

Food Stamp/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Receipt in the Past 12 Months for Households by State: 2008 and 2009

Issued September 2010

American Community Survey Briefs

ACSBR/09-8

INTRODUCTION

This report presents data on food stamp/SNAP receipt for the past 12 months at the national and state levels based on the 2008 and 2009 American Community Surveys (ACS). The data in this report are for households, not individuals. If any person living at the sample address at the time of the interview received food stamps/SNAP, the household is included in the count. Respondents were asked to report any spells of food stamp/SNAP receipt for the past 12 months.

FOOD STAMP/SNAP RECEIPT IN 2009

In 2009, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) was signed into law as a direct result of the economic downturn. The ARRA provided increased food stamp/SNAP benefits to low-income families.

In 2009, 11.7 million households reported receiving food stamp/SNAP benefits during the past 12 months. Among the states with the highest food stamp/SNAP participation were Louisiana (17.4 percent), Tennessee (15.3 percent), and Kentucky (15.1 percent).¹

¹Tennessee's and Kentucky's 2009 ACS food stamp/SNAP participation rates were not statistically different from Mississippi's (15.0 percent) or Maine's (14.5 percent). Tennessee and Kentucky were not statistically different from each other.

The Food Stamp Act of 1977 defines this federally-funded program as one intended to "permit low-income households to obtain a more nutritious diet" (from Title XIII of Public Law 95-113, The Food Stamp Act of 1977, declaration of policy). Food purchasing power is increased by providing eligible households with coupons or cards that can be used to purchase food. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the Food Stamp Program through state and local welfare offices. The Food Stamp Program is the major national income support program to which all low-income and low-resource households, regardless of household characteristics, are eligible.

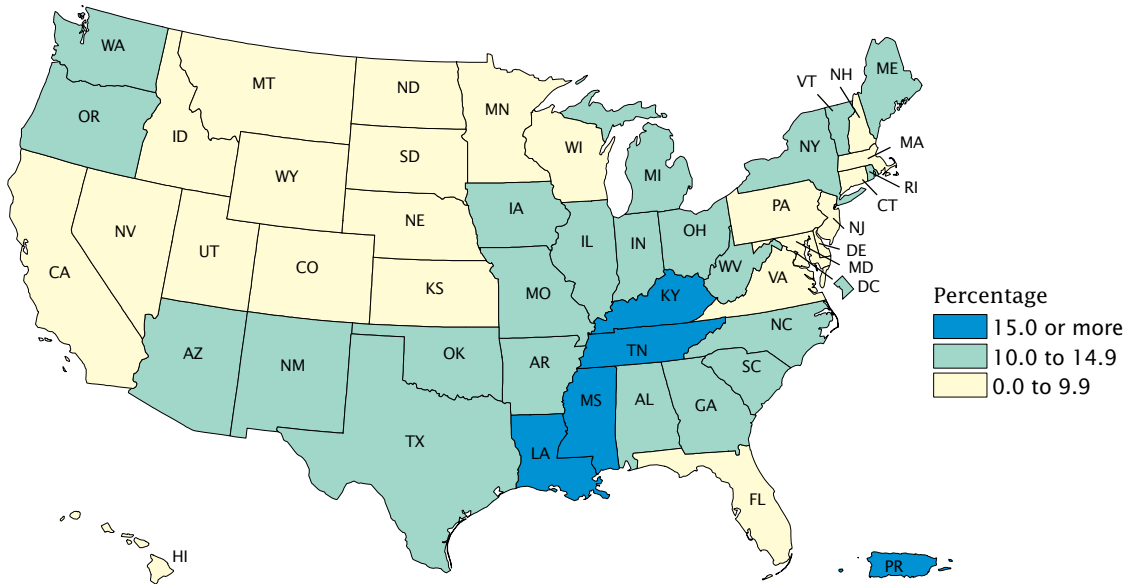
The questions on participation in the Food Stamp Program were designed to identify households in which one or more of the current members received food stamps during the past 12 months.

In 2008, the Food Stamp Program was renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

Although not statistically different when compared with some other states, states with the lowest food stamp/SNAP participation rates included Colorado (6.1 percent), New Jersey (5.5 percent), and Wyoming (5.2 percent).

By
Tracy A. Loveless

Figure 1.
Percentage Receiving Food Stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) for Households by State and Puerto Rico: 2009



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009, Puerto Rico Community Survey, 2009.

