

MARYLAND SNAP HOUSEHOLDS, 2025

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The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), designed to help alleviate food insecurity, is one of the largest and most essential safety net programs in the U.S. Accessible to qualifying individuals and families, the program serves those experiencing economic crises as well as those who work but with monthly income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level [FPL], depending on the state (Food & Nutrition Service [FNS], n.d.-a). The program also serves older or disabled adults. Through providing food assistance, SNAP not only reduces participants' food insecurity but also reduces their poverty levels and improves their health outcomes (Carlson & Keith-Jennings, 2018; Miller & Morrissey, 2021).

In Maryland, an estimated one in eight (12%) residents face food insecurity, and the majority of these residents receive SNAP (Rabbitt et al., 2025). Along with reducing food insecurity, SNAP dollars help support local food retailers by providing people in need with money to spend on groceries (National Grocers Association, n.d.). This support can be especially important for retailers in food deserts (Ross & Andara, 2025). Given the importance of SNAP, this brief examines the nearly one-half of a million Maryland households and individuals who received food assistance in State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2025 (July 2024–June 2025).

SNAP participation in SFY 2025 was stable and similar to SFYs 2023 and 2024 (Figure 1). Likely, the relative consistency is related to the state's generally low unemployment rate following the economic disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. During SFY 2025, the state's unemployment rate hovered between 3% and 4%. Inflation was also lower than in the prior several years (The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, n.d.). Despite lower inflation overall, grocery prices in Maryland climbed 7% in the past year, one of the largest increases in the country (Huffman, 2025). Additionally, in 2025, many Maryland families reported feeling stressed over the cost of food (Spears, 2025).

KEY FINDINGS

- 503,331 households received SNAP in SFY 2025, a 2% increase from SFY 2023.
- The most common household type was households with children (35%) followed by older adults (28%).
- About one in 10 (9%) households were new to SNAP in SFY 2025.
- Households had a median of 48 months (4 years) of SNAP receipt in the prior 10 years.
- About two in five (36%) adults worked while receiving SNAP. However, this varied greatly by adult type.
- Median quarterly earnings while receiving SNAP were \$5,103, similar to SFY 2023.
- Adults who worked were frequently employed in health care and social assistance (21%), retail trade (18%), administrative and support services (12%), and accommodation and food services (12%).

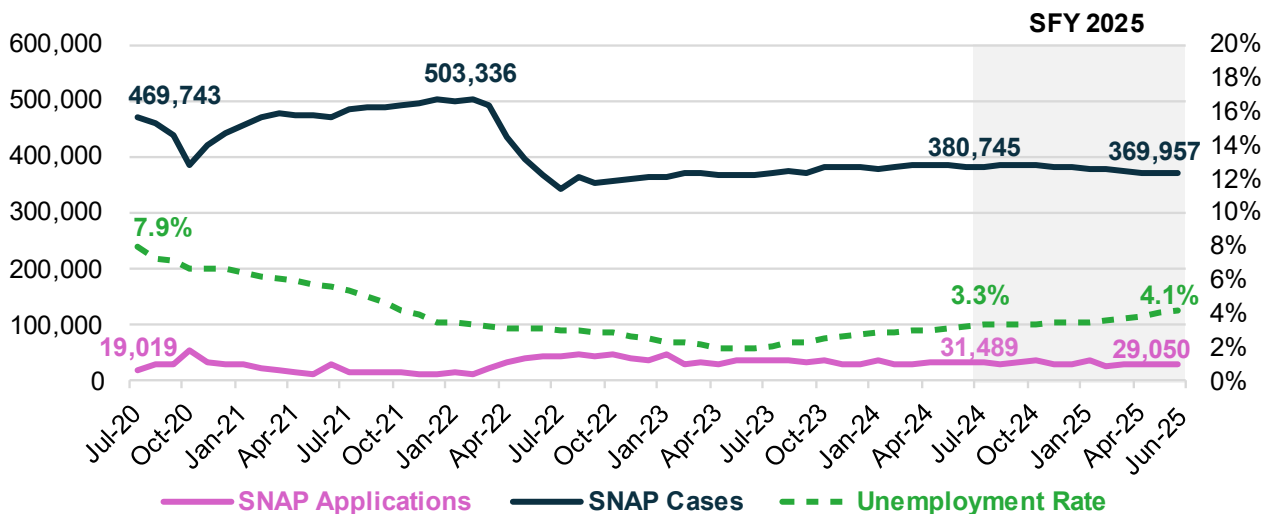
In a period where the SNAP caseload has remained relatively stable, but many are concerned about the cost of food, this brief highlights the characteristics of the 503,331 unique households and 514,055 individuals receiving SNAP in SFY 2025. It does so by addressing the following questions:

1. What are the compositions of SNAP households?
2. What are the characteristics of SNAP households?
3. What are the demographic and employment characteristics of adult recipients in SNAP households?

Addressing these questions can help stakeholders, including local government agencies and community partners, better understand who in Maryland is receiving SNAP and make programmatic and policy decisions that help alleviate Marylanders' food insecurity

and stress around food costs. This SFY 2025 brief can also serve as a final baseline for stakeholders, since it is the last update before H.R. 1 (2025) takes effect. H.R. 1 (2025), is a federal bill passed in July 2025 that enacts several sweeping changes to the SNAP program that will directly impact SNAP in every state, including Maryland. These changes include expanded criteria for who is an Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents (ABAWD) and subject to time limits and work requirements, increased eligibility restrictions for immigrant families, as well as drastic increases to the cost of SNAP shouldered by the state (Maryland Department of Human Services [MDHS], 2025). Since H.R. 1's (2025) enactment, the number of Maryland residents receiving SNAP has already decreased (Rosenbaum et al., 2026) and the characteristics of residents receiving SNAP may change. This 2025 report can provide a point of comparison to monitor and assess future caseload changes.

Figure 1. Monthly Maryland SNAP Applications, Cases, and Unemployment



Note: The number of applications and cases comes from Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) [statistical reports](#). Unemployment data comes from [BLS statistical reports](#). Application and case counts represent the total of each per month.

Methods

Study Population

The study population for this report includes every household that received SNAP for at least one month in SFY 2025 (July 2024 through June 2025). All references to years in the remainder of this report are SFYs unless otherwise noted. Eligibility for SNAP is based on *households* which include one person or a group of people who live and prepare food together (Food and Nutrition Act of 2008). In 2025, there were 503,331 unduplicated SNAP households and 514,055 unduplicated adult recipients.

Additional Population Information

Households that received SNAP for more than one month in the SFY are included in the population only once. Specifically, this report includes the first month in the SFY that the household received benefits, even if the household participated for more than 1 month in the SFY or had multiple exits from and re-entries into the program. This report shows demographic and employment analyses for adult recipients only, including adults who were not head-of-household. Demographic and employment analyses exclude adults who were not recipients, such as heads-of-households who were ineligible for SNAP but received benefits on behalf of other eligible household members.

Defining Recipients

This report defines adult and child recipients using data available in the administrative data system, outlined as follows:

Adult Recipients include individuals who were: (a) age 18 or older as of the first month of receipt in the SFY; or (b) who were listed as the head-of-household on the case, regardless of age.

