

Basic Food

Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
Economic Services Administration
Community Services Division

Program Description

The Basic Food program provides assistance for individuals and families to purchase and access nutritious foods, which plays a critical role in supporting our communities in reaching their full potential. Basic Food refers to a combination of Washington state's federally funded Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, and the state-funded Food Assistance Program, which is for legal immigrants who do not yet qualify for federal SNAP benefits.

We provide the tools and resources to promote well-being through:

- **Access to healthy foods.** Healthy food is foundational to our well-being and without it we struggle to fully contribute to our community. Basic Food provides monthly food benefits to ensure children and adults have a full belly and access to nutritional foods that help us through all stages of life by ensuring healthy brain development, greater school attendance, increased health and social inclusion. In order to qualify for Basic Food, a household's earnings must fall below 200% (\$43,440 for a family of three) of the federal poverty level. The average daily benefit for a household receiving Basic Food is \$7.01 per day.
- **Outreach and education.** In addition to food assistance, the program conducts statewide educational efforts to spread healthy eating awareness and increase physical activities through SNAP-Education. By making sure our community members have the tools we all need to thrive, including knowledge about fresh, healthy food, resource management and food safety, they can create lifelong habits that build a solid foundation for themselves and their families.
- **Connection to employment and training opportunities.** The Basic Food Employment and Training program, or BFET, is a partnership between DSHS, community-based organizations and the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges. It gives youth and adults the opportunity to make use of their gifts and talents to increase their skills and expertise so they have a broader range of options for future employment.

Highlights

- **Washington state was 7th in the nation for SNAP payment accuracy in federal FY 2019.**
- **The BFET program operates in 36 of 39 counties in Washington state and is one of the most robust employment and training programs in the country.**

More information:

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Transforming lives

(10/2020)

Basic Food Facts

Trends

The number of people served by Basic Food has decreased from FY 2018 to FY 2019.

Decrease

FY 2018 **897,220**

FY 2019 **841,927**

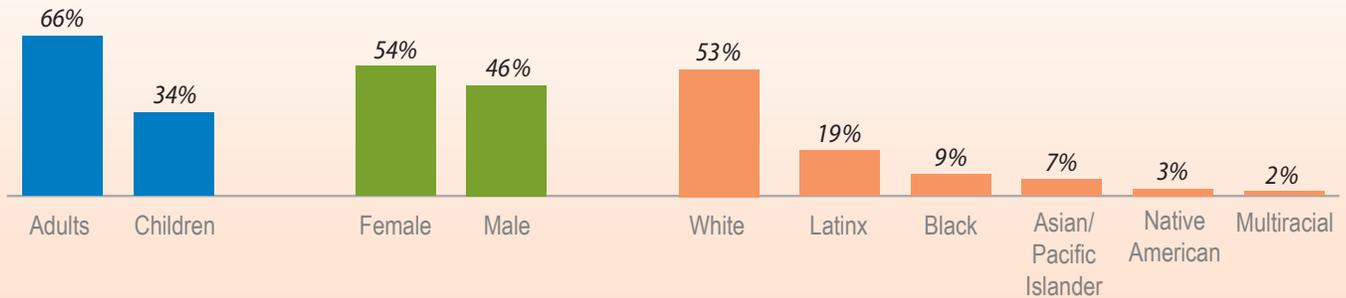
Meeting the Need

The number of people receiving Basic Food increased during the last recession and decreased as the economy continued to improve. For every 100 people living below 200% of the federal poverty line, 46 were served in 2019 which is equal to the number served in 2010.



Characteristics of People Served

Adults, females and people who racially identify as white make up the majority of the caseload.

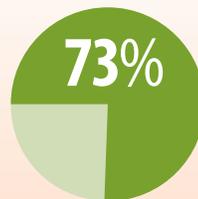


Average Benefit

The average benefit for a household receiving Basic Food.

\$7.01
per day

Receipt of Other Benefits



73% of people receiving Basic Food do not receive any other cash benefit

Budget

Basic Food accounted for less than 1% of state spending in the 2017-2019 biennium.

→ Share of spending on Basic Food = 0.09%

