

# SNAP

the current structure of nutritional assistance works for Idaho



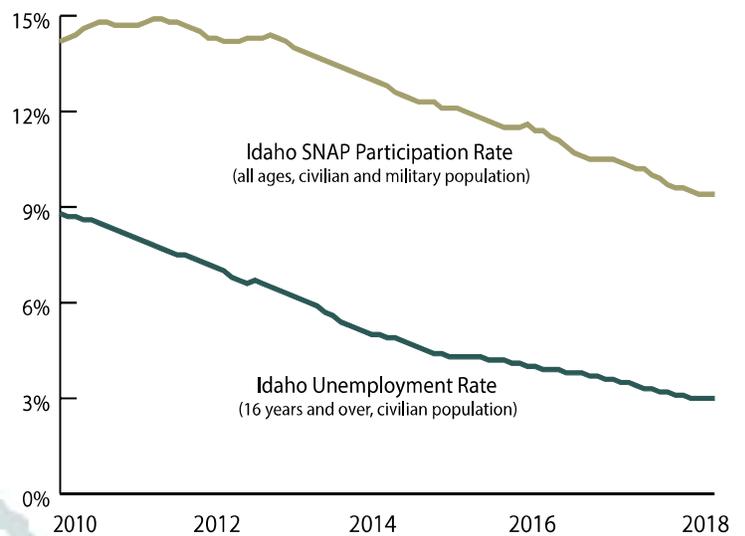
Idaho Asset Building Network

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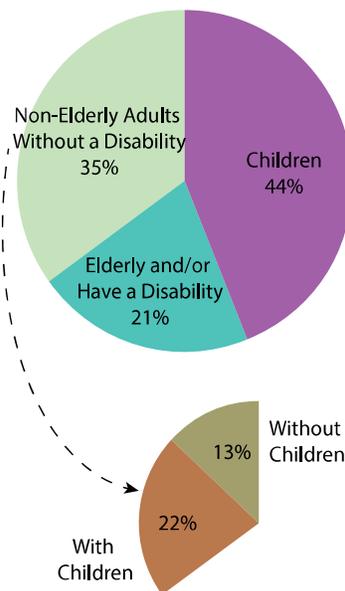
Federal nutrition programs and the charitable food system work together in Idaho to provide a nutrition safety net that reaches hungry people throughout the state. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a mandatory program that must serve everyone who is eligible. **The current structure of SNAP allows it to expand during economic downturns and shrink when the economy improves, providing an economic buffer for Idahoans.**

Following the Great Recession, SNAP was able to expand to meet the need of struggling Idaho families while some other safety net programs were not.<sup>2</sup> If SNAP had been restructured as a block grant in 2007, just before the recession, Idaho would have received 70 percent less funding than it needed to meet the needs of hungry families in 2013.<sup>3</sup> Since 2000, funding for major block grants has fallen 27 percent after accounting for inflation.<sup>4</sup> Fortunately, SNAP maintained its current structure and was able to expand and shrink along with Idaho's need for food assistance.

**SNAP participation in Idaho has decreased by more than a third since its peak following the Great Recession.<sup>1</sup>**



**Nearly two-thirds of people who rely on SNAP for food assistance are children, elderly, or disabled - and many recipients who do not fall in to these categories are taking care of at least one person that does.<sup>5</sup>**



However the economic recovery has not hit people across the state equally, and Idahoans in many areas are still struggling. For example – **in 2017, residents of Clearwater County had seasonally adjusted unemployment that was nearly four times the rate of Madison County.<sup>6</sup>**

The majority of SNAP recipients in Idaho are children, elderly, or have a disability. An estimated 575,000 Idahoans relied on SNAP to help feed their families at some point during the 6 years following the hit of the Great Recession.<sup>7</sup> Ninety-six percent of them used the program to meet a short term emergency need. **Even during the recovery, more than 27 percent of Idaho households still have income that changes significantly from month to month.<sup>8</sup>** The program is an invaluable safety net for Idaho families when they hit hard times. Any structural or funding changes to SNAP would limit its ability to help Idahoans when they need it most.



**Idaho Asset Building Network**

*In partnership with Idaho Voices for Children*

**For resources and more information:**

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- 2 Moffitt, R. A. (2013). The Great Recession and the social safety net. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 650(1), 143-166.
- 3 Rosenbaum, D. (2017, March 30). Block granting SNAP would abandon decades long federal commitment to reducing hunger. Retrieved from [https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/block-granting-snap-would-abandon-decades-long-federal-commitment-to](https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/block-granting-snap-would-abandon-decades-long-federal-commitment-to-research/food-assistance/block-granting-snap-would-abandon-decades-long-federal-commitment-to)
- 4 Cho, C., Kogan, R., Reiche, D., & Shapiro, I. (2017, January 22). Block granting low income programs leads to large funding declines over time, history shows. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-budget/blockgranting-low-income-programs-leads-to-large-funding-declines-over-time>
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- 6 Idaho Department of Labor. (2018). Local area unemployment statistics. Retrieved from <https://lmi.idaho.gov/laus/>
- 7 Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. (2016, January 26). Primary care access program [Presentation by Richard Armstrong].
- 8 Prosperity Now. (2018). Idaho scorecard. Retrieved from <https://scorecard.prosperitynow.org/data-by-location#state/id>