$95.0 billion funded benefits and \$6.7 billion funded the Federal share of administrative costs and other expenses.
- SNAP benefits averaged \$187.94 per month per person, a 1-percent nominal increase from FY 2024 (table 1).

FY 2025 SNAP participation averaged 42.1 million people per month, 1 percent higher than the previous fiscal year (figure 3).

- Participation levels were similar to recent years and remained above prepandemic levels. Participation was 11 percent higher than in FY 2019 but 12 percent below its peak in FY 2013.
- About 12.3 percent of the U.S. resident population participated in SNAP in an average month, similar to FY 2024 (table 1).

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

Participation Increased for a Third Consecutive Year

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 healthcare referrals at no cost to participants. To be eligible, applicants must meet categorical (age for children, pregnancy or postpartum for women), residential, income, and nutrition risk criteria. A person who participates or who has certain family members participating in other benefit programs, such as SNAP, Medicaid, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, may automatically meet income eligibility requirements for WIC.

WIC's prescribed food packages are tailored to each participant's life stage and nutritional needs. Participants receive an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card to purchase prescribed foods at authorized retailers. Federal law requires that State WIC agencies use cost-containment efforts to manage WIC food package costs, while maintaining Federal nutrition standards and food package quantities. For infant formula, WIC State agencies use a single-source, competitively bid system. State agencies receive rebates from manufacturers for infant formula purchased by participants with WIC benefits at retail stores. For more information, see "Research Highlight: Manufacturers' Bids for Infant Formula Rebate Contracts, 2013–23."

Key program developments in FY 2025 included State implementation of revisions to the WIC food packages. In FY 2024, USDA, FNS published a final rule revising WIC food packages to align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020–25* and to reflect recommendations from the National

Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. WIC recipients receive a monthly Cash-Value Voucher (CVV) that is redeemable for fruit and vegetable purchases. The rule codified increases in CVV amounts that had been in place since October 1, 2021, through appropriation legislation. The rule includes annual adjustments of CVV amounts for inflation. The amounts were \$26 per month for children, \$47 for pregnant and postpartum women, and \$52 for breastfeeding women in FY 2025, unchanged from FY 2024.

Other food package revisions included a requirement that State agencies allow participants to purchase frozen, canned, and/or dried fruits and vegetables in addition to fresh; reductions in the prescribed amounts of juice, milk, infant cereal, infant fruits/vegetables, and infant meats; the option for participants to substitute juice for a \$3 cash-value voucher; the option to substitute up to 64 ounces of milk with yogurt; allowances for soy-based yogurts and cheeses in place of milk; expansions of whole grain options; and the inclusion of canned fish for additional participant categories.

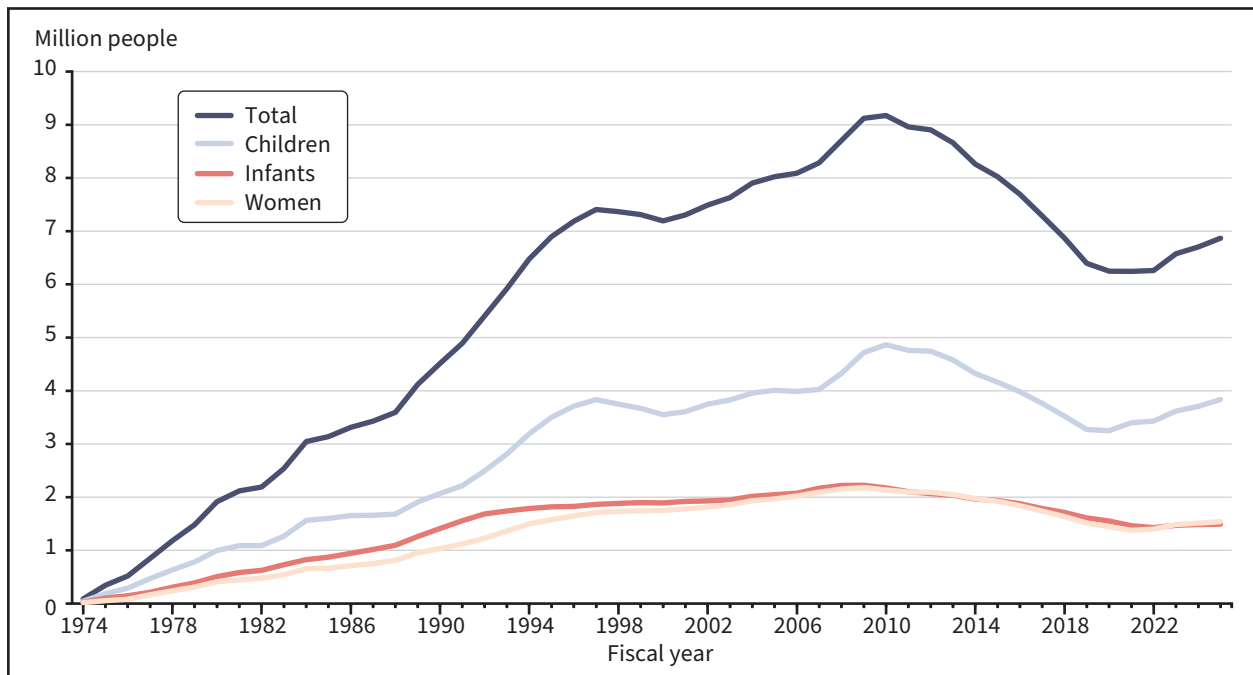
WIC participation averaged 6.9 million people per month in FY 2025, 2 percent higher than the previous fiscal year. This increase was driven by greater participation across all participant groups (figure 4).