Child Recipients include individuals who were 17 or younger as of the first month of receipt in the SFY, unless they were a head-of-household.

Household and Adult Types

This report presents analyses by household and adult *types* where appropriate, providing a richer picture of SNAP participation. These types have different program eligibility rules and are based on the household compositions identified in the Food and Nutrition Service's national report on SNAP households (Monkovic & Ward, 2025) and groups specified in the Food and Nutrition Act (2008).

Household types are based on data from the first month of SNAP receipt in the SFY.¹ Table 2 shows the count of each household and adult type, and the first findings section provides a written description of each type. These types are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, some households and adult recipients may be represented in multiple types.² Although some overlap may occur, separating analyses by type allows stakeholders to understand the nuances between distinct groups of recipients. This report uses the terms *adults with a disability* and *disabled adults* interchangeably to acknowledge and respect the individual preferences of this exceptionally diverse group (Rahman, 2019; National Institutes of Health, 2025).

¹ Readers should interpret comparisons to SFY 2021 and SFY 2023 cautiously due to differences in measurement of adult and household types between SFYs 2023 and 2025.

² For example, a household could have an adult over 60 years of age as well as a child. Consequently, the household would be counted as both a household with an older adult as well as a household with children.

Table 1. Counts of Households and Adult Recipients, SFY 2025

Type	Households	Adult Recipients
Adults with Child(ren)	176,864	181,899
ABAWDs	43,702	41,790
Adults with a Disability	50,889	50,370
Older Adults	140,301	144,824
Other Adults	114,086	108,255
Unduplicated Total	503,331	514,055

Note: Household and adult types are based on the first month of receipt in the SFY. Adult recipient and household types are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, values do not add up to the unduplicated total, as adult recipients and households may be represented by more than one type. See the textbox on page 8 for categorical type definitions.

Comparison Groups

When relevant, this report compares SFY 2025 findings to findings in previous SFYs to illustrate caseload changes. Prior editions of this report are available on the [Family Welfare Research and Training Group](#) website.

Data

Study findings are based on analyses of administrative data retrieved from computerized management information systems maintained by the State of Maryland. Demographic and program participation data were extracted from the Eligibility and Enrollment (E&E) system. Employment and earnings data were obtained from BEACON.

E&E is the administrative data system for safety net programs managed by the Maryland Department of Human Services (MDHS). E&E provides individual- and case-level program participation data for SNAP and other services, as well as demographic data on participants. Certain demographic data in this report reflect the

limited nature of the administrative data systems used (e.g., gender is a binary field). Race (e.g., Black, White) and ethnicity (i.e., Hispanic/Latinx) data represent individuals who self-identify or for whom case managers assign a race and ethnicity (FIA, 2008).³ This report uses the combined non-gendered term Hispanic/Latinx in place of Hispanic or Latino to be inclusive.

BEACON became the administrative data system for Unemployment Insurance (UI) in September 2020 (replacing the Maryland Automated Benefits System) and includes data from all employers covered by the state's UI law and the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) program. Together, these account for approximately 91% of all Maryland civilian employment. However, BEACON data have a few limitations. First, BEACON provides aggregate earnings on a quarterly basis. Thus, it is not possible to compute or infer hourly wages or weekly or monthly salaries from these data. Second, the data do not include earnings from adults engaged in alternative work arrangements or informal work not covered by UI law.

³ A final rule published in the Federal Register on December 14, 2023 prohibits using visual observation as a data collection method for race and ethnicity effective February 12, 2024 (SNAP: Revision of Civil Rights Data Collection and Methods, 2023). In May 2025, FNS proposed a new rule that would rescind

the final rule from 2023, though no final rule has been established as of writing (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Recission of Changes to Civil Rights Data Collection Methods, 2025).

Finally, BEACON does not include out-of-state employment. Out-of-state employment by Maryland residents (13%) is four times greater than the national average (3%) and is even higher in certain jurisdictions.⁴ This report excludes some adult recipients from employment analyses due to missing identifying information (n=3,629).

Data Analysis

This report utilizes descriptive statistics to describe households and adult recipients who participated in SNAP, including percentages, medians, and averages. The average represents the total (e.g., all earnings) divided by the number of individuals included in the analysis. The median is sometimes preferred as a better representation of the data and is derived by arranging all values from lowest to highest and selecting the midpoint value. Extreme values do not affect the median, which can sometimes skew averages. This report examines population statistics and therefore does not use inferential statistics which are used to generalize sample findings to the population.

Findings: Household Characteristics

Many different Maryland households receive SNAP benefits. Given the diversity in families that receive SNAP, this section provides an overview of household characteristics in 2025. The overview includes SNAP caseload by jurisdiction, the age and number of recipients in Maryland's SNAP households, as well as households' previous history with the program.

Households by Jurisdiction

In 2025, over 503,331 Maryland households received SNAP (Table 2), highlighting the importance of the SNAP program for many Maryland families. The majority (71%) of SNAP households resided within the state's five most populous jurisdictions (Table 2) which include: Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Montgomery and Prince George's counties (Maryland Department of Planning, 2025). All five of these jurisdictions are located in the state's Baltimore and suburban Washington regions which are defined by their proximity to large, metropolitan areas (Maryland Department of Planning, n.d.; Maryland.gov, n.d.). Of the five most populous jurisdictions, Baltimore City had the highest shares (25%) of the state's SNAP caseload. Prince George's (16%) and Baltimore (14%) counties had the next highest share followed by Montgomery (10%) and Anne Arundel (6%) counties.

Maryland's 19 less populous jurisdictions collectively accounted for 29% of the 2025 SNAP caseload. These jurisdictions represent regions across the state, ranging from Western Maryland to the Upper and Lower Eastern Shore. While many of Maryland's less populous jurisdictions have a smaller overall share of the state's SNAP caseload, that does not mean there is not a substantial share of families within these jurisdictions utilizing SNAP. For example, 25% of households in Somerset County and 21% in Allegany and Dorchester counties received SNAP between 2017 and 2021, more than twice the statewide average during this period (Food, Research, & Action Center, n.d.).

⁴ Data are from the U.S. Census Bureau website (<https://data.census.gov/>): 2020–2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates for Sex of

Workers by Place of Work—State and County Level (B08007).

