

# Basic Food

## Program Description

The Basic Food program provides people with assistance to buy and access nutritious foods. It plays a critical role in supporting communities. Washington state's federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is mirrored by the state-funded Food Assistance Program. FAP helps immigrants who do not yet qualify for federal SNAP benefits.

### We provide tools and resources through:

- **Access to healthy foods.** Healthy food is foundational to people's well-being and is needed to fully contribute to the community. Basic Food provides monthly food benefits to ensure children and adults have access to nutritional foods. This benefit helps people in all stages of life by ensuring healthy brain development, greater school attendance, increased health and social inclusion. To qualify for Basic Food, a household's earnings must fall below 200% of the federal poverty level (\$53,300 for a family of three). The average daily benefit for a household receiving Basic Food is \$10.60 per day<sup>1</sup>.
- **Outreach and education.** In addition to food assistance, the SNAP Education program conducts statewide education to expand opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. It has over 60 providers across the state. SNAP-Ed works directly with communities to remove barriers and elevate community assets. It increases equitable access to nutritious food and physical activity and enables choice for the SNAP-eligible population. Through nutrition education and changes to policies, systems and environments, the SNAP-Ed program reaches close to 1.4 million people annually<sup>2</sup>.
- **Connection to employment and training opportunities.** The Basic Food Employment and Training program is a partnership among DSHS, community-based organizations, and the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. BFET gives youth and adults the opportunity to increase their skills and expertise, so they have a broader range of options for future employment.

<sup>1</sup> Briefing Book SFY 2024 Basic Food

<sup>2</sup> Washington SNAP-Ed 2024 Annual Report

## Highlights from 2024

- **Replacement of food benefits** stolen through EBT card skimming, cloning or other fraudulent methods was implemented in August 2023. This allowed DSHS to replace validated claims for up to two months of benefits if the benefits were stolen on or before Dec. 20, 2024. For state fiscal year 2024, 4,086 claims totaling \$650,309 were replaced. 10,826 claims totaling over \$370 million have been replaced since August 2023.
- The **Fiscal Responsibility Act** changed work requirements for people designated as Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents effective July 2023. This legislation increased the upper age limit for required participation to 54 years in October 2024. The FRA also provided new participation exceptions for veterans, people experiencing homelessness and people who are younger than age 24 but were in foster care when they turned 18.
- The **BFET program** operates in 39 counties in Washington state.

Anticipated changes due to the H.R. 1 – 119th Congress (2025-2026): [One Big Beautiful Bill Act | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](https://www.congress.gov/bills/119/one-big-beautiful-bill-act)

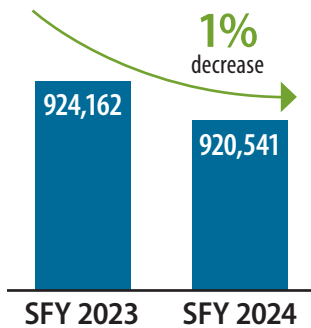
- Benefits limited to US citizens, US nationals, lawfully admitted permanent residents, Cuban-Haitian entrants and those lawfully residing in accordance with the of Compacts of Free Association between the United States and Micronesia, the Marshall Islands and Palau. Other lawfully admitted immigrants previously eligible for SNAP will move to Washington's State Funded Food Assistance Program.
- Changes to eligibility for Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents:
  - Native Americans and Alaskan Natives exempted from time limits
  - Age range expanded from 18-54 to 18-64
  - Definition of dependent changes from a child under age 18 to a child under age 14
- Eligibility for Standard Utility Costs will no longer be conferred based on receipt of Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program unless the assistance unit includes an elderly or disabled household member.
- Federal funding removed from the SNAP-Education program.

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## Basic Food Facts

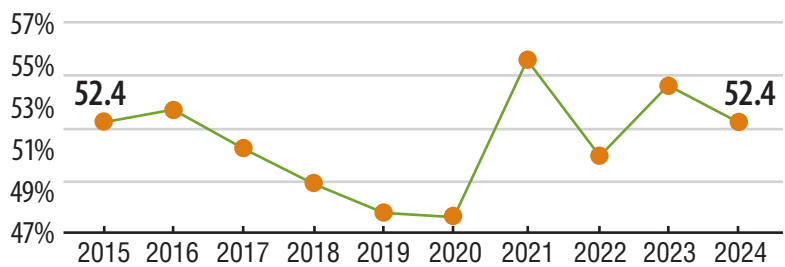
### Trends<sup>1</sup>

The number of people served by Basic Food decreased from SFY 2023 to SFY 2024.



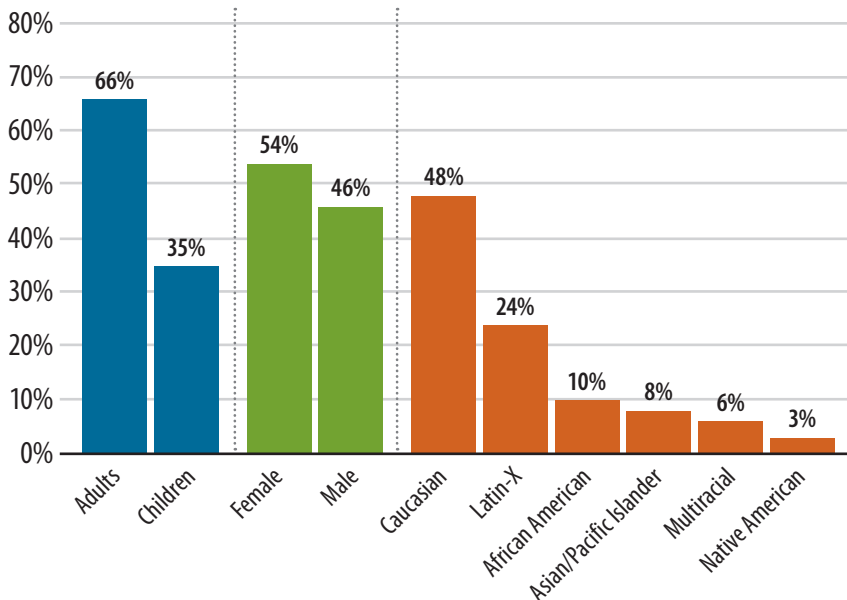
### Meeting the Need<sup>1</sup>

The percentage of households receiving Basic Food increased during the pandemic and has returned to match the 2015 rate. For every 100 households living below 200% of the federal poverty level, about 52 were served in 2024.



### Characteristics of People Served<sup>1</sup>

Adults, females and people who racially identify as Caucasian make up most of the caseload.



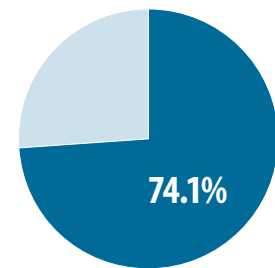
### Average Benefit<sup>1</sup>

The average benefit for a household receiving Basic Food:



### Receipt of Other Benefits<sup>1</sup>

About 74% of people receiving basic food do not receive a cash benefit.



<sup>1</sup>Briefing Book SFY 2024 Basic Food

Note: The Social Security Administration collects identified-at-birth binary information only. ACES records must match with SSA."

#### More information:

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