- The number of women participating in WIC increased by 2 percent from the previous fiscal year. The number of infants participating in WIC increased by 0.3 percent from the previous fiscal year. The number of children participating in WIC increased by 4 percent.
- Children aged 1–4 years made up 56 percent of all WIC participants, while infants (22 percent) and women (22 percent) accounted for 44 percent of all participants.

Figure 4

WIC average monthly participation by group, fiscal years (FYs) 1974–2025

Participation continued to rise for women, infants, and children in FY 2025



WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Note: The figure is based on preliminary data from the October 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in January 2026 and the September 2025 Keydata released by USDA, FNS in December 2025.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, FNS data.

In FY 2025:

- Federal spending on WIC totaled \$7.7 billion, 6 percent more than the previous fiscal year in nominal terms (table 1) and 3 percent more after adjusting to 2025 dollars.
- Federal spending on WIC was 21 percent lower than the inflation-adjusted historical high of \$9.8 billion set in FY 2011 following the Great Recession (figure 2).
- Food costs per person averaged \$64.71 per month, an increase of \$3.66 (6 percent) from the previous fiscal year (table 1).
- After adjusting for inflation, average per-person food costs were at their highest level since FY 1989.

Child Nutrition Programs

Child Nutrition Spending Increased

USDA, FNS operates child nutrition programs to facilitate access to nutritious meals and snacks in schools, summer programs, childcare centers and homes, and afterschool programs. The three largest child nutrition programs by spending are the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Three additional programs focus on providing food during the summer months. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP and SBP provide free meals to children in low-income areas. The Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program (Summer EBT) issues food benefits to eligible households with school-aged children.

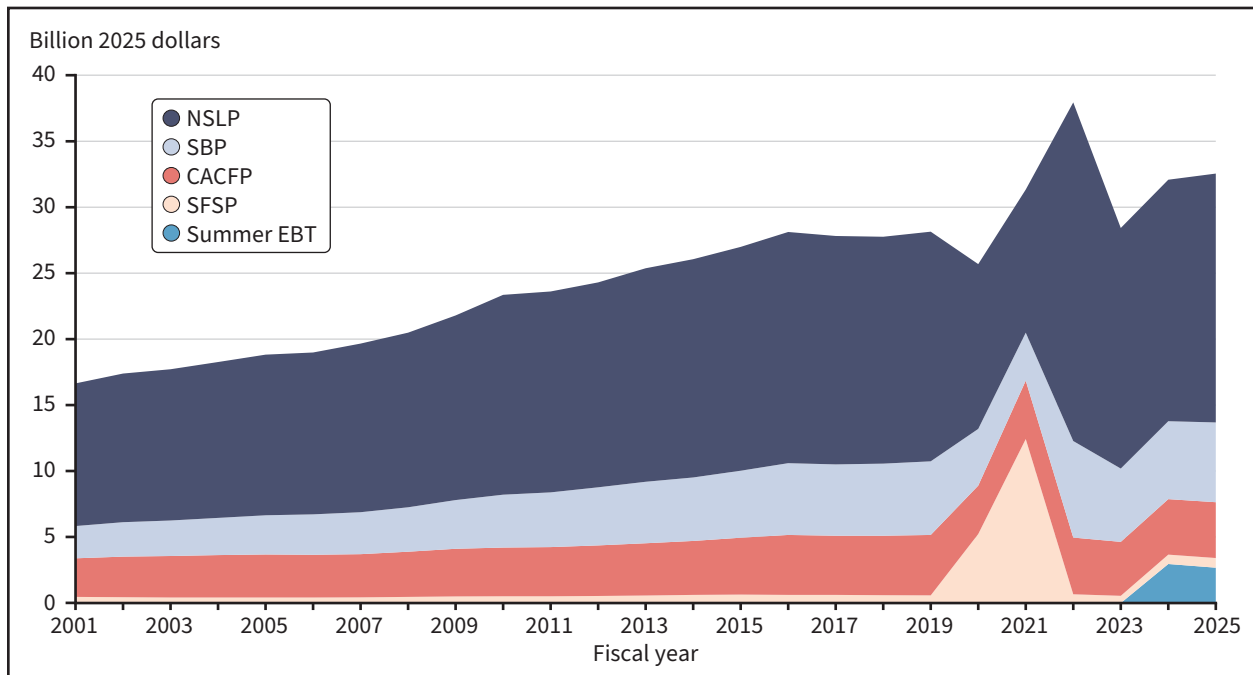
Spending on these child nutrition programs totaled \$32.5 billion in FY 2025 (figure 5).