Table 2. Households by Jurisdiction, SFY 2025

Jurisdiction	%	n
Baltimore City	25%	125,513
Prince George's	16%	80,228
Baltimore County	14%	68,380
Montgomery	10%	49,533
Anne Arundel	6%	29,735
Washington	3%	16,047
Harford	3%	15,928
Wicomico	3%	15,724
Frederick	3%	13,138
Howard	3%	12,849
Charles	2%	11,261
Allegany	2%	9,736
Cecil	2%	8,893
St. Mary's	2%	7,660
Carroll	1%	6,949
Dorchester	1%	5,363
Worcester	1%	4,681
Calvert	1%	4,515
Somerset	1%	3,763
Caroline	1%	3,637
Talbot	1%	2,862
Garrett	0.5%	2,642
Queen Anne's	0.5%	2,362
Kent	0.3%	1,727
Maryland	100%	503,331

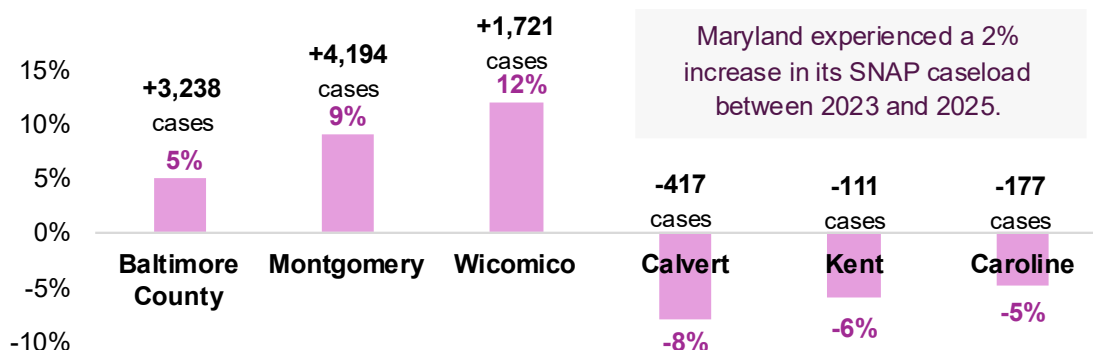
Note: Jurisdictions are sorted by highest percentage of the SFY 2025 caseload. Counts represent the total number of unduplicated households that received SNAP in the SFY. Jurisdictional counts do not sum to the state total due to missing jurisdiction information for some households (n=205). Valid percentages are reported to account for missing data.

Between years, the 2025 SNAP caseload represents a 2% increase from 2023 (n=492,679) (see [Gagliardi & Passarella, 2024](#)). Although this is a relatively small increase in the state caseload, several jurisdictions had more substantial caseload shifts. As Figure 2 shows, six jurisdictions had at least a 5% change in their caseload size from 2023. Wicomico County (12%) had the largest percent increase across all jurisdictions, experiencing an influx of 1,721 SNAP cases. Montgomery County (9%) and Baltimore County (5%) had the second and third largest percent increases in SNAP households.

Calvert County (-8%), comparatively, had the largest percent decrease, and experienced a loss of 417 households. Kent (-6%) and Caroline (-5%) counties also saw larger shares of their caseloads decline. While Kent, Caroline, and Calvert counties comprised between 0.3% and 1% of the statewide SNAP caseload, respectively (Table 2), larger changes to their relative caseload size can have greater impacts on local program administrators compared to larger jurisdictions, who may have more infrastructure and resources to handle such changes (Schuyler et al., 2024).

Figure 2. Percent Change in SNAP Caseload between SFYs 2023–2025

Jurisdictions with at least a 5% change between years



Household Composition

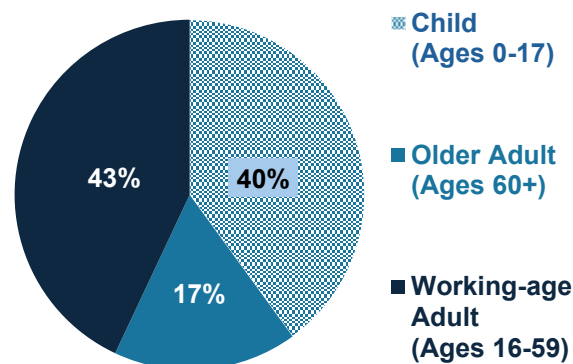
Maryland’s SNAP program serves a diverse range of households, including households with children, working-age adults without dependents, households with older adults, and households with disabled adults, amongst others. The range of families served by SNAP is one attribute that makes the program unique compared to other components of the safety net. For example, the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), one of the biggest safety net resources in the U.S., is only available to low-to-moderate income households who have filed taxes (Internal Revenue Service, n.d.). Maryland’s Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program, the state’s version of the federal TANF program, provides cash directly to families but is only available to adults with dependent children (Maryland DHS, n.d.).

Age of Recipients

While the composition of SNAP households varies, the program largely serves two groups of people particularly susceptible to the adverse effects of food insecurity: children and older adults. Amongst other challenges, children facing food insecurity are at a greater risk of obesity, developmental difficulties, and mental health challenges compared to children who

do not face food insecurity (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, n.d.). Older adults facing food insecurity are at an increased risk of experiencing chronic health conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, as well as physical and cognitive impairment (Pooler et al., 2018). Figure 3 shows that 57% of all Maryland SNAP recipients in 2025 were children (40%) or older adults (17%). The remaining 43% of recipients were considered working-age adults.

Figure 3. Age of Recipients, SFY 2025



Note: In 2025, there were 859,037 SNAP recipients. Refer to the *Methods* section for definitions of children and adults. The working-age adult category includes recipients 16 and 17 years of age who are head-of-households or who are not meeting school requirements.

Household Types

Households generally fit into broad categories referred to as household types. This brief reports analyses by five household types that align with the household types commonly identified in federal reports, including (1) households with children; (2) households with an able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD); (3) households with an adult with a disability; (4) households with an older adult; and (5) other households that do not meet the definitions of the previous four household types (see Monkovic & Ward, 2025). Importantly, household categories are not mutually exclusive and a household can fall into more than one category. For example, a household could fall into both the older adult and households with children category if an older adult and a child in that household received SNAP.

Figure 4 displays the share of SNAP cases that fall into each household type. Overall, the most common household type in 2025 was households with children (35%). This means that during 2025, over one in three households receiving SNAP had at least one child. This aligns with the share of child recipients displayed in Figure 3. The next most common household type was older adults (28%).

Adults with a disability (10%) are another group particularly susceptible to the negative effects of food insecurity, (Brucker, 2017). Combined with households with children and households with older adults, these particularly vulnerable groups accounted for 73% of Maryland's SNAP households, which is similar to nationwide trends (Monkovic & Ward, 2025). ABAWDs represented an additional 9% of the SNAP caseload. Some households (23%) did not

meet criteria for any household type. These households were categorized in the other households category.

Households with Children: Households with at least one child recipient 17 years or younger when SNAP receipt began during the SFY. Although uncommon, individuals aged 16 or 17 are excluded if they are head-of-households.

Households with an Able-Bodied Adult without Dependents (ABAWD)*: Households without children but with at least one adult recipient between certain ages who do not have any work exemptions. ABAWDs had **two age ranges** during SFY 2025: 1) **18 to 52 years** (July-September 2024) and 2) **18 to 54 years** (October 2024-June 2025).

Households with an Adult with a Disability: Households with at least one adult recipient between 18 and 59 years who has a temporary or permanent disability exemption when SNAP receipt began during the SFY.

Households with an Older Adult: Households with at least one adult recipient 60 years or older when SNAP receipt began during the SFY.

Other Households: Households with at least one adult recipient who does not fit criteria for any other household type when SNAP receipt began during the SFY.