FOOD STAMP/SNAP RECEIPT IN 2008 AND 2009

In 2009, 10.3 percent of all households reported receipt of food stamps/SNAP, a 19.8 percent increase over the 2008 figure of 8.6 percent. No states experienced a decline in food stamps/SNAP receipt between 2008 and 2009. Forty-six states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico experienced an increase in food stamp/SNAP receipt. The only states that did not experience a statistically significant increase were Hawaii, Maine, Montana, and North Dakota.

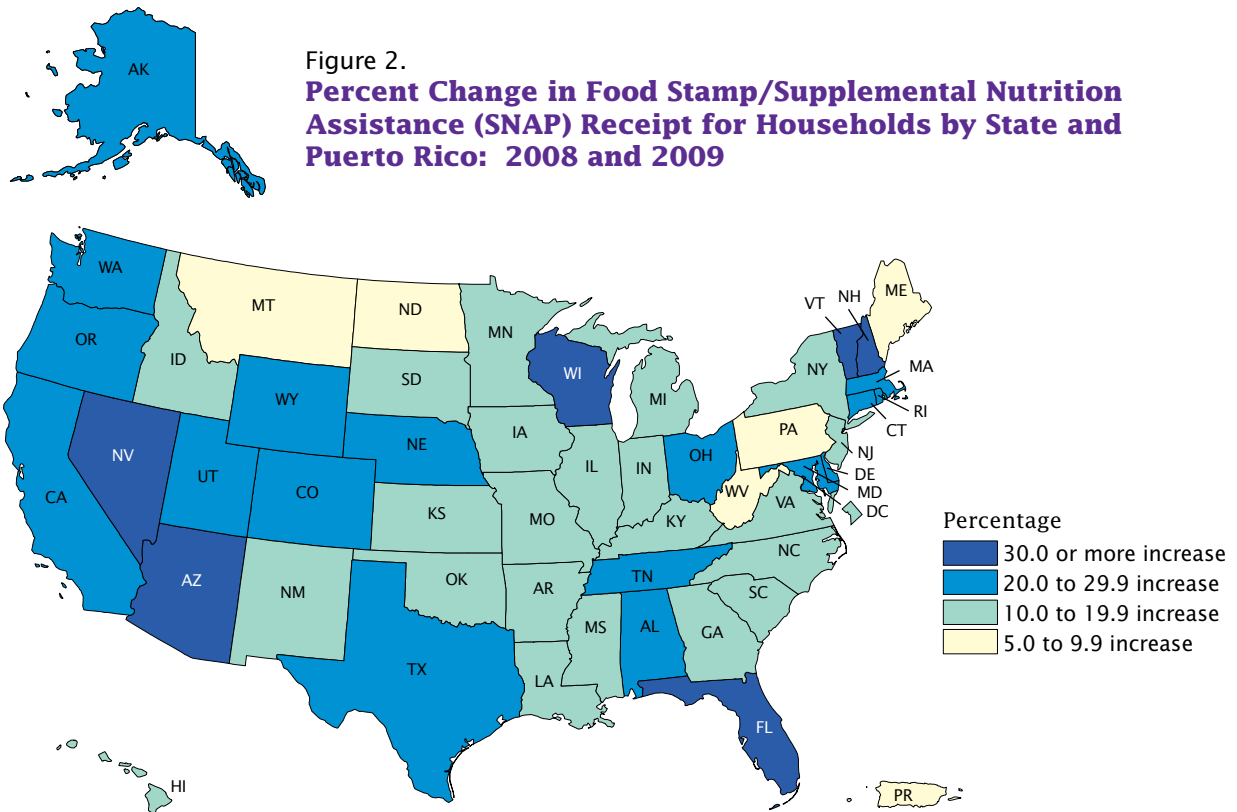
Although not statistically different from several other states, the food stamp/SNAP receipt increased by 32.4 percent in Florida, 32.2 percent in New Hampshire, and 31.3 percent in Nevada between 2008 and 2009.

Altogether, there were eight states in which the increase in food stamp/SNAP receipt was larger than the national increase of 19.8 percent, and eleven states with increases that were smaller than the national increase (Figure 2).

