

DEFINITION

This indicator reports the number and percent of children under the age of 18 enrolled in the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), commonly known as Food Stamps.

CONTEXT

SNAP provides a monthly benefit to eligible households enrolled in the program, enabling participants to purchase food items from authorized vendors. Along with federal child nutrition programs such as the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs and the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), SNAP is a major source of food for children in low-income families. SNAP is the largest of these food assistance programs, accounting for 73 percent of all federal food and nutrition spending in 2013 (USDA ERS, 2014). To be eligible, a household's gross monthly income cannot exceed 130 percent of the federal poverty level, which is currently \$2,584 per month for a family of four (USDA FNS, 2014). The average per person benefit level in 2013 was \$133.08 per month (USDA ERS, 2014).

Historically, SNAP or Food Stamps participation has fluctuated with economic conditions, rising during recessionary periods of high unemployment and poverty. The percentage of Americans participating in the program has grown steadily since 2000, with the largest increases occurring during the Great Recession between 2008 and 2011. In 2013, 46.7 million persons per month participated in SNAP, an increase of 2 percent from fiscal year 2012, making this the largest number of participants in the history of the program (USDA ERS, 2014). This increase, however, was the smallest annual percentage increase since 2007, which indicates that this trend may be slowing. At the same time, a slight decline in participation in WIC was reported, with 3 percent fewer WIC participants in fiscal year 2013 compared to 2012, which was the largest annual decline since the start of the WIC program in 1974 (USDA ERS, 2014). This decline in WIC participation may be related to the steadily decreasing national child population rates rather than decreased national need in the program's target population (Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, 2014).

NEW HAMPSHIRE FINDINGS

Over the past four years, New Hampshire saw an increase in the percentage of children under the age of 18 enrolled in SNAP, rising steadily year-over-year from

Children Under 18 Years Enrolled in SNAP by County, 2010-2013

	2010		2011		2012		2013	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
STATE TOTAL	44,711	15.6%	46,681	16.6%	47,640	17.3%	48,536	17.9%
Belknap	2,802	22.6%	2,921	23.9%	2,977	24.6%	2,966	25.1%
Carroll	1,712	19.4%	1,786	20.8%	1,953	23.3%	1,933	23.7%
Cheshire	2,961	19.7%	3,141	21.3%	3,234	22.1%	3,318	22.9%
Coös	1,669	27.0%	1,743	29.4%	1,786	31.3%	1,793	31.8%
Grafton	2,735	16.8%	2,917	18.3%	3,047	19.4%	3,065	19.7%
Hillsborough	15,581	16.6%	16,151	17.5%	16,345	18.0%	16,563	18.5%
Merrimack	4,842	15.3%	5,118	16.4%	5,411	17.8%	5,717	19.2%
Rockingham	5,243	7.8%	5,508	8.4%	5,543	8.6%	5,732	9.1%
Strafford	5,057	19.9%	5,199	20.7%	5,153	20.8%	5,270	21.5%
Sullivan	1,990	21.7%	2,106	23.5%	2,088	23.9%	2,151	25.2%

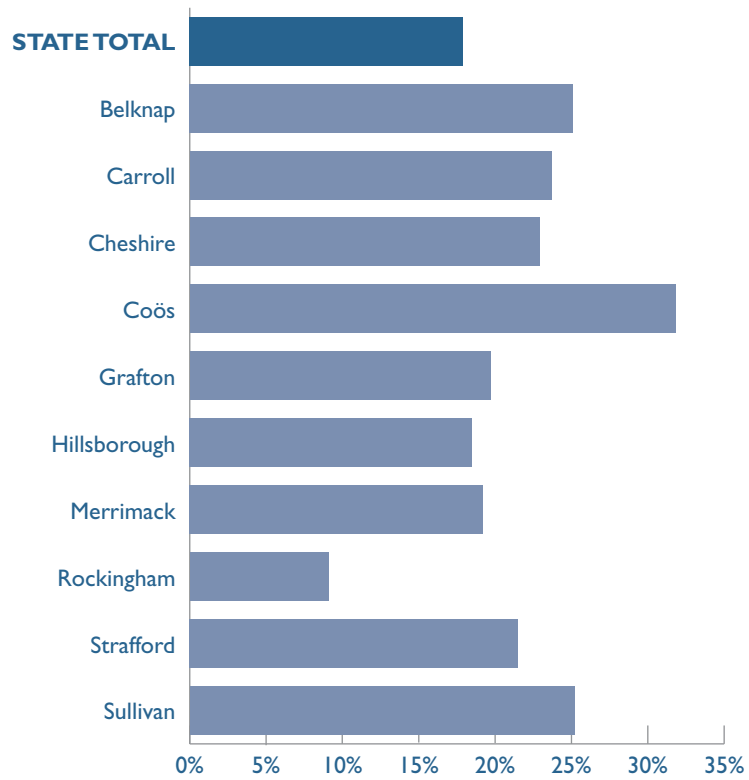
NOTES:

1. Annual SNAP enrollment numbers are counts of children under age 18 that were receiving benefits as of April 30 of each year. Source: New Hampshire DHHS.
2. Percentage based on child population under age 18. Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013 Population Estimates, Table PEPAGESEX.

15.6 percent in 2010 to 17.9 percent in 2013. Across the state, 48,536 children were receiving SNAP benefits as of April 2013, an increase of almost 9 percent from April 2010 (NHDHHS, 2014).

Of the ten counties in New Hampshire, Coos County had the highest rate of SNAP enrollment among children as of April 2013, with a rate of 31.8 percent. Rockingham County had the lowest children's enrollment by a wide margin at 9.1 percent, approximately half that of the statewide rate. The remaining eight counties ranged from 18.5 percent in Hillsborough County to 25.1 and 25.2 percent in Belknap and Sullivan Counties, respectively.

Children Under 18 Years Enrolled in SNAP by County, 2013



SOURCE OF DATA FOR ILLUSTRATION/METHODOLOGY

New Hampshire Department of Health & Human Services, Division of Family Assistance, 2014.

REFERENCES

Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (2014). *At a Glance for 2014: America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being.*

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United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service (2014). *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Eligibility.*

▶ www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility

United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (2014). *The Food Assistance Landscape: FY 2013 Annual Report.* Economic Information Bulletin No. 120, February 2014.

▶ www.ers.usda.gov/media/1282272/eib120.pdf