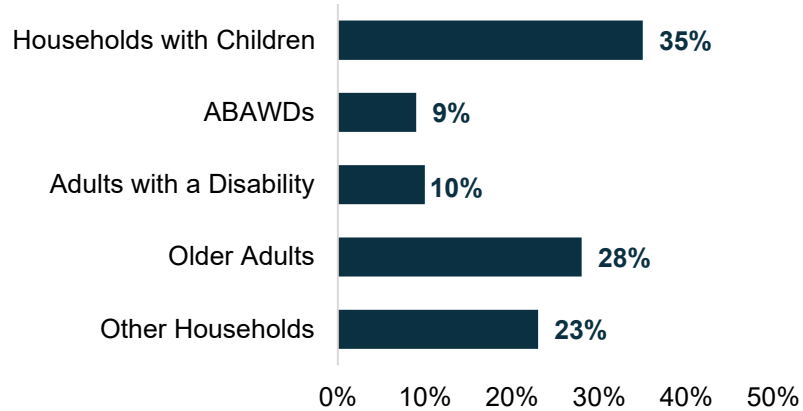
* **The Fiscal Responsibility Act** revised the **ABAWD definition** in September 2023, gradually increasing the age limit to 54 years old by October 2024. Beginning in July 2025, **H.R. 1 (2025)** again increased the ABAWD age limit to 64 years old. This change is not reflected in this report.

Notably, the share of households in each category may change in future reports due to new eligibility requirements established in H.R. 1 (2025). Effective November 1, 2025, Maryland followed federal guidance on H.R. 1 (2025) implementation and increased the

upper age limit for ABAWDs from 54 years of age to 64 years (FIA, 2025). In addition, the federal changes also redefine “dependent child” to only include children under the age of 14. Practically, these two

changes mean that some households with older adults and some households with children will be categorized as ABAWD households in future years.

Figure 4. Household Types, SFY 2025



Note: Households are based on the first month of receipt in the SFY. Household types are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%.

The Impact of H.R. 1 (2025) on Household Types

In July 2025, [H.R. 1 \(2025\)](#) took effect—right after the study period of this report. The law increases the upper ABAWD age limit from 54 years of age to 64 years. The law also redefines a dependent child as a child less than 14 years of age. This will result in some households with children whose youngest child is 14 or older needing to meet ABAWD work requirements.

If it had been in effect during the study period, **H.R. 1 (2025) would have increased the number of ABAWDs by approximately 86,000, increasing the share of ABAWD households from 9% to 24%.**

The increase would mostly be due to the reclassification of households with older adults followed by households with other adults and households with children.

Number of Recipients

The variety of SNAP households and their definitions means that household composition can vary based on category. Table 3 lists the percentage of SNAP recipients by household type. In general, most SNAP households had one (62%) or two (17%) recipients. The majority (84%) of SNAP households had one adult recipient on the case and about one third (35%) of cases had at least one child recipient.

Households with children (94%) were much more likely to have two or more recipients

on the case compared to all households (38%). Often, this is because households with children have at least one child recipient and one adult on the case. As a result, they also often receive higher SNAP amounts to feed their larger households (Monkovic & Ward, 2025). The other household types, conversely, were more likely to only have one recipient on the case (e.g., 89% of ABAWDs had one recipient) and rarely had a child recipient (e.g., 82% of adults with a disability did not have a child in their SNAP household).

Table 3. Number of Recipients in Households, SFY 2025

Recipient Category	Households with Children	ABAWDs	Adults with a Disability	Older Adults	Other Households	All Households
Total Recipients	%	%	%	%	%	%
1 recipient	6%	89%	75%	88%	91%	62%
2 recipients	35%	9%	13%	10%	8%	17%
3 recipients	28%	2%	6%	1%	1%	10%
4+ recipients	30%	1%	7%	1%	0%+	11%
Child Recipients	%	%	%	%	%	%
No children	0%+	100%	82%	97%	100%	65%
1 child	43%	0%+	9%	2%	0%+	15%
2 children	31%	0%+	5%	1%	0%+	11%
3+ children	25%	0%	4%	0%+	0%+	9%
Adult Recipients	%	%	%	%	%	%
No adults	14%	0%+	0%+	0%+	0%+	5%
1 adult	67%	89%	85%	89%	91%	84%
2 adults	16%	9%	12%	10%	7%	10%
3+ adults	3%	3%	3%	1%	1%	1%

Note: +Values equal to or less than 0.5% are rounded to 0%. Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. The number of recipients and their household type is based on the first month of benefit receipt in the SFY. Household types are not mutually exclusive. For example, some households with older adults had child recipients, likely meaning there was an older adult and child(ren) receiving SNAP in the same household.

Previous SNAP Receipt

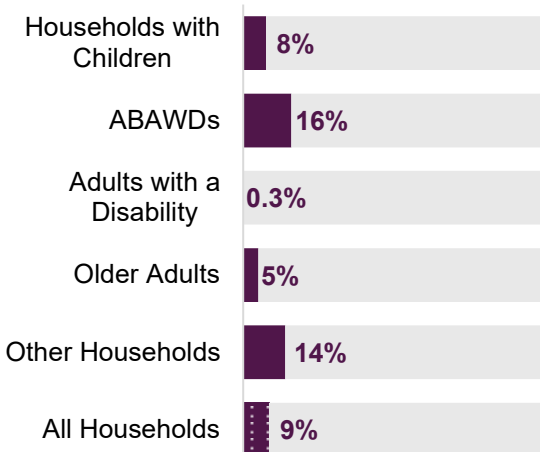
Households seeking SNAP support may do so for a variety of reasons, ranging from job loss or the inability to work to working but having low earnings. Unlike other safety net programs, SNAP does not have a lifetime benefits limit which means that, as long as a household meets eligibility criteria, they can receive SNAP. Additionally, some

households may consistently receive SNAP while others may cycle on and off the program.

In general, most households had received SNAP prior to 2025. As Figure 5 displays, only about one in every 10 (9%) households were new to the program in 2025. This is comparable to the share of new families in 2023 (Gagliardi & Passarella, 2024). Some

household types were more likely to have new households than others. For example, nearly one in six (16%) ABAWD households were new to SNAP in 2025. Comparatively, only 0.3% of households with adults with a disability were new to SNAP as were 5% of households with older adults.

Figure 5. Households New to SNAP by Household Type, SFY 2025



Note: *New households* include cases in which the head of household or other adult recipients on the case had not participated in SNAP prior to SFY 2025. Percentages are not directly comparable to reports prior to 2024 due to updates in data processes.

The amount of previous SNAP receipt also varied by household type. Table 4 shows cumulative SNAP receipt by household type in the prior 10 years. As the table shows, households overall had a median of 48 months, or 4 years, of receipt prior to 2025. ABAWDs (18 months) and other households (27 months) had fewer months of median receipt compared to all households. Alternatively, households with children (50 months), older adults (71 months), and adults with a disability (88

months), all had more median months of receipt when compared to all households.⁵

Differences in SNAP history may be attributed to the categorical rules for different household types as well as recertification processes. For instance, ABAWD households are subject to SNAP work requirements and must meet these requirements to receive SNAP for more than 3 months in a 36-month period (FNS, n.d.-b). Households that do not meet applicable work requirements may lose their SNAP benefits. This may lead to a decrease in median months of SNAP receipt compared to households not subject to work requirements.