- Spending in FY 2025 was 4 percent higher than in FY 2024, the first year Summer EBT operated (table 1).
- Inflation-adjusted spending in FY 2025 was 1 percent higher than in FY 2024 and 14 percent lower than the historic high of \$37.9 billion in FY 2022.

Figure 5

Total inflation-adjusted spending across NSLP, SBP, CACFP, SFSP, and Summer EBT, fiscal years (FYs) 2001–25

Child nutrition spending increased in FY 2025



NSLP = National School Lunch Program. SBP = School Breakfast Program. CACFP = Child and Adult Care Food Program. SFSP = Summer Food Service Program. Summer EBT= Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program.

Note: The figure is based on preliminary data from the October 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in January 2026 and the September 2025 Keydata released by USDA, FNS in December 2025. Combined spending on NSLP, SBP, CACFP, SFSP, and Summer EBT was adjusted for inflation to 2025 dollars using the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis' Personal Consumption Expenditures price index. NSLP and SBP meals include meals provided through the Seamless Summer Option.

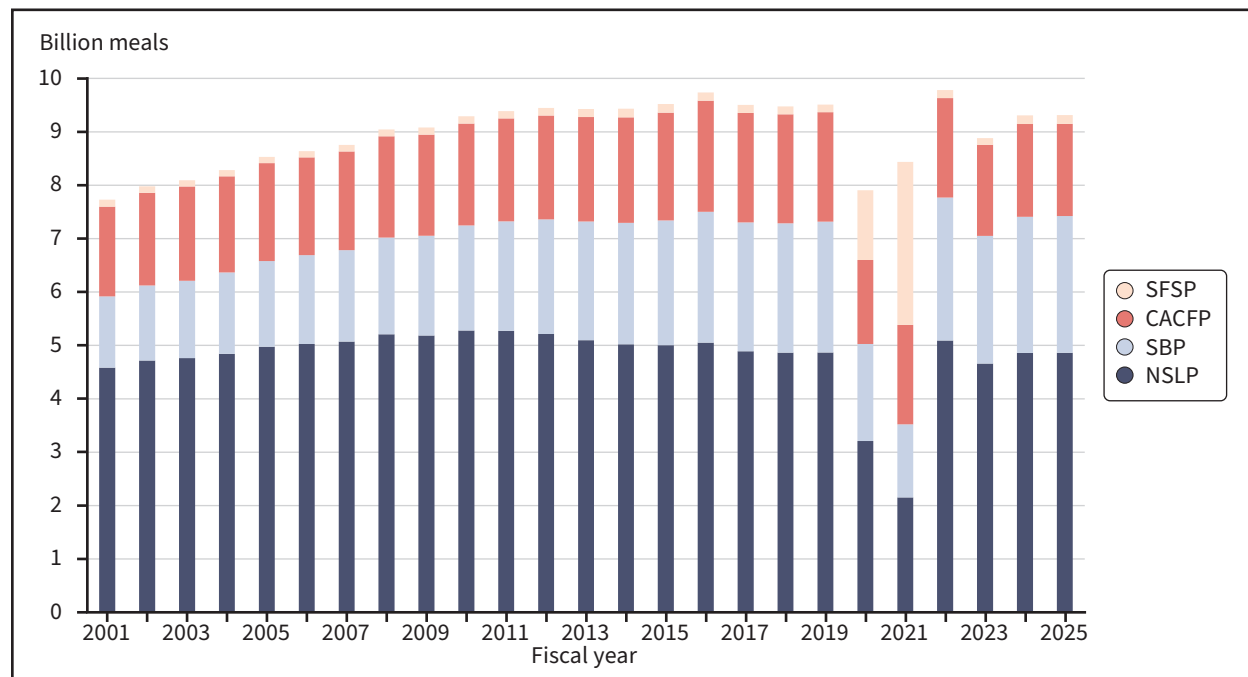
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, using USDA, FNS data.

The NSLP, SBP, CACFP, and SFSP provide meals, while Summer EBT provides benefits to households with children that are redeemable for groceries much like SNAP benefits. The number of meals served through the NSLP, SBP, CACFP, and SFSP totaled 9.3 billion in FY 2025 (figure 6). This was 0.3 percent fewer meals than FY 2024 and 5 percent fewer meals than FY 2022, when an all-time high of 9.8 billion meals were served.

Figure 6

Total meals served across NSLP, SBP, CACFP, and SFSP, fiscal years 2001–25

USDA child nutrition programs served 9.3 billion meals in fiscal year 2025



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

Note: The figure is based on preliminary data from the October 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in January 2026 and the September 2025 Keydata released by USDA, FNS in December 2025.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service, using USDA, FNS data.

