



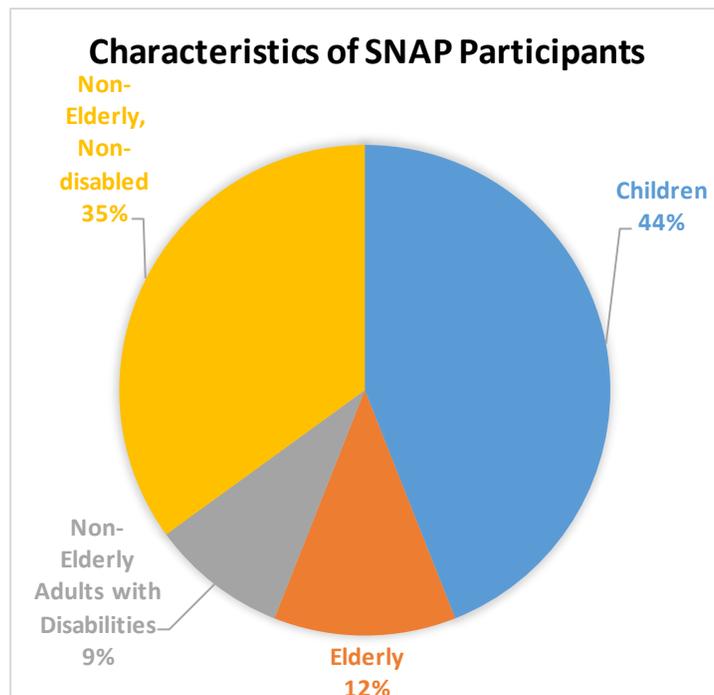
December 1, 2017

## SNAP Encourages Work

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) protected 44 million Americans in 2016 from food insecurity and hunger. Critics of the program who are demanding significant changes and drastic cuts often ignore the makeup of the SNAP population, the economic conditions people face, and the reality that SNAP successfully encourages work.

### Who Receives SNAP Benefits?

- **Kids** — Nearly 20 million — 44 percent — of SNAP recipients are children.
- **Elderly or disabled adults** — Approximately 12 percent of SNAP beneficiaries are elderly and another 9 percent are disabled adults.
- **Other adults, a majority of whom are in households with children** — While 35 percent of SNAP recipients are non-elderly, non-disabled adults, only 8.8 percent of recipients are able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs).



### Adults in Households without Children Are Required to Work

ABAWDs are adults between 18 and 49 in childless households who currently face stringent work requirements. If they do not maintain work or participate in a job-training program, they cannot receive SNAP benefits for more than three months in three-year period.

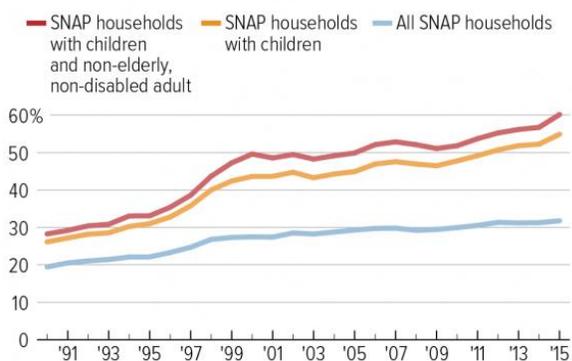
States and localities can seek waivers from these work requirements and the accompanying three-month time limit during hard economic times. In 2009, as our country was facing the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, the Recovery Act suspended the waiver

requirement in every state through September 2011. In 2012, as our nation continued to recover from the recession, 47 states still had waivers, 45 of which covered the entire state. That number has now declined to 9 states with a statewide waiver, while 27 have waivers to cover those parts of their state still struggling to recover from the recession. Therefore, even during the recovery, ABAWDs who remain on SNAP outside the time limit are able to do so only because of the ongoing economic conditions where they live.

### Many on SNAP that Can Work, Do Work

#### SNAP Work Rates Have Risen, Especially Among Households With Children and Adults Who Could Be Expected to Work

Share of households with earnings



Source: CBPP tabulations of Agriculture Department household characteristics data

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Many non-disabled, non-elderly adults who are able to work do so. In households with children and at least one able-bodied adult, the majority had earned income while receiving SNAP benefits. In fact, work rates among SNAP recipients have generally been increasing year after year, especially among households with children. And because SNAP is designed to respond immediately and effectively to economic conditions, SNAP serves as a lifeline for those in between jobs, a situation low-income individuals and families are more likely to face.

Even if individuals have or find full-time employment, they may still face economic conditions that leave them unable to meet their basic standards of living. Maintaining one federal minimum-wage job would earn a single individual without dependents \$15,080 a year, or just below 130 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). Yet SNAP eligibility generally does not end until a household's gross income exceeds 130 percent of FPL. Until there is more widely shared prosperity, including earning a living wage for those at the low end of the income scale, there will be a need for government programs that help working families put food on their tables.