Additionally, households commonly lose benefits during recertification periods, even if a household still meets eligibility criteria (Gray, 2019). Loss of benefits during a recertification period are often due to administrative processes, such as a head-of-household not submitting necessary paperwork (Gray, 2019). In SNAP, different household types have different recertification processes. For example, SNAP households generally must recertify their benefits after 12 months of receipt with a mid-point review after 6 months (FIA, 2023c, sec. 410; FIA, 2024). However, ABAWDs must initially recertify their benefits after 3 months (FIA, 2023a, sec. 106). Households with a disability, comparatively, typically only have to recertify their benefits every 24 months and households with an older adult may only have to recertify benefits every 36 months (FIA, 2023c, sec. 410).⁶ Households with

⁵ See Appendix Table A1 for a breakdown of categorical months of receipt in the prior 10 years by household type.

⁶ States have some discretion in setting recertification periods. Maryland allows some categories of SNAP

recipients, such as those with a disability or those who are older, to have longer recertification periods. See [McConnell et al., 2025](#) for certification period lengths by state.

older adults and households with a disability, therefore, receive benefits for longer periods without any potential recertification-related benefit loss. As a result, the differences in recertification periods by household type may affect households' median benefit receipt.

Table 4. Cumulative SNAP Receipt by Household Type, SFY 2025

In the Prior 10 Years (120 months)

Household Type	Median Months
Households with Children	50
ABAWDs	18
Adults with a Disability	88
Older Adults	71
Other Households	27
All Households	48

Note: Median months of SNAP receipt represent cumulative months in the 10 years prior to SFY 2025, but do not indicate consecutive months of receipt.

Findings: Adult Recipients

Most (84%) SNAP households have at least one adult recipient (Table 3). This next section examines characteristics of adult recipients, including demographics, employment and earnings, as well as common sectors of employment. Information in this section can help stakeholders understand more about adult SNAP recipients and make informed

Adult Types

Adult types are similar to the household types identified on page 8. Rather than examining a household, however, this section examines adults who (1) have children, (2) are ABAWDs, (3) have a disability, (4) are older adults, and (5) do not fit any of these descriptions. The Methods chapter provides counts for each adult type.

program decisions, including in regard to the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) program.

Demographic Characteristics

Across all adult types, the typical SNAP recipient in 2025 was a female (61%) who most likely identified as Black (57%) or White (30%) and who was 47 years old, on average (Table 5). She likely never married (66%) and completed high school (73%). While this profile reflects adult SNAP recipients broadly, demographic traits varied by household type.

Gender. Across all adult types, the majority (61%) of SNAP recipients were female. However, adults with children had a higher share of female recipients (77%) compared to all adult recipient types (Table 5). While most adult types had a higher share of female recipients than male recipients, ABAWDs (58%) and other adults (55%) were slightly more likely to be male.

Race and Ethnicity. Most (87%) adult recipients identified as either Black (57%) or White (30%). A smaller portion of adult recipients identified as Hispanic/Latinx (7%), Asian (4%), Indigenous Peoples (1%), or another race or ethnicity (1%). Race and ethnicity varied somewhat by adult type. Adults with a disability were more likely to be White (37%) compared to all adult recipients (30%) while ABAWDs had a higher share of Black recipients (70% vs. 57%). Adults with children were more likely to be Hispanic/Latinx (10% vs. 7% for all adult recipients).

Age. The average age of adult recipients in 2025 was 47 years old. Approximately 12% of recipients were 24 years or younger while 60% were between the ages of 25 and 59 years old, encompassing adults often

considered in prime working age. The remaining 28% of recipients were 60 years or older.

The ages of recipients varied greatly by adult type. This may reflect the life stages of those in different categories. For instance, 92% of adults with children were 49 years or younger, reflecting the ages at which parents may have children in the household. The variation of age by adult type also likely reflects the fact that several categories have age-based requirements. For instance, in 2025, ABAWDs had a categorical maximum age limit of either 52 or 54 years old depending on when they began SNAP receipt (see the textbox of household type definitions on page 8 for more detail). As a result, ABAWDs skewed younger than all adult recipients, generally. Older adults, on the other hand, have a minimum age limit of 60 years old. Older adults, consequently, had the highest median age.

Marital Status. The majority of adult recipients were never married (66%) or were previously married (21%). Only about one in eight (13%) recipients were married. One potential explanation for the small percentage of married adults is SNAP's income eligibility requirements. SNAP income eligibility limits are based on household size.⁷ Married couples typically earn more than a single-earner (The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2018) and might be more likely to exceed the

SNAP eligibility threshold. While adults with children (16%) were more likely to be married compared to all adult recipients (13%), married adults with children have a larger household size compared to married adults without children. This increases the likelihood that their earnings qualify for SNAP. Conversely, ABAWDs (5%), who by definition do not have dependent children, are less likely than adults with children to be married. Older adults (20%), who are more likely to be married, are likely no longer in the workforce and have reduced income, increasing the share of married older adults who qualify for SNAP.

Educational Attainment. Nearly three in four (73%) adult recipients completed high school, with 13% of all adult recipients having some post-secondary education. Roughly one in four (27%) adult recipients did not complete high school. While educational attainment was consistent across adult types, adults with a disability (32%) were slightly more likely than other adult types (27%) to have not completed high school. There could be several reasons for this occurrence. For one, children with a disability face barriers in the education system leading to lower levels of educational attainment as adults (Montez et al., 2017). Additionally, poverty can compound the likelihood of an individual developing a disability as well as lead to disparities in educational outcomes (Montez et al., 2017).

⁷ See the [Maryland SNAP Manual section 409 \(2023\)](#) for details on income eligibility limits and household size.

Table 5. Demographic Characteristics of Adult Recipients by Adult Type, SFY 2025

Demographic Category	Adults with Children	ABAWDs	Adults with a Disability	Older Adults	Other Adults	All Adult Recipients
Gender	%	%	%	%	%	%
Female	77%	42%	52%	61%	45%	61%
Male	23%	58%	48%	39%	55%	39%
Race/Ethnicity	%	%	%	%	%	%
Asian ^	4%	2%	2%	8%	2%	4%
Black ^	58%	70%	58%	51%	61%	57%
Hispanic/Latinx	10%	5%	3%	6%	5%	7%
Indigenous Peoples ^†	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
White ^	26%	21%	37%	32%	31%	30%
Other ^	1%	2%	0%##	2%	1%	1%
Age (Years)	%	%	%	%	%	%
24 & Younger*	18%	20%	9%	–	17%	12%
25 to 34	34%	33%	18%	–	24%	21%
35 to 49	40%	38%	34%	–	29%	26%
50 to 59	6%	9%	39%	–	30%	13%
60 & older	2%	–	–	100%	–	28%
Average Age	35	35	44	71	40	47
Marital Status	%	%	%	%	%	%
Never Married	73%	87%	77%	41%	79%	66%
Married	16%	5%	6%	20%	6%	13%
Previously Married‡	11%	9%	18%	40%	15%	21%
Highest Education Level	%	%	%	%	%	%
Did not Complete High School	25%	29%	32%	23%	30%	27%
Completed High School#	75%	71%	68%	77%	70%	73%
>Only High School	61%	59%	59%	64%	57%	60%
>Post-Secondary Education	14%	12%	9%	13%	13%	13%

Note: Gender, race, and ethnicity categories come from predetermined fields in the state administrative database. ^Non-Hispanic/Latinx. †Includes Native American, Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, and Other Pacific Islander. Age is based on the first month of benefit receipt in the SFY. *Recipients ages 16 to 17 are included in the 24 & younger category if they are the head of household on a case. ‡Includes divorced, separated, and widowed marital statuses. #General Education Development Program (GED) certificates are included in high school completion rates. ##Values equal to or less than 0.5% are rounded to 0%. Column percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. Valid percentages are reported to account for missing data.