School Meal Programs

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) provides nutritious lunches at low or no cost to children at school and snacks to children participating in afterschool care programs. Schools that participate in NSLP receive Federal subsidies for reimbursable meals served and some commodities (or cash in lieu of commodities) from USDA. In return, schools must serve lunches that meet Federal nutrition requirements and offer them at free or reduced price to qualifying students.

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) provides nutritious breakfasts to students in participating schools. Similar to NSLP, schools that participate in SBP receive Federal subsidies for reimbursable meals served and some commodities (or cash in lieu of commodities) from USDA. In return, schools must serve breakfasts that meet Federal nutrition requirements and offer them at free or reduced price to qualifying students.

All students at participating schools may participate in the school breakfast and lunch programs. Children from households with incomes at or below 130 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines are eligible for free meals. Children from households with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty guidelines are eligible for reduced-price meals. Children from households with incomes of more than 185 percent of the poverty guidelines are eligible for full-price meals. USDA reimburses schools for free and reduced-price meals at higher rates than full-price meals.

Certain schools can opt to provide free school breakfast and school lunch to all students regardless of their household incomes through several NSLP provisions. One such provision, the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), allows an individual school, groups of schools, or school districts to provide school meals at no charge to all students if at least 25 percent of students are directly certified or categorically eligible for a free lunch through participation in SNAP or other specific means-tested programs (i.e., determined by household income and assets). The Federal reimbursement at CEP schools is based on the percentage of directly certified students.

In FY 2025, following a final rule that went into effect on July 1, 2024, schools began implementing changes to nutrition standards for NSLP and SBP to better align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020–25*. The changes include a gradual reduction in added sugars, a modest reduction in sodium levels, and adjustments to the standards for other food groups such as milk and whole grains. There were no estimated changes in Federal costs due to these changes in nutrition standards.⁸

Federal spending on NSLP and SBP increased in FY 2025 (figure 5).

- Federal NSLP spending amounted to \$18.9 billion in FY 2025, 6 percent higher than the \$17.8 billion spent in FY 2024.
- Federal SBP spending amounted to \$6.1 billion in FY 2025, 5 percent higher than the \$5.8 billion spent in FY 2024.
- Combined inflation-adjusted spending on both programs of \$24.9 billion in FY 2025 was 3 percent higher than in FY 2024 (\$24.2 billion) and 24 percent lower than its peak in FY 2022 (\$33.0 billion).

The number of meals served through NSLP and SBP in FY 2025 were similar to FY 2024 (figure 6).

- Like FY 2024, NSLP meals served totaled 4.9 billion in FY 2025.
- Like FY 2024, SBP meals served totaled 2.6 billion in FY 2025.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) subsidizes healthy meals and snacks in participating childcare centers, daycare homes, and adult daycare facilities. CACFP also reimburses meals served to children participating in afterschool care programs or residing in emergency shelters. The program primarily serves children but also serves adults with disabilities or those 60 years of age or older 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.

In FY 2024, CACFP nutrition standards were updated to align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020–2025* via a USDA, FNS rule. As with meals served through NSLP and SBP, the rule specified a gradual phase-in of limits on added sugars (instead of on total sugars) for CACFP foods.

Federal spending on CACFP increased in FY 2025 (figure 5).

- Federal CACFP spending amounted to \$4.2 billion in FY 2025, 3 percent higher than the \$4.1 billion spent in FY 2024.

⁸ See 89 *Federal Register*, Number 31962 (2024).

The number of meals served through CACFP decreased in FY 2025.

- CACFP meals served totaled 1.7 billion in FY 2025, 0.6 percent fewer than in FY 2024 (figure 6).
- Childcare centers accounted for 77 percent of all meals served, family daycare homes accounted for 18 percent, and adult daycare centers accounted for 5 percent in FY 2025.

Summer Meal Programs

Summer meals are typically provided in both congregate and, for some rural areas, non-congregate settings via eligible organizations, including those sponsored by school food authorities, local government agencies, private nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and universities operating federally funded sports camps.⁹ The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free meals to children in low-income areas during the summer months when most schools are closed for instruction and during unanticipated school closures outside the summer months.¹⁰ Organizations provide meals through SFSP in areas or sites where at least 50 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. SFSP meals are reimbursed at a higher rate than NSLP and SBP meals.

SFSP participation, spending, and meals served increased in FY 2025.

- Participation in SFSP was 2.8 million people in July 2025 (the month when participation in the program typically peaks).
- Organizations served 164 million meals through SFSP in FY 2025 (figure 6) at a cost of \$730 million (figure 5).
- Meals served and spending increased by 1.3 percent and 5 percent, respectively, from FY 2024. Organizations served 162 million meals through SFSP in FY 2024 at a cost of \$696 million.

In addition to the SFSP, schools participating in the NSLP or SBP are eligible to participate in the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). The SSO allows schools to continue serving free meals to children during the summer or school breaks. All eligible meals provided under the SSO are reimbursed at NSLP and SBP applicable free rates for the school year beginning July 1 of the prior calendar year. SSO meals served and expenditures are reported in NSLP and SBP totals.¹¹

The Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program (Summer EBT) entered its second year of operation in FY 2025.¹² Summer EBT issues food benefits to eligible households with school-aged children for the summer months, when school meals through NSLP and SBP are not typically available. These benefits are redeemable for groceries, much like SNAP benefits. Summer EBT was created under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023.

