

Food Assistance



Purpose

Food Assistance (FA), also known as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), is a federally funded program that provides food or benefits to purchase food for low-income Iowans.

Who Is Helped

Food Assistance

People eligible for Food Assistance must:

- Be residents of Iowa.
- Be citizens or legally qualified non-citizens (such as refugees).
- Have household incomes not to exceed 160 percent of the federal poverty level. For a family of three, that equals a gross annual income of about \$31,000.

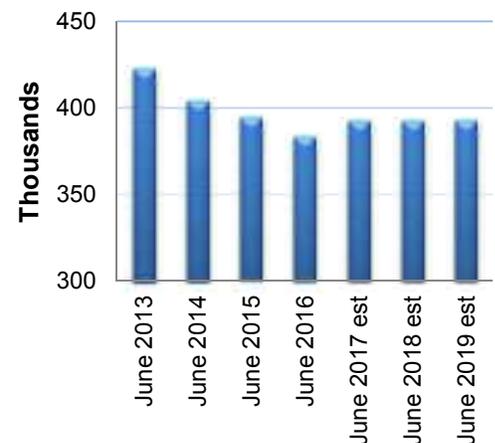
To provide more complete and accurate counts of households and recipients, DHS has made the following improvements, which are reflected in counts for SFY15 and future years:

- Counts are done mid-month following the report month rather than at the end of the report month as has been done in the past. For example, July counts are done mid-August.
 - About 2,000 households are in a closed status at the end of each month but are re-opened the following month.
 - Under the old counting method, these households would not be included and as a result, household and recipient counts have been understated.
- A new category for both households and recipients has been added based on participation in the Healthy and Well Kids in Iowa (*hawk-i*) program.
- Recipient counts are now based on each household member's participation status in other programs rather than the household category. Under the old method, if a household was categorized as FA and FIP, all FA recipients would also be categorized and counted as FA and FIP regardless of actual FIP status.

In SFY16:

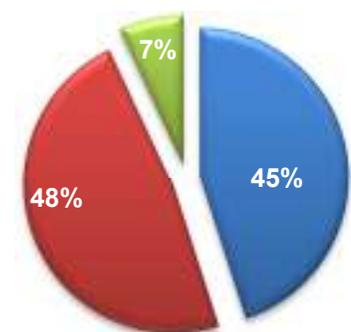
- An average of 398,317 Iowans in 181,839 households received benefits every month, a 0.8 percent decrease from SFY15.
- 85 percent of FA recipients also receive Medicaid and/or Family Investment Program (FIP) benefits, or *hawk-i*.
- The average recipient is a 26-year-old Caucasian female.

FA Recipients



Age of Recipients in SFY16

- Children (45%)
- Age 18-59 (48%)
- 60 & Over (7%)



Supplemental Food Programs

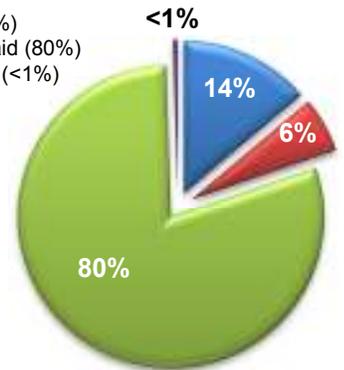
The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) provide food to low-income lowans.

Due to a change in federal law, CSFP now exclusively serves elderly, low-income lowans. Low-income women and children, who were previously covered, are now served by the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.

- An average of 2,868 lowans per month were served through CSFP and over 865,000 pounds of commodities were distributed in SFY16.
- TEFAP served an average of 103,500 individuals per month and distributed 4.3 million pounds of food during SFY16.

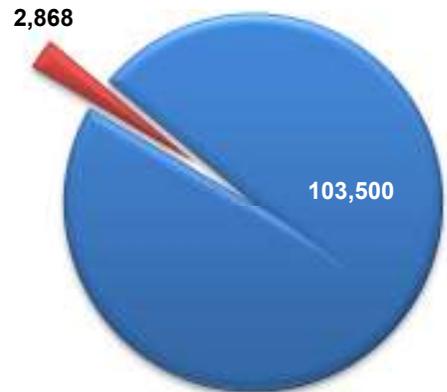
Recipients by Program in SFY16

- FA only (14%)
- FA and FIP (6%)
- FA and Medicaid (80%)
- FA and hawk-I (<1%)



Monthly Average Recipients of TEFAP and CSFP SFY16

- TEFAP
- CSFP



- ✓ *Having children is not a requirement to receive Food Assistance benefits.*
- ✓ *People incarcerated more than 30 days are not eligible. Their families may continue to receive benefits if the household still meets eligibility requirements.*
- ✓ *Requirements under the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA) for individuals to obtain health care coverage and the increased availability of such coverage to lowans under the Iowa Health and Wellness Plan, have caused a shift in household and recipient counts from FA Only to FA Medicaid. By June 2017, FA Only households are projected to account for less than 12 percent of all households receiving Food Assistance as compared to over 33 percent of all households in December 2012.*

Services

Food Assistance

- Food Assistance benefits assure low-income Iowans have access to food.
- Benefits may only be used to purchase unprepared food and non-alcoholic beverages.
- All Food Assistance transactions occur electronically on Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards. The card does not have cash benefits and will not work at ATMs.
- EBT cards may be used to buy food from 150 farmers at 110 different farmers markets and 39 roadside stands across Iowa. This provides easy access to the freshest food Iowa has to offer.

Supplemental Food Programs

- The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) distributes commodities directly to elderly recipients.
- The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) distributes food through food banks and meal sites to low-income Iowans.