SOURCE AND ACCURACY

Data presented in this report are based on people and households that responded to the ACS in 2008 and 2009. The resulting estimates are representative of the entire population. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. Due to rounding, some details may not sum to totals. For information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and sampling and nonsampling errors, please see the “2009 ACS Accuracy of the Data” document located at www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data_2009.pdf.

Figure 2.
Percent Change in Food Stamp/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) Receipt for Households by State and Puerto Rico: 2008 and 2009



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Surveys, 2008 and 2009, Puerto Rico Community Surveys, 2008 and 2009.

WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data for the nation, states, congressional districts, counties,

places, and other localities every year. It has an annual sample size of about 3 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico and includes both housing units and group quarters (e.g., nursing facilities and prisons). The ACS is conducted in every county throughout the nation, and every municipio

in Puerto Rico, where it is called the Puerto Rico Community Survey. Beginning in 2006, ACS data for 2005 were released for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 and greater. For information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit <www.census.gov/acs/www>.

Food Stamp/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Receipt in the Past 12 Months for Households by State and Puerto Rico: 2008 and 2009

Area	Food stamp/SNAP receipt in 2008				Food stamp/SNAP receipt in 2009				Change in food stamp/SNAP receipt			
	Estimate	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Percentage	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Estimate	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Percentage	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Estimate	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Percentage	Margin of error ¹ (±)
United States . . .	9,770,597	49,238	8.6	0.1	11,707,519	48,656	10.3	0.1	1,936,922	69,223	*19.8	0.8
Alabama	186,630	6,756	10.3	0.4	235,122	7,393	12.7	0.4	48,492	10,015	*26.0	6.0
Alaska	18,825	1,815	7.9	0.8	23,699	2,465	10.0	1.0	4,874	3,061	*25.9	17.9
Arizona	186,071	8,165	8.2	0.4	244,136	9,376	10.7	0.4	58,065	12,433	*31.2	7.7
Arkansas	140,865	5,668	12.6	0.5	157,428	5,591	14.0	0.5	16,563	7,962	*11.8	6.0
California	624,731	12,717	5.1	0.1	754,865	13,278	6.2	0.1	130,134	18,386	*20.8	3.3
Colorado	95,111	5,109	5.0	0.3	116,941	5,077	6.1	0.3	21,830	7,203	*23.0	8.5
Connecticut	87,102	4,342	6.6	0.3	107,127	4,818	8.1	0.4	20,025	6,486	*23.0	8.3
Delaware	24,322	2,269	7.4	0.7	30,371	2,804	9.3	0.9	6,049	3,607	*24.9	16.4
District of Columbia	27,032	2,188	10.8	0.9	32,032	2,737	12.8	1.1	5,000	3,505	*18.5	13.9
Florida	504,043	12,589	7.1	0.2	667,567	13,808	9.6	0.2	163,524	18,685	*32.4	4.3
Georgia	320,790	9,125	9.2	0.3	378,962	8,892	10.9	0.2	58,172	12,741	*18.1	4.4
Hawaii	31,443	2,688	7.2	0.6	34,900	3,005	7.8	0.7	3,457	4,032	11.0	13.5
Idaho	43,218	3,610	7.6	0.6	49,288	3,365	8.8	0.6	6,070	4,935	*14.0	12.3
