Myths vs. Facts

The truth about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

People on welfare are lazy and don’t want to work.

Many SNAP households are, or have been, part of the labor force. About 30% of SNAP households have earnings from wages, salaries, or self-employment. About 40% of participants live in a household with earnings. (Source: Building a Healthier America)

Government handouts don’t help fix the problem. Teach them how to fish!

SNAP benefits equal less than $1.50 per person per meal. SNAP lessens the effect of poverty and decreases food insecurity and hunger. SNAP participation reduces the likelihood of food insecurity by about 30% and the likelihood of very low food insecurity by 20%. (Source: Building a Healthier America)

They just buy chips and soda with the food stamps. That’s why they are fat.

Diets of SNAP recipients don’t differ much from everyone else. (Source: USDA Economic Research Service Report SNAP Participation Leads to Modest Changes in Diet Quality, April 2013)

People on welfare use food stamps to buy alcohol and cigarettes.

SNAP cannot be used to withdraw cash at ATM machines or to purchase alcohol, cigarettes or non-food items. (Source: FNS Website)

We should be creating jobs with that money instead of handing it out for free.

Each $1 billion increase in SNAP benefits is estimated to create or maintain 18,000 full-time equivalent jobs, including 3,000 farm jobs. (Source: Building a Healthier America)

For More Information, Call the Hunger Hotline 1-800-359-2163
Why get a job when you get more money from government handouts?

The average SNAP benefit per person is $133.41. (Source: FNS website)

People on welfare buy steak and lobster with my tax dollars.

SNAP supports healthy eating. Fruits and vegetables, grain products, dairy, meat, and meat alternates account for almost three-quarters of the money value of foods SNAP recipients use at home. The purchasing patterns of SNAP households mirror those of other low- and moderate-income households. Because they can be spent only on food, SNAP benefits increase families’ food purchases more than the equivalent amount of cash assistance. (Source: Center on Budget Policy and Priorities website, Building a Healthier America.)

People on food stamps are scamming the system.

SNAP delivers program benefits with a high degree of integrity. The FY 2012 SNAP payment accuracy rate—the combined measure of benefit overpayments and underpayments to recipients—was the highest in the history of the program. (Source: USDA blog)

Food stamps help poor people but it doesn’t help anyone else during these tough times.

SNAP puts money back into the economy. Every $1 in new SNAP benefits generates up to $1.80 in economic activity. (Building a Healthier America)

We waste too many tax dollars on handouts.

SNAP is 2% of the federal budget. (Source: OMB National Priorities Project FY 2014 projected federal government spending)

Everyone who receives handouts should have to work for the money.

Almost 55% of all SNAP recipients are children or elderly. Forty-seven percent are less than 18 years old, and 8% percent are elderly (age 60 or older). About three-fourths of all SNAP households include a person who is elderly (age 60 and above), a child, or a disabled member. (Source: Building a Healthier America)

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