Children attending NSLP/SBP schools who are certified as eligible to receive free or reduced-price school meals are automatically eligible for Summer EBT, or they may submit a Summer EBT application to establish eligibility. In addition, households with school-aged children are eligible to receive

⁹ Non-congregate meal service in certain rural areas was permanently authorized by Congress in FY 2024 through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022; USDA, FNS published corresponding regulations allowing the distribution of non-congregate meals in approved rural areas, which became effective in FY 2025.

¹⁰ Schools operating on a continuous-year calendar may serve meals through SFSP when school is out of session for 15 days or more.

¹¹ Beginning in FY 2025, information on SSO meals was reported separately from NSLP/SBP meals. For specific SSO amounts for FY 2025, see USDA, FNS (2025a).

¹² Both Summer EBT and SUN Bucks (or SuN Bucks in some contexts, short for Summer Nutrition Bucks) are used as abbreviations for the full program name.

Summer EBT benefits if they are enrolled in SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations.

In FY 2025:

- Summer EBT operated in 37 States, Washington, DC, 4 territories, and 5 Indian Tribal Organizations.¹³
- Summer EBT benefits were \$120 per child for the summer in most areas.
- Total spending on Summer EBT was \$2.7 billion, down 7 percent from FY 2024 spending of \$2.9 billion (table 1).

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

Economic and demographic conditions, among other factors, affect participation in and spending on food and nutrition assistance programs by influencing the sizes of the eligible populations, the rates of participation among those who are eligible, and the benefits households receive.

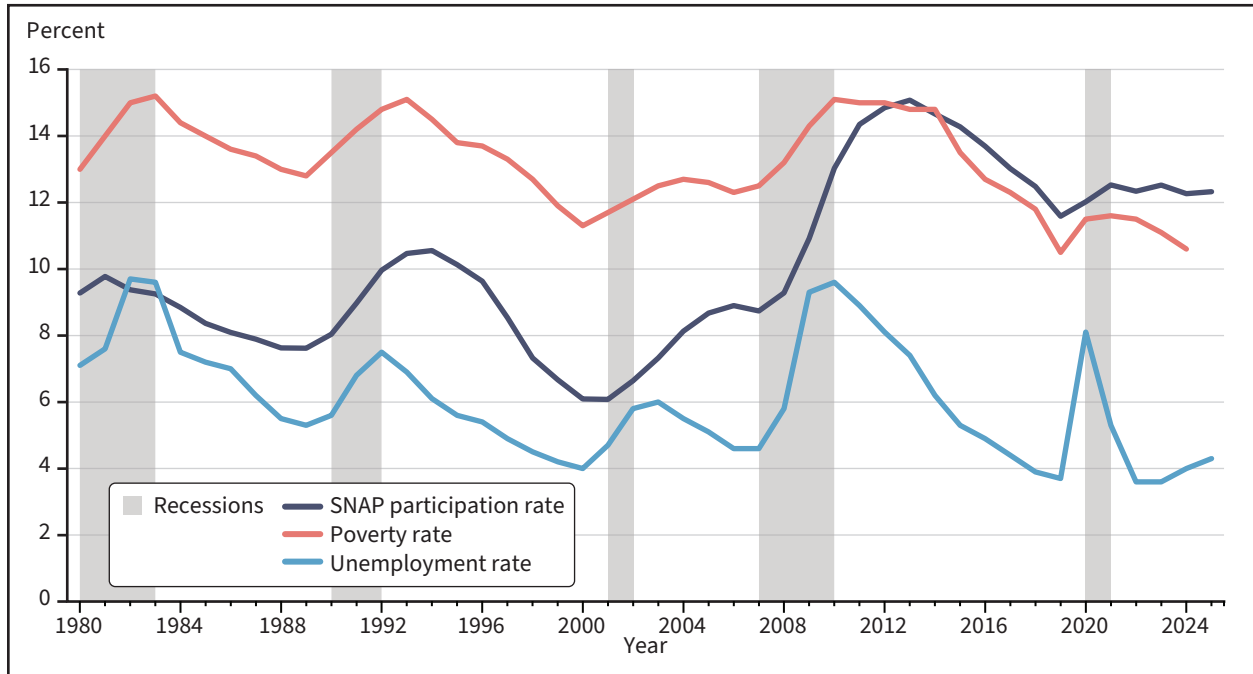
Since USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs are means-tested (i.e., determined by household income and assets), the number of people eligible to participate in the programs are linked to the strength of the economy. For example, SNAP eligibility and benefit amounts are tied directly to household income. Accordingly, SNAP expands during economic downturns and contracts during periods of economic growth. Historically, the SNAP participation rate generally tracks the unemployment rate and the poverty rate, though declines in SNAP participation tend to lag behind declines in unemployment (figure 7).