Illinois	416,101	9,487	8.7	0.2	486,801	10,413	10.2	0.2	70,700	14,086	*17.0	3.7
Indiana	226,864	7,639	9.1	0.3	267,661	8,452	10.8	0.3	40,797	11,392	*18.0	5.4
Iowa	107,115	4,585	8.8	0.4	123,219	5,166	10.0	0.4	16,104	6,908	*15.0	6.9
Kansas	78,258	4,192	7.0	0.4	91,291	3,873	8.3	0.3	13,033	5,707	*16.7	8.0
Kentucky	230,001	7,352	13.6	0.4	255,794	6,607	15.1	0.4	25,793	9,884	*11.2	4.6
Louisiana	264,816	7,863	16.3	0.5	293,164	8,739	17.4	0.5	28,348	11,756	*10.7	4.7
Maine	73,984	3,725	13.6	0.7	78,873	4,202	14.5	0.8	4,889	5,616	6.6	7.8
Maryland	114,870	5,947	5.5	0.3	147,415	5,156	7.0	0.3	32,545	7,871	*28.3	8.0
Massachusetts	191,055	6,347	7.7	0.3	233,115	7,834	9.4	0.3	42,060	10,083	*22.0	5.8
Michigan	465,280	7,882	12.2	0.2	555,220	11,569	14.5	0.3	89,940	13,998	*19.3	3.2
Minnesota	114,501	4,499	5.5	0.2	131,783	5,803	6.3	0.3	17,282	7,343	*15.1	6.8
Mississippi	144,994	5,437	13.2	0.5	164,624	6,259	15.0	0.6	19,630	8,290	*13.5	6.1
Missouri	260,372	7,236	11.2	0.3	293,576	7,316	12.5	0.3	33,204	10,290	*12.8	4.2
Montana	30,432	2,454	8.1	0.6	32,887	2,497	8.8	0.7	2,455	3,501	8.1	12.0
Nebraska	46,895	3,290	6.7	0.5	58,665	4,203	8.2	0.6	11,770	5,337	*25.1	12.5
Nevada	49,855	3,780	5.2	0.4	65,473	4,578	6.8	0.5	15,618	5,937	*31.3	13.5
New Hampshire	26,652	2,735	5.3	0.5	35,223	2,786	7.0	0.5	8,571	3,904	*32.2	17.1
New Jersey	150,029	5,640	4.8	0.2	174,459	7,059	5.5	0.2	24,430	9,035	*16.3	6.4
New Mexico	66,800	3,776	9.0	0.5	79,217	4,267	10.7	0.6	12,417	5,698	*18.6	9.3
New York	754,459	15,087	10.6	0.2	891,528	14,154	12.4	0.2	137,069	20,687	*18.2	3.0
North Carolina	343,177	9,370	9.5	0.3	401,614	10,150	11.0	0.3	58,437	13,814	*17.0	4.4
North Dakota	19,628	2,044	7.1	0.7	21,168	1,953	7.6	0.7	1,540	2,827	7.8	15.0
Ohio	448,544	8,996	9.9	0.2	569,270	10,381	12.6	0.2	120,726	13,737	*26.9	3.4
Oklahoma	153,347	6,231	10.9	0.4	172,416	5,857	12.1	0.4	19,069	8,551	*12.4	6.0
Oregon	172,176	6,884	11.7	0.5	215,791	6,686	14.5	0.4	43,615	9,596	*25.3	6.3
Pennsylvania	440,743	9,088	9.0	0.2	477,892	8,088	9.7	0.2	37,149	12,166	*8.4	2.9
Rhode Island	31,478	2,873	7.9	0.7	40,499	3,277	10.0	0.8	9,021	4,358	*28.7	15.7
South Carolina	183,087	6,987	10.8	0.4	214,770	7,924	12.4	0.4	31,683	10,564	*17.3	6.2
South Dakota	26,809	2,328	8.4	0.7	30,705	2,768	9.7	0.8	3,896	3,617	*14.5	14.3
Tennessee	311,518	7,894	12.8	0.3	375,597	9,373	15.3	0.4	64,079	12,254	*20.6	4.3
Texas	798,173	14,044	9.5	0.2	979,499	13,447	11.5	0.2	181,326	19,444	*22.7	2.7
Utah	48,124	3,314	5.6	0.4	62,314	3,714	7.2	0.4	14,190	4,977	*29.5	11.8
Vermont	21,845	1,842	8.7	0.7	28,433	1,982	11.3	0.8	6,588	2,706	*30.2	14.2
Virginia	194,281	7,634	6.6	0.3	232,617	6,911	7.8	0.2	38,336	10,298	*19.7	5.9
Washington	221,475	7,459	8.7	0.3	282,907	8,024	11.1	0.3	61,432	10,955	*27.7	5.6
West Virginia	96,909	4,521	12.9	0.6	106,391	4,809	14.2	0.6	9,482	6,600	*9.8	7.1
Wisconsin	147,187	5,285	6.5	0.2	192,121	5,720	8.5	0.3	44,934	7,788	*30.5	6.1
Wyoming	8,580	1,380	4.1	0.7	11,089	1,735	5.2	0.8	2,509	2,217	*29.2	29.0
Puerto Rico	392,827	7,766	33.1	0.6	415,075	6,823	35.1	0.5	22,248	10,338	*5.7	2.7

* Statistically different at the 90 percent confidence level.

¹ Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Surveys, 2008 and 2009, Puerto Rico Community Surveys, 2008 and 2009.