

SNAP Update: Latest Data Confirm Contraction

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On July 4, 2025, the budget reconciliation bill that was signed into law made significant changes to the federal **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**. Two notable changes require states to (1) fund 75% of administrative costs (up from 50%) and (2) potentially fund a share of benefit costs (up from none) depending on the state payment error rate. New work requirements were also added. Effective September 1, 2025, eligible recipients will have to meet SNAP work requirements that include working, volunteering, or participating in an education or training program for at least 20 hours a week (or 80 hours each month) and report that they are meeting those work requirements. The rules apply if recipients are (1) 18 to 54 years old, (2) do not have a dependent child under age 18 and (3) are considered physically and mentally able to work. Effective November 1, 2025, more residents became subject to new work requirements. The expanded requirements (1) raise the age threshold from 54 to 64 and (2) reduce the age of dependent children to under 14.¹ Veterans and current or former foster youth age 18 to 24 also no longer qualify as exemptions.

The table displays Pennsylvania SNAP data for each December from 2019 to 2025. Average benefits increased significantly from 2020 to 2022 due to a redefinition of the Thrifty Food Plan (2021) and pandemic "emergency allotments" that ended in February 2023. The latest data for December 2025 from the state open data portal show enrollment reductions in October (-32,900) and November (-50,100), and then steady enrollment in December. Compared to December 2024, the number of recipients contracted by 160,000 (-8.0%), and the share of the state population enrolled in the program fell from 15.3% to 14.0%. That share remains 0.7 percentage points higher than the pre-pandemic share (13.3%).

How much of the contraction is attributable to new work requirements cannot be quantified with precision. However, the December data do confirm the year-over-year contraction that occurred in November (-158,000, -8.0%), and the timing suggests that new work requirements were a material factor.

SNAP Benefits Received by Pennsylvania Residents

	December Data							Total Growth
	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	
Monthly Benefits (\$ millions)	\$205	\$300	\$380	\$531	\$362	\$363	\$344	68%
Number Persons (000s)	1,726	1,805	1,852	1,903	1,975	1,995	1,834	6%
Avg Monthly Benefit / Person	\$119	\$166	\$205	\$279	\$183	\$182	\$188	58%
Pennsylvania Population (000s)	12,992	12,996	13,016	12,985	13,018	13,079	13,069	1%
Share Enrolled	13.3%	13.9%	14.2%	14.7%	15.2%	15.3%	14.0%	n.a.
Philadelphia CPI-U Groceries	240.9	248.6	258.7	295.5	305.7	312.7	316.7	31%

Note: Excludes P-EBT benefits, includes emergency allotments. Population estimates for July of relevant year. SNAP data are from USDA, except for 2025, which is based on data from the state open data portal.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and Open Data PA.

1 See: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dhs/resources/snap/snap-work-requirements-abawds>.