¹³ Alabama and Utah implemented Summer EBT for the first time in FY 2025. Tennessee implemented Summer EBT in FY 2024 but not in FY 2025. The U.S. Virgin Islands did not implement Summer EBT in 2025.

Figure 7

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation, unemployment, and poverty rates, 1980–2025

Economic conditions provide context for SNAP participation rates



Note: SNAP participation is based on preliminary data from the October 2025 Program Information Report (Keydata) released by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) in January 2026 and the September 2025 Keydata released by USDA, FNS in December 2025. The SNAP participation rate is calculated as the average level of monthly participation in each fiscal year over the estimated U.S. resident population in July of the corresponding year. Grey vertical bars indicate years when recessions occurred (January–July 1980; July 1981–November 1982; July 1990–March 1991; March–November 2001; December 2007–June 2009; and February–April 2020).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using USDA, FNS SNAP participation data; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics unemployment rate data; and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census population and poverty rate data.

The U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics tracks key labor market indicators, including the numbers of employed and unemployment people, the unemployment rate, and the labor force participation rate (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2026a). The latest employment data, reported in table 2, indicate that from 2024 to 2025:

- The number of employed persons in the United States increased by 2.1 million, and the number of unemployed persons increased by 0.6 million.¹⁴
- The national unemployment rate increased from 4.0 percent to 4.3 percent.
- The labor force participation rate decreased from 62.6 percent to 62.4 percent.

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census measures household income and poverty each year. The Census Bureau measures poverty in two ways: (1) the official poverty measure, which is based on household cash resources, and (2) the Supplemental Poverty Measure, which incorporates noncash resources (such as SNAP benefits) and certain household expenses. The latest income and poverty data (table 2) indicate that in 2024:

¹⁴ Differences in increases and decreases from numbers reported in table 2 are due to rounding.

- The median household income was \$83,730, up 4 percent from \$80,610 in 2023. However, there was no statistically significant change in inflation-adjusted median income from 2023 (\$82,690 in 2024 dollars; Kollar & Scherer, 2025).
- Using the official poverty measure, there were 35.9 million people, including 10.4 million children, living in households with incomes below the official poverty line (\$31,200 for a family of four). The poverty rate fell to 10.6 percent from 11.1 percent in 2023 (Shrider & Bijou, 2025).
- Using the Supplemental Poverty Measure, the poverty rate was 12.9 percent, the same as in 2023 (Shrider & Bijou, 2025).

Inflation refers to the rate at which the prices of goods increase. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a summary measure of consumer prices and one indicator of inflation (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2026b). The costs of food and other goods increased in 2025 (table 2):

- The CPI for all items increased by 2.6 percent in 2025. Overall inflation was down from 2.9 percent in 2024 and a high of 8 percent in 2022.
- The CPI for food grew faster than the CPI for all items in 2025 (2.8 percent) and faster than the CPI for food in 2024 (2.3 percent). Food inflation was slower than in 2023 (5.8 percent) and 2022 (9.9 percent).
- Inflation for food away from home (i.e., purchased from restaurants and other food service venues) drove the CPI for food, growing at 3.7 percent in 2025 and was higher than inflation for food at home (i.e., purchased from grocery stores and other retail venues) of 2.2 percent.

Table 2
Selected economic and demographic indicators, 2022–2025

Indicator	2022	2023	2024	2025
Population in July (millions)	334.0	336.8	340.1	341.8
Births (millions)	3.7	3.6	3.6	NA
School enrollment (millions)	55.2*	54.8*	54.3*	53.7*
Prekindergarten–grade 8	38.1	37.8	37.4	33.0
Grades 9–12	17.1	17.1	16.9	15.1
Labor force measures				
Employed people (millions)	158.3	161.0	161.3	163.5
Unemployed people (millions)	6.0	6.1	6.8	7.3
Unemployment rate (percent)	3.6	3.6	4.0	4.3
Labor force participation rate (percent)	62.2	62.6	62.6	62.4
Median household income	\$74,580	\$80,610	\$83,730	NA
Official poverty measure				
Persons in poverty (millions)	37.9	36.8	35.9	NA
Poverty rate (percent)	11.5	11.1	10.6	NA
Children in poverty (millions)	10.8	11.0	10.4	NA
Poverty rate for children (percent)	15.0	15.3	14.3	NA

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Indicator	2022	2023	2024	2025
Supplemental poverty measure				
Persons in poverty (millions)	40.9	42.8	43.7	NA
Poverty rate (percent)	12.4	12.9	12.9	NA
Children in poverty (millions)	9.0	10.0	9.7	NA
Poverty rate for children (percent)	12.4	13.7	13.4	NA
CPI for all items (annual percent change)	8.0	4.1	2.9	2.6
CPI for food (annual percent change)				
CPI for food at home	11.4	5.0	1.2	2.2
CPI for food away from home	7.7	7.1	4.1	3.7

NA = Data not available. CPI = Consumer Price Index.

