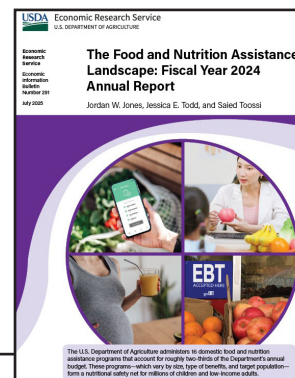




A report summary from the Economic Research Service

The Food and Nutrition Assistance Landscape: Fiscal Year 2024 Annual Report

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Key Points

- Total Federal spending on USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs decreased by 16 percent from \$168.3 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2023 to \$142.2 billion in FY 2024. Adjusted for inflation, annual spending was 32 percent lower than in FY 2021, the historic high, and similar to spending in FY 2013, the pre-Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic high.
- Spending on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) totaled \$99.8 billion in FY 2024, down 12 percent from FY 2023. The expiration of emergency allotments in FY 2023 and a 1-percent decline in participation (to an average of 41.7 million people per month) contributed to the decline. Adjusted for inflation, the 14-percent decline from FY 2023 to 2024 was larger than for any other year on record.
- Participation in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) averaged 6.7 million women, infants, and children in FY 2024, and participation among all three groups increased. WIC spending totaled \$7.2 billion, up 7 percent from FY 2023, reflecting increases in participation (2 percent) and food costs per participant (9 percent) from FY 2023.
- In FY 2024, 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), up 4 percent from FY 2023. Combined spending on these programs totaled \$28.2 billion, also up 4 percent from FY 2023.
- FY 2024 saw continued changes in food and nutrition assistance, including the end of Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) issuance and the start of the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children (Summer EBT or SUN Bucks) Program.

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 participate in at least one of these programs. FY 2024 marked the first full fiscal year following the 2023 expiration of the COVID-19 public health emergency declaration and was the first full year of program operation after most temporary pandemic response-related provisions had ended. Overall spending continued to fall from its peak in FY 2021, primarily driven by decreases in spending on SNAP following the expira-

tion of emergency allotments and the end of P-EBT benefit issuance in FY 2023. USDA's food and nutrition assistance programs continued to evolve in FY 2024, which was the first year of operation of the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program (Summer EBT). 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.

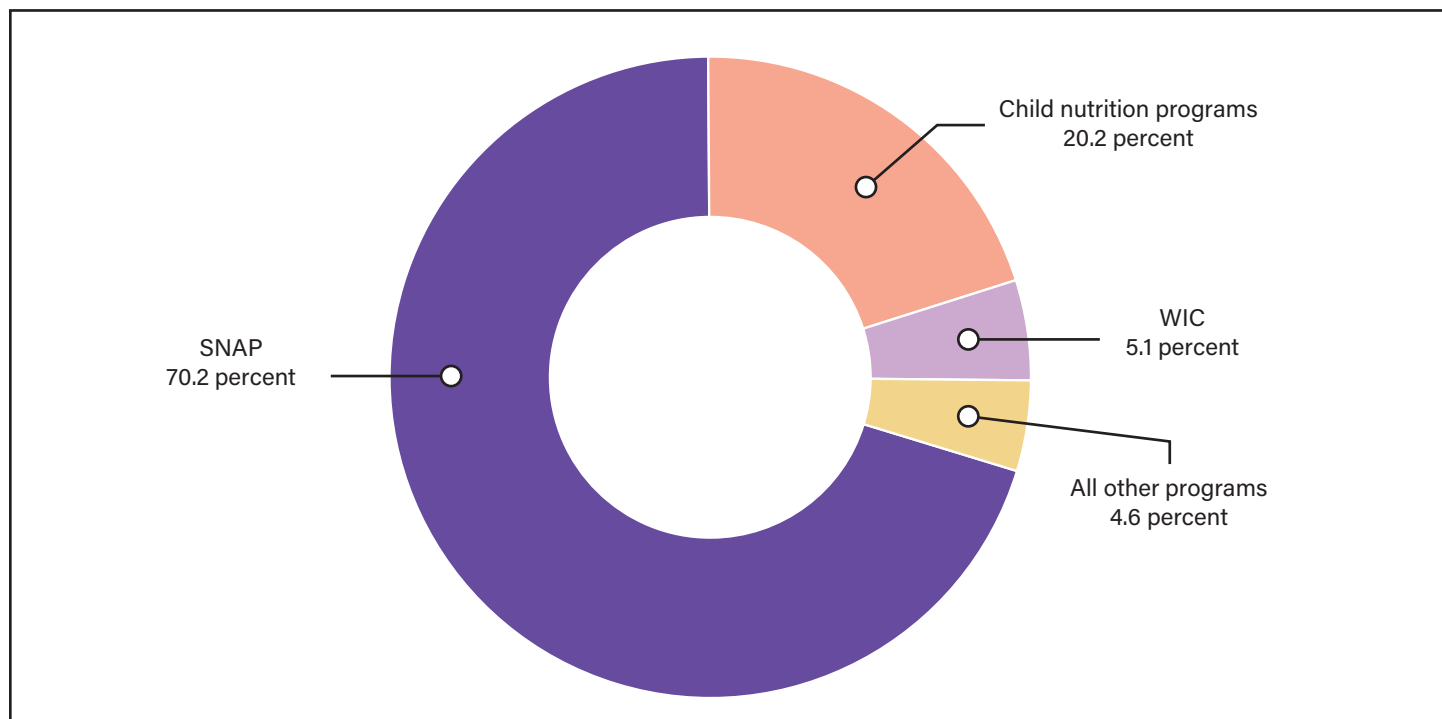
Highlights

A Few More Details

We used preliminary data from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to examine program trends through FY 2024. 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 FYs 2023 and 2024 came from the September 2024 Program Information Report (Keydata) released in December 2024. Program data for prior FYs came from historical program data released in December 2024. Data on Summer EBT was not available as of April 2025, when this report was finalized. We also examined economic and social indicators using supplementary data.

USDA food and nutrition assistance spending by program, fiscal year 2024

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; related State administrative expenses; and other related child nutrition costs. All other programs does not include spending on the Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children Program (Summer EBT or SUN Bucks), for which data were not available as of April 2025.

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