



Farm Bill Primer: SNAP and Other Nutrition Title Programs

The Nutrition title of the farm bill typically reauthorizes a number of nutrition or domestic food assistance programs. These include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program) and certain other programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). These programs (listed below, with additional detail in **Table 1**) were last reauthorized by the Agriculture Act of 2014 (2014 farm bill; P.L. 113-79). They are authorized through September 30, 2018. Farm bills since 1973 have included reauthorization of the Food Stamp Program (renamed SNAP in 2008).

Nutrition Programs Reauthorized in a Farm Bill

The major programs reauthorized in the 2014 farm bill were the following:

- SNAP and related grant programs (e.g., SNAP Employment & Training);
- Programs in lieu of SNAP: **Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)**, grants for certain territories;
- **The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)**;
- **Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)**;
- **Community Food Projects**; and
- **Senior Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP)**.

SNAP is the largest of USDA’s domestic food assistance programs, in both participation and spending (see **Table 1**).

Relationships with Child Nutrition Reauthorization

The authorizing statutes for the child nutrition programs (National School Lunch Program and other institutional food service programs) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) are typically reauthorized in a “child nutrition reauthorization,” not a farm bill. These programs were last reauthorized by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-96). However, the 2008 and 2014 farm bills did include policies related to the purchase and distribution of food to schools. Though the **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP)** is authorized in a statute typically amended in child nutrition reauthorization, the 2008 and 2014 farm bills made some changes to this program.

Funding

According to the Congressional Budget Office’s (CBO’s) projected costs at the time of enactment, the Nutrition title made up nearly 80% of spending under the 2014 farm bill. SNAP accounted for the vast majority of the spending in this title.

SNAP Funding

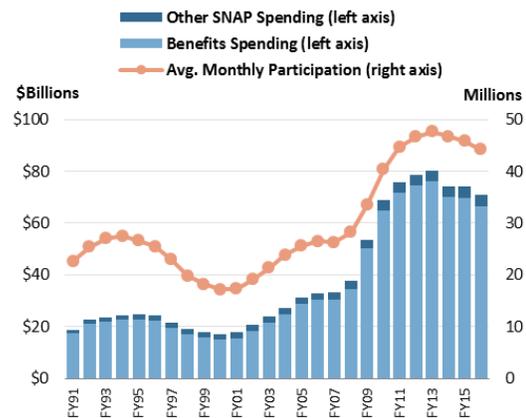
SNAP is authorized as open-ended mandatory spending and is funded through appropriations laws. As such, amending SNAP eligibility, benefits, or other program rules can have

a budgetary impact. At the same time, the availability of appropriated funding also affects SNAP’s operation.

SNAP’s spending is largely driven by program participation, which can fluctuate due to economic conditions and program rules (see **Figure 1**).

Approximately 95% of SNAP spending is for the benefits themselves, which are 100% federally funded. Administrative costs of eligibility determination are shared between the states and the federal government. Other SNAP spending includes funds for nutrition education and Employment and Training (E&T).

Figure 1. SNAP Participation and Federal Spending (FY1991-FY2016)



Source: CRS, using USDA-FNS Administrative Data.

Note: Data underlying this chart are available in CRS Report R42505 (see below).

Other Funding

The programs in lieu of SNAP (except for a small amount of FDPIR) are also mandatory spending. TEFAP’s “entitlement commodity” funds for food are mandatory spending, while the program’s administrative costs are discretionary. CSFP is discretionary spending. FFVP and SFMNP receive mandatory funding from sources outside of annual appropriations bills.

SNAP in the 2014 Farm Bill

The 2014 farm bill was formulated and enacted amid contentious debate that centered on SNAP spending and certain program rules. The enacted 2014 farm bill had to reconcile significant differences between the House- and Senate-passed SNAP provisions. The enacted bill ultimately included changes to the treatment of Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) payments in the calculation of SNAP benefits, funding and authority to implement and evaluate Employment and Training (E&T) Pilot Projects, changes to standards for SNAP-authorized retailers, and a new Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive grant program, among other changes. The law did not change SNAP’s financial eligibility rules,

nor did it change work-related rules. Many of the questions and debates during the 112th and 113th Congresses' formulation of this law persist today and may shape the next farm bill.

Related CRS Reports

- CRS Report R42353, *Domestic Food Assistance: Summary of Programs*, by Randy Alison Aussenberg and Kirsten J. Colello
- CRS Report R43332, *SNAP and Related Nutrition Provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill (P.L. 113-79)*, by Randy Alison Aussenberg
- CRS Report R42505, *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP): A Primer on Eligibility and Benefits*, by Randy Alison Aussenberg
- CRS Report R42394, *Drug Testing and Crime-Related Restrictions in TANF, SNAP, and Housing Assistance*, by Maggie McCarty et al.
- CRS Report R43400, *Work Requirements, Time Limits, and Work Incentives in TANF, SNAP, and Housing Assistance*, by Gene Falk, Maggie McCarty, and Randy Alison Aussenberg

Table I. Major Nutrition Programs in the 2014 Farm Bill

Program	Authorizing Statute	Program Summary	FY2016 Expenditures (in millions) (exceptions noted)	FY2016 Participation
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly, Food Stamp Program)	Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (§1 et seq.)	Provides to low-income households electronic benefits redeemable for SNAP-eligible foods at SNAP-eligible retailers. Benefit amounts vary by household size and benefit calculation rules. Non-benefit SNAP funding for matching states' administrative costs, Employment & Training, nutrition education, and other SNAP-related costs. Operates in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Virgin Islands; other territories receive nutrition block grants in lieu of SNAP.	\$70,963	44.2 million
The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)	Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (§27); the Emergency Food Act (§204(a))	Provides food commodities (and cash support for storage and distribution costs) through states to local emergency feeding organizations (e.g., food banks).	\$375 ^a	Not available
Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP)	Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (§4(a))	Provides supplemental monthly food packages to low-income elderly persons (primarily).	\$183	585,300
Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)	Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (§4(b)); Agriculture and Consumer Protection Act of 1973 (§4(a))	Provides, in lieu of SNAP benefits, food commodities to low-income households on Indian reservations and to Native American families residing in Oklahoma or in designated areas near Oklahoma.	\$121	93,000
Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program	Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (§4002)	Provides vouchers/coupons to low-income seniors to purchase fresh produce at farmers' markets and other direct-to-consumer venues.	\$21	816,000 ^a
Community Food Projects	Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (§25)	Competitive grants to nonprofit organizations for programs that improve access to locally produced food for low-income households.	\$9	Not available
Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) ^b	Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (§19)	Provides free fresh fruit and vegetable snacks to elementary school students.	\$167 ^a	Not available

Source: Except as noted, participation and funding data from USDA-FNS Key Data Report, dated May 5, 2017, based on data through February 28, 2017.

- Obligations data from FY2018 president's budget, USDA-FNS Explanatory Notes.
- The 2008 farm bill (P.L. 110-46) permanently authorized and permanently funded FFVP (funds from Section 32). As such, FFVP was not "reauthorized" in the 2014 bill, but a related pilot study was authorized.

Randy Alison Aussenberg, Specialist in Nutrition Assistance Policy

IF10663

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.