Note: The asterisk (*) indicates data are projections.

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

USDA, Economic Research Service Research Update

USDA, Economic Research Service (ERS) staff conduct economic research on food and nutrition assistance, among other issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America. Recently released USDA, ERS reports and updated data products relevant to domestic food and nutrition assistance include:

- *County Characteristics Associated with Receipt of Food Boxes through the Farmers to Families Food Box Program*: Examines whether counties characterized by greater levels of need (based on measures of their food environment, food access, rates of food hardship, economic conditions, demographic composition, and urbanicity) were more likely to receive food boxes through the Farmers to Families Food Box Program (Marchesi et al., 2025).
- *Documentation for the Agri-Food Economic Data System (Ag-FEDS): A More Complete Accounting of the U.S. Agri-Food Economy*: Introduces the Agri-Food Economic Data System (Ag-FEDS), an integrated system of economic data that elaborates the linkages between all production and consumption activities throughout the economy, and shares details of the models and assumptions supporting the new tool (Rehkamp & Canning, 2025).
- *Household Food Security in the United States in 2024*: Examines data from the December 2024 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement and presents estimates of the prevalence of household food insecurity among various populations (Rabbitt et al., 2025).
- *Manufacturers’ Bids for Infant Formula Rebate Contracts, 2013–23* (summarized below): Summarizes recent trends in manufacturers’ bids for infant formula rebate contracts and estimates the impacts of changes in net whole prices on total infant formula costs to WIC (Hodges et al., 2025).

- *Understanding Data About the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) in the Circana Consumer Network Panel*: Examines the quality of two indicators of household SNAP participation in the Circana Consumer Network panel, a proprietary dataset that contains information on food-at-home purchases for the years 2018–20 and assesses the prospects of using the indicators in diet, health, and nutrition research (Gregory, 2025).
- *U.S. Household Food Spending Post COVID-19 and the Implications for Diet Quality*: Analyzes recent trends in household food spending across socioeconomic groups, amid a combination of uncommon and economically impactful events, including the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, supply chain disruptions, historically high food price inflation, and the pandemic stimulus (Okrent & Zeballos, 2025).

Research Highlight: Manufacturers’ Bids for Infant Formula Rebate Contracts, 2013–23

The USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides iron fortified infant formula to low-income and nutritionally vulnerable infants. Federal law requires that WIC State agencies operate cost containment systems to reduce formula costs. Most State agencies use competitive bidding to award contracts to issue a single manufacturer’s infant formula as the first-choice formula to WIC participants. In return, the manufacturer offers State agencies a discount in the form of a rebate on each unit of formula purchased through WIC. State agencies award contracts to the manufacturer offering the lowest net wholesale price, which is the difference between the manufacturer’s wholesale price and the rebate. As of March 2023, WIC State agencies in all 50 States, Washington, DC, 5 territories, and 15 Indian Tribal Organizations used competitive bidding processes to award infant formula contracts. Of these State agencies, 31 States, Washington, DC, 4 territories, and 14 Indian Tribal Organizations were part of alliances (groups of States that jointly award contracts).