Employment and Earnings

One important tenant of SNAP is balancing benefits with work and responsibility (FNS, n.d.-b). This tenant was introduced in the Fiscal Responsibility Act [FRA] (2023), which amended the purpose statement of SNAP to explicitly include “assist[ing] low-income adults in obtaining employment and increasing their earnings” (USDA, 2025). In practice, this focus on work and responsibility is reflected in the program’s work requirements. SNAP rules require non-

work exempt recipients to follow work requirements to maintain SNAP eligibility (FIA, 2023b, sec. 130). General work requirements in Maryland for adult recipients include registering to work, accepting a job if offered, and not quitting a job without good cause (Hahn et al., 2020). ABAWDs additionally must work or participate in work activities (e.g., working or participating in a certain training programs) for 80 hours per month in order to maintain eligibility for more than 3 months in a 36-month period (FIA, 2023a, sec. 106).

Given the connection between work and SNAP receipt, this next section examines adult recipients' employment and earnings while receiving SNAP as well as their sectors of employment. Such information can help decision makers understand the current relationship between employment and SNAP receipt in Maryland. Additionally, employment and earnings information may be able to help policy makers further adapt Maryland's SNAP E&T program to more keenly support and encourage recipients' self-sufficiency.

Employment while Receiving SNAP

With the importance of employment in the SNAP program, this employment and earnings section examines trends from 2021, 2023, and 2025. In all years examined, around two in five adult recipients (38% in 2021 and 36% in 2025) worked in the quarter in which they received SNAP (Figure 6). Employment, however, varies greatly by adult type. The variation in employment likely reflects the circumstances of adults broadly in the adult type categories.

Adults with children were the most likely to be employed while receiving SNAP. In 2021, 54% of adults with children were employed and received SNAP in the same quarter and in 2025, the share was 56%. Most frequently, adults with children were a single adult in a household that had one or two children on their case (Table 3), likely making them single earners who support themselves and their family. Frequently, adults in low-income households with children work in essential occupations that pay low wages (e.g., retail sales, cashiers, janitors, and cleaners) (United for ALICE,

n.d.; United for ALICE, 2025). Adults with children who were not employed while receiving SNAP may be TCA recipients, have lost work and are receiving unemployment insurance, or are experiencing some other barriers to work.

ABAWDs were also more likely to be employed compared to all adult recipients. In 2021, 54% of ABAWDs were employed in at least 1 quarter while receiving SNAP (Figure 6). ABAWD employment, however, has decreased by 11 percentage points over the last few years, with only 43% of ABAWDs working and receiving SNAP in at least 1 quarter of 2025.

The reasons for the decline in ABAWD employment is unclear. One potential explanation, however, might be the change in the ABAWD age range under FRA (2023). Within SFY 2025, the FRA (2023) increased the ABAWD age limit twice. First, it increased from 49 years old to 52 years old (between July and September 2024) and then again to 54 years (starting in October 2024). Potentially, some of these older adults newly classified as ABAWDs experienced barriers to meeting the ABAWD work requirements, especially if they were unfamiliar with the rules. This may have generally resulted in a lower ABAWD employment rate in SFY 2025.⁸

Adults with a disability, comparatively, were less likely to be employed than all adult recipients. In 2021, roughly one in six (17%) adults with a disability were employed while receiving SNAP and the share of employed adults with a disability remained consistent through 2025 (16%). Older adults were also less likely to be employed while receiving SNAP compared to all adults, with 8%

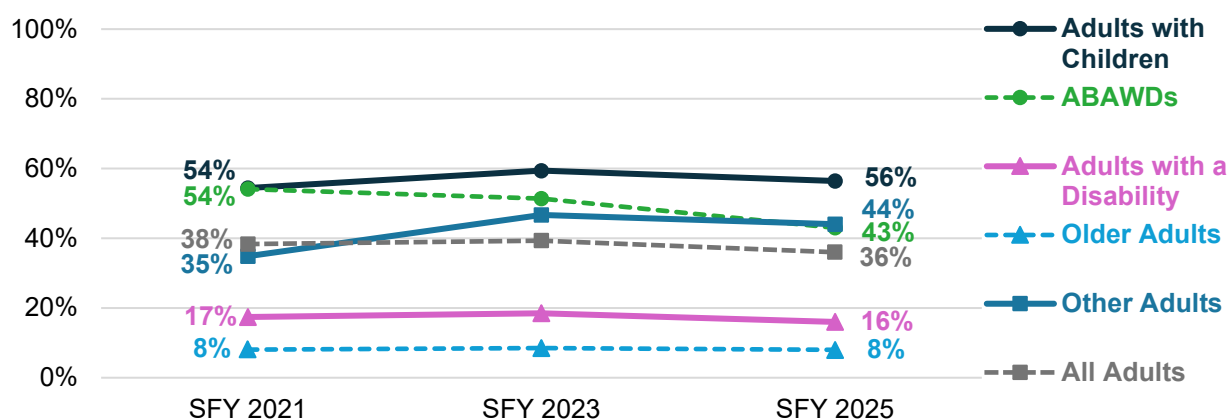
⁸ Older ABAWDs (ages 50-54 years old) were less likely (30%) to be employed and receive SNAP in at

least one quarter in 2025 compared to ABAWDs less than 50 years old (47%). Analysis not shown.

employed in 2021 and 2025. Both adults with a disability and older adults were exempt from all SNAP work requirements in SFY 2025 (FIA, 2023b, sec. 130). Additionally, adults who have a disability as well as older adults often face barriers to

work participation and are more likely to be out of the labor force compared to adult workers who do not fall into those categories (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2025a; Wilkins, 2025).

Figure 6. Percentage Employed while Receiving SNAP by Adult Type



Note: This figure shows the percentage of adults who are both SNAP recipients and employed in the same quarter for at least 1 quarter in each SFY. It excludes recipients for whom identifying information was unavailable. Refer to the Methods section for data limitations. Valid percentages are reported to account for missing data.

Median Quarterly Earnings

For all adults who were employed in at least 1 quarter while receiving SNAP, median quarterly earnings in 2025 were \$5,103 (Figure 7). Median earnings were highest among adults with children (\$6,163). However, if an adult with children earned income at the median rate across all 4 quarters of the year, their annual earnings would be approximately \$24,600. While this is the highest for all adult categories, it indicates that many households with children earn little more than the FPL for a family of two in 2025 (\$21,150) (Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, 2025).

ABAWDs, the group with the second highest employment rate, had the second

lowest median earnings in 2025 (\$3,943). Given that this would make ABAWD earnings roughly \$15,700 per year, many ABAWDs would have annual earnings close to the FPL for a single individual in 2025 (\$15,650), the most frequent case size for ABAWD households (Table 3). For both adults with children and ABAWDs, low earnings may reflect the realities of employment that many SNAP recipients face, which can include working in jobs with low wages, unpredictable schedules, and lack of benefits such as paid leave (Keith-Jennings & Chaudhry, 2018).

