

Child Nutrition: Food Stamps

Definition

Children receiving food stamps is the number of children under 18 who received food stamps.

Data in context

Every child needs adequate and nutritious food to grow up healthy. Children living without adequate food or experiencing food shortages face more health and psychological issues than other children.¹ The Food Stamp Program exists to help those most in need buy the food necessary for good health.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture administers the Food Stamp Program through its Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). The federal government spent \$674 million in food stamp benefits in Kentucky for FY 2007.²

In Kentucky, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services administers the program through the Division of Family Support and determines eligibility, allotments, and the distribution of benefits. Households with gross income below 130 percent of the federal poverty level are eligible for food stamps, and the specific benefit amount is based on the household's income. Benefits are provided by coupons or an electronic card, much like an ATM card, and accepted at grocery stores. Kentucky's use of electronic cards for food stamps allows families to access this support more easily.

Nationally, the number of food stamp recipients has risen since FFY 2002, corresponding to increases in people living below the poverty line, wage stagnation, and better access to the program through the states' outreach efforts.³ The Congressional Budget Office projects continued growth in the program, estimating that the FFY 2009 monthly caseload will average 28 million persons.⁴ Though more people are using food stamps to make ends meet, the maximum monthly allotment for a family of four falls an estimated \$46.20 short of the amount needed to purchase the minimal adequate diet.⁵

In 2006, 37 million individuals on average were eligible to receive food stamps each month, and roughly 68 percent of those qualified obtained them.⁶ The majority of all food



stamp benefits go to households with children – nearly 80 percent of eligible households received food stamps.⁷

In 2007, an average of 248,676 Kentucky children received food stamps each month.⁸ The average monthly benefit for all recipients was \$210.70 per household.⁹ Kentucky's food stamp participation has increased by 40 percent since 2000. Shelby County experienced the largest jump in recipients with a 220 percent change in participation since 2000. The number of participants more than doubled in Allen, Anderson, Boone, Bracken, Franklin, Grant, Harrison, Jessamine, Meade, Oldham, Scott, Simpson, Spencer, Trimble, and Woodford Counties since 2000.

Twelve counties, all located in Eastern Kentucky, saw decreases in the average monthly number of children receiving food stamps, corresponding with declining child populations in these counties.

Food stamps offer a temporary lifeline for families struggling to make ends meet. Systemic barriers like high prices for goods and services in poor neighborhoods, the relocation of jobs from low-income neighborhoods, and discriminatory hiring practices limit opportunities for families, especially families of color because of the

interaction between poverty and race.¹⁰ In 2006, more than one in three households with income below the poverty line and about one in five Black or Hispanic households across the U.S. experienced food insecurity, compared to 10.9 percent of all households.¹¹

The majority of children (79 percent) receiving food stamps in Kentucky in 2007 were White. Black children represented 18 percent of child food stamp recipients, and Asian and Hispanic children represented a combined 3 percent that year. In addition to food stamps, families also need opportunities to train for good jobs, build assets, and access consumer goods and financial services at reasonable costs to achieve financial stability.¹²

Data Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services.

- 1 Food Research and Action Center. *Facts about Hunger*. Available at <http://www.frac.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 2 USDA Food and Nutrition Service program data. *National Level Annual Summary: Participation and Costs, FS Benefits*. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fspmain.htm>. Accessed August 2008.
- 3 Wolkwitz, K. (2008). *Trends in Food Stamp Program Participation Rates: 2000 to 2006*. USDA Food and Nutrition Service. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov>. Accessed August 2008.
- 4 Congressional Budget Office. *Food Stamp Fact Sheet*. Available at <http://www.cbo.gov/>. Accessed August 2008.
- 5 Food Research and Action Center. *Food Stamp Participation in May 2008 Sets Another Record High*. Available at: <http://www.frac.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 6 USDA Food and Nutrition Service (2008). *Trends in Food Stamp Program Participation Rates: 2000-2006*. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov>. Accessed August 2008.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Data provided by Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.
- 9 USDA Food and Nutrition Service program data. *Annual State Level Data: Average Monthly Benefit Per Household*. Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/fspmain.htm>. Accessed August 2008.
- 10 Annie E. Casey Foundation (2006). "Unequal Opportunities for Rural Family Economic Success." *Race Matters Toolkit*. Available at <http://www.aecf.org>. Accessed August 2008.
- 11 USDA Economic Research Service. *Food Security in the United States: Conditions and Trends*. Available at <http://www.ers.usda.gov>. Accessed August 2008.
- 12 Annie E. Casey Foundation (2006). "Unequal Opportunities for Rural Family Economic Success." *Race Matters Toolkit*. Available at <http://www.aecf.org>. Accessed August 2008.

