



BY ESI HUTCHFUL

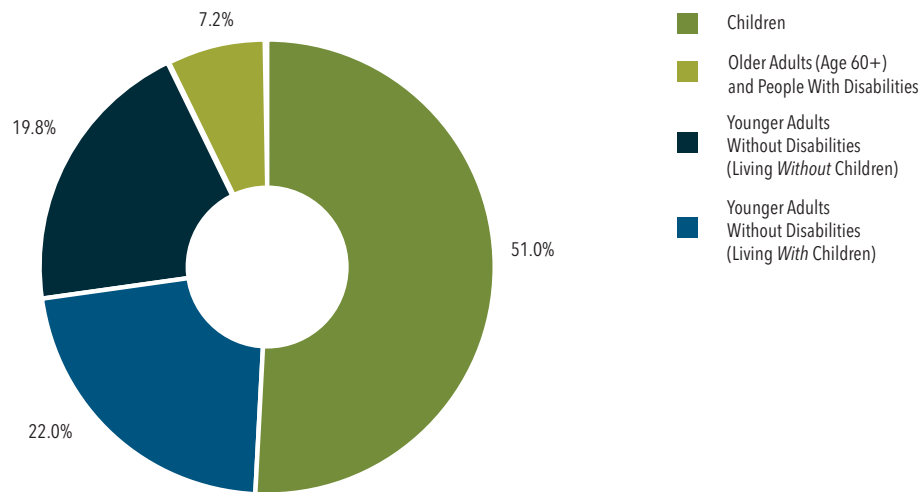
CalFresh Reaches Millions of Californians and Reduces Poverty

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the country’s largest anti-hunger program. SNAP benefits are 100% federally funded and help families and individuals put food on the table by paying for a minimally adequate diet. Research shows that SNAP yields important long-term benefits in terms of participants’ economic self-sufficiency, health, and educational attainment, especially for children.¹

In California, SNAP – known as CalFresh – serves a particularly vulnerable population. On average, almost 4.3 million Californians received CalFresh assistance each month during the 2016 federal fiscal year. Over half of these participants were children, and another 7.2% were either people with disabilities or adults age 60 or older.² Of younger adults without disabilities who receive CalFresh benefits, more than half lived with children.³

Almost 60 Percent of CalFresh Participants Are Children, Older Adults, or People With Disabilities

Average Monthly Number of CalFresh Participants in Federal Fiscal Year 2016 = 4,261,000

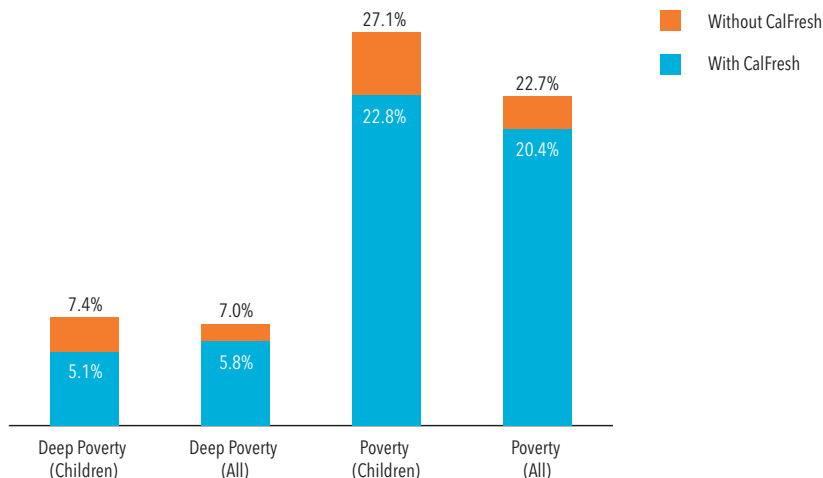


Note: CalFresh is California’s version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.
Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and US Department of Agriculture

By increasing purchasing power for millions of Californians, CalFresh plays a crucial role in fighting poverty. With an average CalFresh household living on a gross income of \$707 a month, the \$281 average monthly benefit boosted their resources by 40%.⁴ Without CalFresh food assistance, 22.7% of Californians would have lived in poverty and 7.0% would have lived in deep poverty in 2013-2015.⁵ However, because of CalFresh, the poverty and deep poverty rates are actually 20.4% and 5.8%, respectively.⁶

CalFresh Food Assistance Reduces Poverty and Deep Poverty Among Children and All Californians

Poverty and Deep-Poverty Rates for Children and All Californians, 2013-2015



Note: CalFresh is California's version of the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. "Deep poverty" is defined as having net resources below 50% of the California Poverty Measure poverty threshold and "poverty," below 100% of the threshold.
 Source: Budget Center analysis of data from the Public Policy Institute of California and the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality

Despite being one of the most effective anti-poverty programs, SNAP faces growing threats from federal policymakers. On February 12, the Trump Administration released the President’s budget for the 2019 federal fiscal year, which proposes slashing SNAP funding by over \$213 billion (nearly 30%) over 10 years, including by narrowing eligibility and cutting benefits.⁷ These changes would harm those who rely on food assistance, including the growing population of older Californians who already struggle to put food on the table.⁸ Instead of targeting SNAP benefits, policymakers should focus on strengthening its ability to reduce hunger, ease hardship, and improve child well-being.

¹ Steven Carlson, et al., *SNAP Works for America’s Children* (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: September 29, 2016), p.2.
² Sarah Lauffer, *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2016* (US Department of Agriculture: November 2017), Table B.14. The 7.2% figure was provided by Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis of the underlying US Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Quality Control administrative data (Federal Fiscal Year 2016). "People with disabilities" does not include children or adults age 60 or older.
³ Center on Budget and Policy Priorities analysis of US Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Quality Control administrative data (Federal Fiscal Year 2016).
⁴ Budget Center analysis of *Characteristics of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Households: Fiscal Year 2016* (US Department of Agriculture: November 2017), Table B.2.
⁵ Budget Center analysis of data from 2013 to 2015 for the California Poverty Measure (based on US Census Bureau, American Community Survey data), produced by the Public Policy Institute of California and the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality.
⁶ Budget Center analysis of data from 2013 to 2015 for the California Poverty Measure (based on US Census Bureau, American Community Survey data), produced by the Public Policy Institute of California and the Stanford Center on Poverty and Inequality.
⁷ Office of Management and Budget, *Effective, Efficient, Accountable: An American Budget – Major Savings and Reforms* (Federal Fiscal Year 2019), p.128. For the 30% figure, see Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *Greenstein: Trump Budget Offers Stark Vision* (February 12, 2018).
⁸ Budget Center analysis of the California Health Interview Survey, 2011-2015. More than one-quarter of Californians age 65 or older (27.1%) report that they cannot afford enough food.