Older adults and adults with a disability had median quarterly earnings of \$4,068 and \$2,811, respectively, in 2025. Both groups are exempted from SNAP work requirements and, as noted in Figure 6,

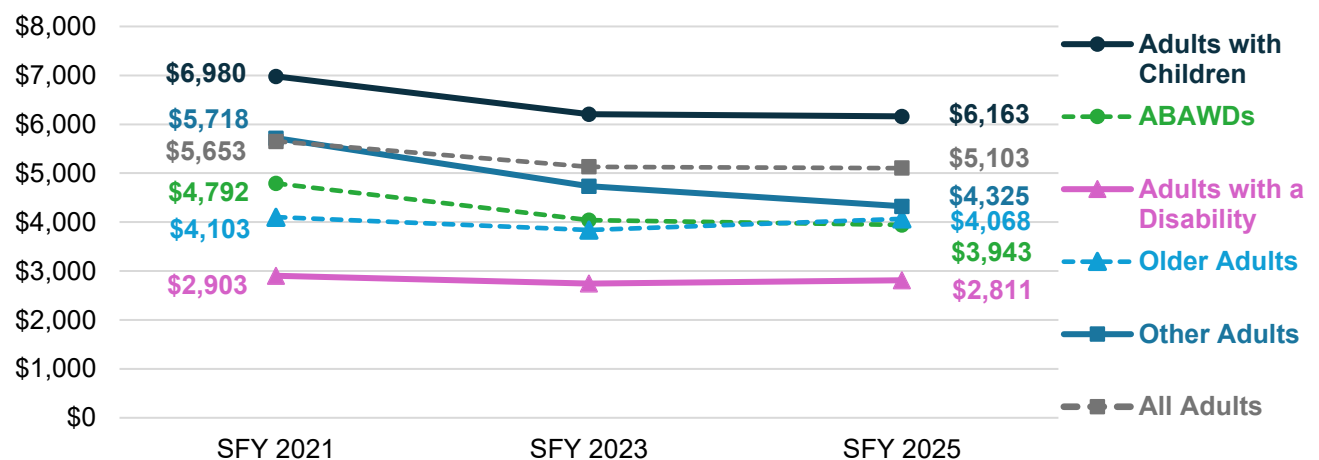
were the least likely to be employed.⁹ When adults in these categories do work, they are more likely to work part time (BLS, 2025b; BLS, 2026). The higher likelihood of part-time employment might be reflected in the lower earnings.

Adults with a disability may also face additional earning limitations. The Fair Labor Stands Act of 1938 (FLSA) allows some employers to pay wage rates below the minimum wage in certain circumstances, including when individuals' productive capacities are impaired by a disability (The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, 1938). Although Maryland mostly phased out this practice in 2020, some employers were exempted (MD Health-General Code Ann. § 7-1012, 2021).

Importantly, median income across all adult type categories declined between 2021 and 2023 but was relatively consistent between 2023 and 2025 (Figure 7). Potentially, the decline in median earnings between 2021

and 2023 reflects the environment of the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, job loss or the reduction in working hours may have pushed adults with stronger than typical work histories onto SNAP (Hall, 2022). As these SNAP recipients began to find jobs, they may have found employment in positions that earned more than median SNAP earnings. Others may have been able to increase their working hours. Both may have led to earnings higher than the typical employed SNAP recipient, increasing median earnings. Additionally, the automatic redetermination of SNAP benefits during this period might have allowed some of these adults to stay on SNAP even if their earnings would have typically pushed them off the program (FIA, 2021). Median earnings likely declined in 2023 as the economy recovered from the pandemic and people exited SNAP and pandemic-era policy flexibilities, such as the automatic redetermination of SNAP benefits, expired (Gagliardi & Passarella, 2023).

Figure 7. Median Quarterly Earnings while Receiving SNAP by Adult Type



Note: Median quarterly earnings are reported for the quarters in which adults are both SNAP recipients and employed in Maryland. Refer to the Methods section for data limitations. Earnings are standardized to 2025 dollars.

⁹ Beginning in November 2025, older adults between the ages of 60-64 are subject to ABAWD work requirements (FIA, 2025).

Sectors of Employment

Adult recipients' earnings are likely reflective of the sectors in which they work. Table 6 shows the most common sectors for employment in 2025 and the median quarterly earnings for each sector. Of adult recipients who were employed while receiving SNAP, the most common sector of employment was health care and social assistance (21%), followed by retail trade (18%), administrative and support services (12%), and accommodation and food services (12%). Transportation and warehousing (8%) and educational services (6%) were also in the top employment sectors although they were somewhat less common.

Sectors of employment were consistent across adult types, with some exceptions. For example, the top sector of employment for ABAWDs and adults with a disability was retail trade rather than health care and social assistance (Appendix Table A.2). Regardless of any variations by adult type, top sectors of employment for SNAP recipients contain many of the most common occupations for low-wage workers, generally (Ross & Bateman, 2019; Mattingly & Watson, 2024; Kneebone & Holmes, 2025). Although low-earning, many occupations within these sectors include important roles, such as home health and personal care aides and custodians (Ross & Bateman, 2019; Mattingly & Watson, 2024).

The low earnings associated with the most common sectors of employment for adult SNAP recipients is reflected in Table 6. Median quarterly earnings were highest for the health care and social assistance sector (\$8,098). At the median quarterly income, earnings in the health care and social assistance sector for an adult recipient would be around \$32,000 annually. While

this might put some adult recipients above the FPL, depending on household size, it is well under the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) threshold

Healthcare & Social Assistance (NAICS 62):

This sector includes establishments that provide health care and social assistance. Both health care and social assistance are included because it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the boundaries of these two activities. Industries in this sector can include outpatient health care and residential care facilities.

Retail Trade (NAICS 44–45): This sector includes establishments that engaged in retailing merchandise and rendering services incidental to the sale of merchandise. Industries in this sector can include general merchandise retailers and food & beverage retailers.

Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services (NAICS 56): Individuals employed in this sector support the day-to-day operations of organizations by providing clerical, cleaning, and temporary employment services, among other activities. Industries include office administration and waste disposal services.

Accommodation & Food Services (NAICS 72): Establishments in this sector provide customers with lodging and/or meals, snacks, and beverages for immediate consumption. Industries include hotels and casinos.

Transportation & Warehousing (NAICS 48–49): This sector includes occupations providing passenger and cargo transportation, scenic and sightseeing transportation, warehousing and storage, and support activities related to modes of transportation. Industries in this sector can include warehousing and cargo transportation.

Educational Services (NAICS 61): Establishments in this sector are specialized in providing instruction and training in diverse subjects. Industries include primary education, secondary education, technical and trade schools, and education support services.

for a single adult and child in Maryland (\$55,140) (United for ALICE, 2025). The ALICE threshold represents the minimum income needed for a household to afford housing, childcare, food, transportation, healthcare, and taxes (United for ALICE, 2025).