Children receiving food stamps (average monthly number of children)

	2000	2007
Kentucky	177,569	248,676
Adair	760	997
Allen	516	1,081
Anderson	297	747
Ballard	303	383
Barren	1,367	2,323
Bath	755	1,029
Bell	2,754	3,283
Boone	1,058	3,012
Bourbon	569	1,037
Boyd	2,391	3,083
Boyle	766	1,316
Bracken	240	562
Breathitt	1,706	1,680
Breckinridge	733	1,147
Bullitt	1,504	2,854
Butler	618	835
Caldwell	542	726
Calloway	903	1,204
Campbell	2,379	3,501
Carlisle	152	219
Carroll	390	619
Carter	1,851	2,477
Casey	719	1,235
Christian	3,322	5,040
Clark	1,348	2,265
Clay	2,666	2,644
Clinton	602	835
Crittenden	380	449
Cumberland	412	493
Daviess	3,580	5,225
Edmonson	518	630
Elliott	659	713
Estill	1,200	1,419
Fayette	6,633	11,107
Fleming	642	869
Floyd	4,187	4,211
Franklin	1,085	2,239
Fulton	622	630
Gallatin	333	521
Garrard	529	914

	2000	2007
Grant	800	1,866
Graves	1,308	2,126
Grayson	1,015	1,642
Green	434	609
Greenup	1,594	2,137
Hancock	219	397
Hardin	2,462	4,562
Harlan	3,594	3,305
Harrison	502	1,061
Hart	885	1,189
Henderson	1,763	2,534
Henry	524	807
Hickman	229	244
Hopkins	2,255	2,900
Jackson	1,036	1,254
Jefferson	27,036	40,270
Jessamine	1,175	2,440
Johnson	1,947	2,036
Kenton	4,611	7,174
Knott	1,902	1,583
Knox	3,391	3,868
LaRue	531	781
Laurel	3,274	4,659
Lawrence	1,432	1,417
Lee	799	793
Leslie	1,180	1,169
Letcher	2,303	2,183
Lewis	1,150	1,402
Lincoln	960	1,714
Livingston	277	411
Logan	911	1,472
Lyon	154	218
McCracken	3,066	3,667
McCreary	2,053	1,998
McLean	300	520
Madison	2,286	4,005
Magoffin	1,555	1,593
Marion	802	1,013
Marshall	754	1,226
Martin	1,580	1,449
Mason	872	1,209

	2000	2007
Meade	583	1,207
Menifee	488	652
Mercer	589	1,022
Metcalfe	452	690
Monroe	588	795
Montgomery	1,080	1,644
Morgan	1,048	1,122
Muhlenberg	1,202	1,922
Nelson	1,259	2,049
Nicholas	328	465
Ohio	1,155	1,676
Oldham	371	971
Owen	444	646
Owsley	671	631
Pendleton	547	851
Perry	2,960	2,796
Pike	4,852	4,993
Powell	1,014	1,328
Pulaski	2,611	4,056
Robertson	110	132
Rockcastle	949	1,319
Rowan	928	1,363
Russell	940	1,265
Scott	936	2,029
Shelby	559	1,790
Simpson	378	940
Spencer	223	492
Taylor	900	1,277
Todd	420	796
Trigg	322	563
Trimble	245	537
Union	612	804
Warren	3,629	5,047
Washington	273	510
Wayne	1,440	1,718
Webster	532	689
Whitley	3,288	3,799
Wolfe	811	944
Woodford	302	695