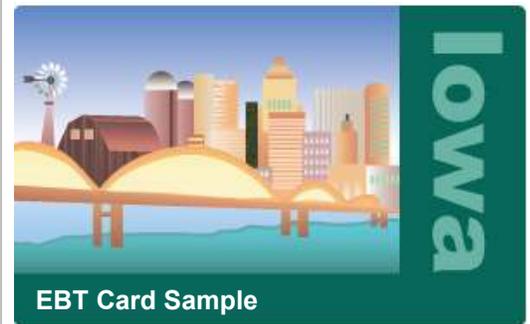
Employment and Training Program

This is a voluntary program through Food Assistance offering job seeking skills, classroom training, and structured employment search.

DHS partners with the following community colleges to provide services to those FA recipients seeking training for employment: Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), Hawkeye, Indian Hills, Iowa Western, Kirkwood and Southwestern.

Nutrition Education

Written educational materials are provided to FA recipients to promote healthy food choices.



EBT Card Sample

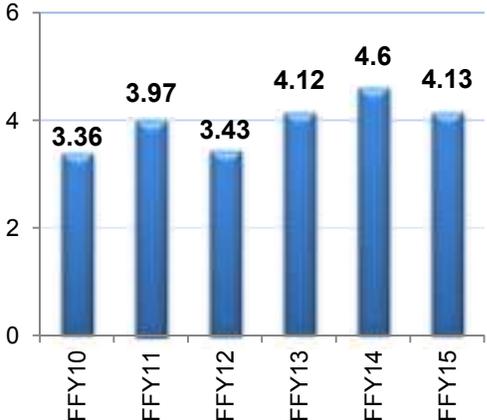
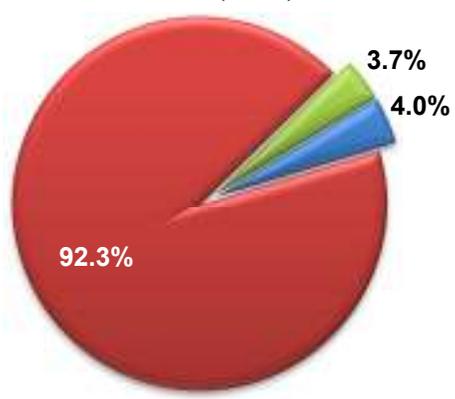
Average Benefits SFY16:

- **\$231.99** per month per household
- **\$105.95** per month per individual
- **\$3.48** per day per individual
- **\$1.16** per meal

Farmers Markets EBT Sales



- ✓ *While Food Assistance may be used in any state, approximately 99 percent of benefits are used in Iowa or bordering states.*
- ✓ *DHS and the Department of Education partner to identify children who qualify for free school lunches based on the receipt of Food Assistance or FIP, or being in foster care.*
- ✓ *Employment and Training services through community colleges provide short term certification for in-demand industries in Iowa.*

<p>Goals & Strategies</p>	<p>Goal: Improve efficiency and accuracy. Strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue monitoring and training on key causes of errors. <p>Goal: Assure benefits are issued timely. Strategy: Monitor performance.</p> <p>Goal: Prevent fraud and abuse. Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented new methods to identify potential misuse of EBT cards. Identify and cancel benefits for ineligible individuals who are incarcerated. 	<p>Percentage of Errors Calculating Benefits</p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Fiscal Year</th> <th>Percentage of Errors</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>FFY10</td> <td>3.36</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FFY11</td> <td>3.97</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FFY12</td> <td>3.43</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FFY13</td> <td>4.12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FFY14</td> <td>4.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FFY15</td> <td>4.13</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Fiscal Year	Percentage of Errors	FFY10	3.36	FFY11	3.97	FFY12	3.43	FFY13	4.12	FFY14	4.6	FFY15	4.13
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<p>Cost of Services</p>	<p>The average annual FA benefit per recipient is \$1,310.</p> <p>✓ <i>In SFY16, the average monthly FA benefit for FIP households was \$413.32 = \$4,960 annually; for FA Only households was \$162.29 = \$1,947 annually; for Medical Assistance households was \$229.13 = \$2,750 annually; and for hawk-i households was \$232.73 = \$2,793 annually.</i></p>															
<p>Funding Sources</p>	<p>Food Assistance benefits and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) are paid 100 percent by federal dollars. Iowa and the federal government split the administrative costs 50/50.</p> <p>Nutrition Education, Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), and the Employment & Training (E & T) program are paid 100 percent with federal dollars.</p> <p>The SFY17 total projected budget is \$555,318,987:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$533,217,097 is federal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$512,661,398 in benefits \$20,555,699 in admin costs \$22,101,890 in state general fund. 	<p>SFY17 Funding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State General Fund (4.0%) Federal Benefits (92.3%) Federal Admin (3.7%) 														
<p>✓ <i>In SFY16, \$511.4 million was drawn from the federal government for Food Assistance benefits, a one-year decrease of 1.9 percent.</i></p> <p>✓ <i>The USDA estimates that \$9.20 in economic activity is generated for every \$5 spent on food.</i></p> <p>✓ <i>Both state and federal funds are used to contract with a vendor to provide EBT cards. DIA's fraud investigators also receive federal funding for FA activities.</i></p> <p>✓ <i>While caseloads have decreased during the past two years, they are not expected to reach pre-recession levels. This applies not only to Iowa, but also nationally.</i></p>																

Legal Basis

Federal:

- Code of Federal Regulations: 7 CFR 272.2
- The Agricultural Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-79).
- Section 6 of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2014 as amended by P.L. 113-79

State:

- Iowa Administrative Code, 441 IAC 65