While health care and social assistance had the highest median earnings, accommodation and food service had the lowest median earnings (\$4,788). Accommodation and food services include occupations such as cooks and food preparation workers as well as food and beverage service workers, where the large majority of workers earn low wages (Ross et al., 2020). Importantly, workers in low-wage jobs may face challenges to increase earnings, including not having enough hours of scheduled work and working in positions that do not offer opportunities for advancement (Ross & Bateman, 2019; Henry-Nickie et al., 2022). Additionally, barriers such as lower educational attainment and access to transportation and child-care may make finding and maintaining a job more challenging for low-income workers compared to high-income workers (Edmiston, 2020). The generally low quarterly earnings displayed in Table 6 highlight why the SNAP program is important to the many adults who work in low-paying but essential jobs.

Table 6. Sectors of Employment and Median Quarterly Earnings, SFY 2025

Among adults employed while receiving SNAP

Sector	% Employed	Median Quarterly Earnings
Health Care & Social Assistance	21%	\$8,098
Retail Trade	18%	\$4,985
Administrative & Support Services [^]	12%	\$5,553
Accommodation & Food Services	12%	\$4,788
Transportation & Warehousing	8%	\$6,189
Educational Services	6%	\$7,315
Other Sectors	22%	\$7,688

Note: [^]The full name of this sector is administrative & support & waste management & remediation services. See the definitions of each sector in Appendix Figure A2. Sector and median quarterly earnings are based on the quarter in SFY 2025 with the highest earnings in which an adult was both receiving SNAP and employed in Maryland. If a recipient had more than one job in the quarter, the job with the highest earnings is used. Analyses exclude recipients who do not have a unique identifier or who were employed but for whom the NAICS code was not identified. Top sectors are sorted in order of the highest to lowest percentage of adult recipients employed, and the other sectors category includes 14 sectors, each employing 0.02% to 3% of employed SNAP recipients. Valid percentages are reported to account for missing data.

Conclusion

In SFY 2025, SNAP served more than one-half of a million (n=503,331) unique Maryland households, making it a vital safety net program for the state. Not only is SNAP important due to the number of households it serves, but also for the variety of households it reaches. While some safety net programs focus on specific populations, SNAP reaches households with children, older adults, adults with a disability, as well as able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs), among others. Given the significance of SNAP in Maryland, this brief offered an overview to help understand who received food assistance in 2025.

Largely, the characteristics of SNAP households and adult recipients in this update were similar to those in 2023. One important similarity between 2023 and 2025 lies in who the program serves. Consistent with findings in 2023 and in prior years, the 2025 update highlights that more than half of Maryland's SNAP recipients were either a child (40%) or adult 60 or older (17%). These two groups are particularly affected by the adverse effects of food insecurity (Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, n.d; Pooler et al., 2018).

This update also highlights that the various households served by Maryland's SNAP program often have different characteristics. Such differences can be reflective of the rules for each household type. For example, households generally had a median of 4 years of cumulative receipt in the last 10 years. However, this ranged from less than 2 cumulative years for ABAWDs to more than 7 years for adults with a disability. The large differences in median months may be attributable to the fact that ABAWDs have the shortest redetermination period to

confirm continued SNAP eligibility while adults with a disability and older adults have the longest.

Another area with large differences was employment. By adult type, adults with children (56%) and ABAWDs (43%) were much more likely to be employed in the same quarter in which they received SNAP compared to adults with a disability (16%) and older adults (8%). Similar to median months of receipt, differences may reflect programmatic rules. For instance, ABAWDs must meet work requirements in order to receive SNAP for more than 3 months in a 36-month period. However, the differences likely also reflect the different circumstances for each group. Adults with children, for instance, are often single-adult households (67%) with one or two children (74%). This means that even when working, relatively low wages may necessitate SNAP receipt to help alleviate food costs. Comparatively, older adults or adults with a disability have lower rates of employment likely due to employment barriers common amongst adults in these two groups.

For recipients who are employed while receiving SNAP, this report highlights that adults typically have low earnings across all adult types. Earnings ranged from \$2,811 per quarter for adults with a disability to \$6,163 per quarter for adults with children in 2025. Low wages are partially attributable to some of the low-wage sectors in which recipients often worked (e.g., accommodation and food services and retail trade). Low wages, however, are not a reflection of the value of the work being done. Low-wage workers often fill essential roles such as health care aides, cooks, and custodians (Ross & Bateman, 2019).

Collectively through its analyses, this brief highlights that SNAP is a crucial program in Maryland's safety net and helps bring food to the tables of children and their caregivers, older adults, adults with a disability, and those looking for work or earning low wages. This brief also serves as the final baseline of caseload data prior to new sweeping federal changes. In July 2025, changes to the SNAP program under H.R. 1 (2025) began to take effect. The changes impact who is subject to ABAWD work requirements, eligibility for non-U.S. citizens, the thrifty food plan, among other aspects of the program (FNS, 2025). H.R. 1 (2025) also shifts more of the program's administrative expenses from the federal government to state governments (FNS, 2025). In Maryland, these changes are estimated to cost the state around \$300 million in calendar year 2027 (Brown, 2025). H.R. 1 (2025) will consequently impact both Maryland's budget as well as the state's SNAP caseload. While it is unclear the precise consequences of these changes, Maryland's SNAP caseload has already experienced a decline (Rosenbaum et al., 2026). What will not change, however, is the continued importance of SNAP in alleviating food insecurity for thousands of Maryland households.

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Appendix A: Supplemental Analyses

Table A1. Categories of Receipt in the Prior 10 Years by Household Type, SFY 2025

Recipient Category	Households with Children	ABAWDs	Adults with a Disability	Older Adults	Other Households	All Households
No receipt	8%	17%	0.4%	6%	16%	10%
2 years or less (1-24 months)	23%	40%	11%	16%	32%	24%
2-6 years (25-72 months)	32%	29%	28%	28%	32%	31%
6-8 years (73-96 months)	14%	6%	16%	12%	10%	12%
8-10 years (97-120 months)	23%	7%	44%	37%	10%	24%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Table A2. Sectors of Employment while Receiving SNAP by Adult Type, SFY 2025

Among adults employed while receiving SNAP

Sector	Adults with Children	ABAWDs	Adults with a Disability	Older Adults	Other Adults	All Adults
Health Care & Social Assistance	26%	13%	19%	21%	15%	21%
Retail Trade	16%	19%	23%	19%	21%	18%
Administrative & Support Services [^]	10%	16%	14%	13%	15%	12%
Accommodation & Food Services	11%	12%	13%	9%	13%	12%
Transportation & Warehousing	8%	10%	8%	5%	9%	8%
Educational Services	7%	5%	5%	8%	4%	6%
Other Sectors	21%	24%	19%	25%	23%	22%

Note: [^]The full name of this sector is Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services. Sector is based on the quarter in SFY 2025 with the highest earnings in which an adult was both receiving SNAP and employed in Maryland. If a recipient had more than one job in the quarter, the job with the highest earnings is used. Analyses exclude recipients who do not have a unique identifier or who were employed but for whom the NAICS code was not identified. The top six sectors are sorted in order of the highest to lowest percentage of adult recipients employed. The Other Sectors category includes 14 sectors, each employing 0.02% to 3% of recipients. Valid percentages are reported to account for missing data.

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