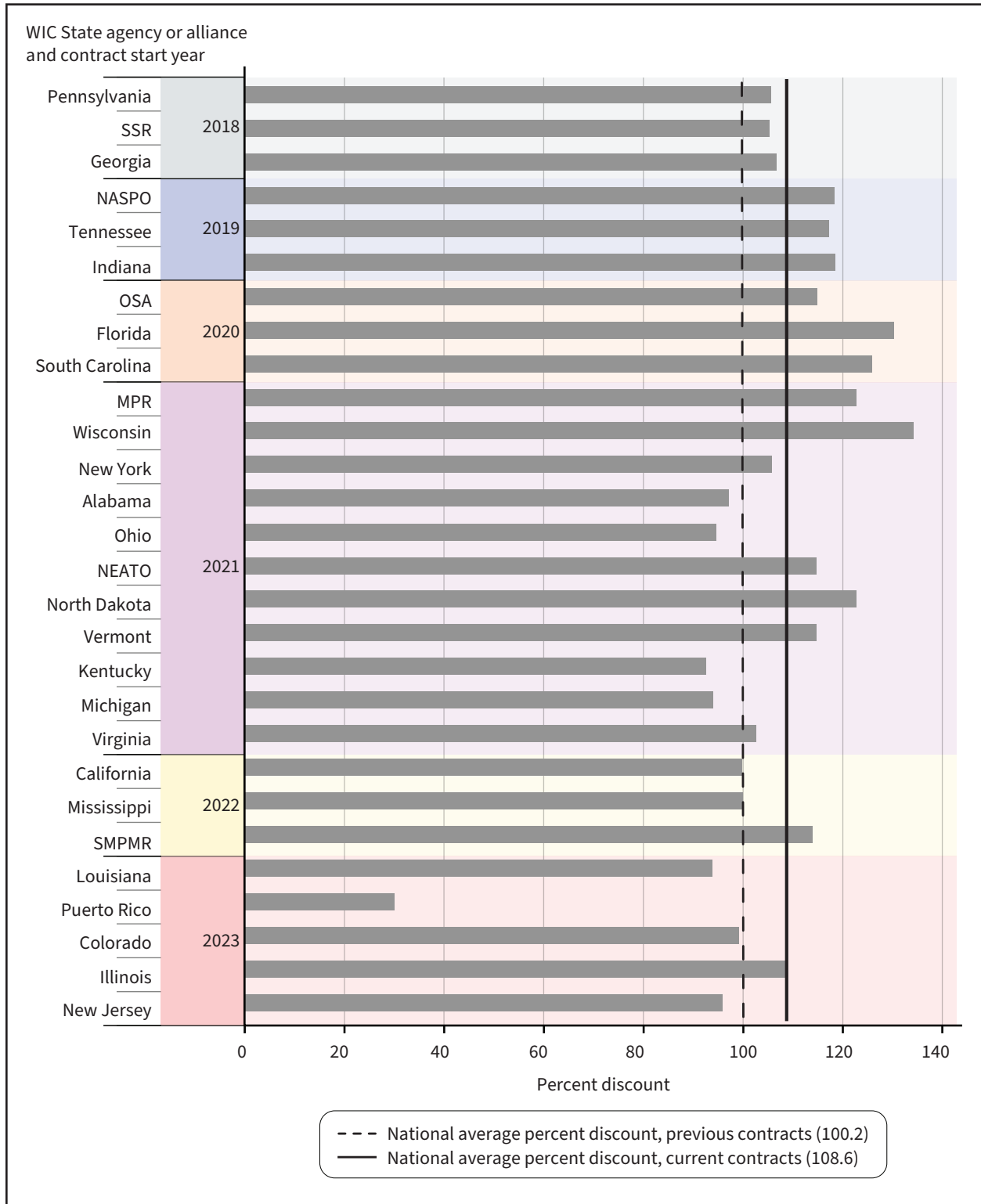
USDA, ERS periodically reports on WIC’s infant formula costs, which are determined by contracts with formula manufacturers. The USDA, ERS report *Manufacturers’ Bids for Infant Formula Rebate Contracts, 2013–23* (Hodges et al., 2025) summarized trends in infant formula rebate contracts from October 2013 to March 2023. The report compared new contracts (awarded between October 2018 and March 2023) to prior contracts (awarded between October 2013 and March 2018) to estimate the impacts of changes in net wholesale prices on total infant formula costs to WIC.¹⁵ Monitoring trends in infant formula rebate contracts is important because the contracts influence what WIC—and ultimately U.S. taxpayers— pay for infant formula. WIC receives a fixed amount in appropriations each year, so saving on the foods WIC provides maximizes the number of participants the program can serve.

Under the new contracts, WIC State agencies, on average, received rebates that exceeded manufacturers’ wholesale prices for their formula. The national average percent discount, or the rebate as a percentage of the wholesale price, for the new contracts was 108.6 percent compared to 100.2 percent for the previous contracts (figure 8). The new contracts resulted in greater savings to WIC on infant formula purchases compared with previous contracts. Adjusting for inflation to 2023 dollars and holding caseloads constant, WIC State agencies saved an estimated \$131 million per year on the wholesale price of infant formula under the new contracts.

¹⁵ The 28 contract changes (56 contracts) represented WIC State agencies from all 50 U.S. States, Washington, DC, 14 Indian Tribal Organizations, and 5 U.S. territories. Six of the contracts were awarded by alliances of State WIC agencies. The remaining 22 contracts were awarded by individual State WIC agencies.

Figure 8

Percent discounts for infant formula rebate contracts in effect in March 2023



Note: WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children. SSR = Southwest/Southeast Regions (Arkansas, New Mexico, and North Carolina). NASPO = National Association of State Procurement Officials (Alaska; Arizona; Delaware; Hawaii; Idaho; Kansas; Maryland; Montana; Nevada; Oregon; Utah; Washington; Washington, DC; West Virginia; Wyoming; American Samoa; Guam; the Virgin Islands; the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona; Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada; Navajo Nation; Osage Nation; and Pueblo of Isleta). OSA = Oklahoma State Alliance (Oklahoma; Chickasaw Nation; Citizen Potawatomi Nation; Eight Northern Indian Pueblos, Inc.; Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; Muscogee (Creek) Nation; Otoe-Missouria Tribe; and WCD Enterprises, Inc.). MPR = Mountain Plains Region (Missouri; Nebraska; South Dakota; and North Dakota (beginning 10/1/2021)). NEATO = New England and

Tribal Organization (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont (as of 10/1/2021), and Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma). SMPMR = Southwest/Mountain Plains/Midwest Regions (Iowa, Minnesota, Texas, and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma. Percent discount = Manufacturer rebate divided by wholesale price. Start dates of current contracts range from October 1, 2018, to March 1, 2023. Start dates of previous contracts range from October 1, 2013, to March 1, 2018.

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

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