

# Social Assistance during COVID-19

Food Security and Income Support



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

*Make waves. Move mountains. Change lives.*

# Columbia School of Social Work

## Office of Professional Engagement

Robert Paul Hartley, MDiv, PhD

John Robertson, MSW, LMSW, PhD

Special guest: Bradley Hardy, PhD, American University

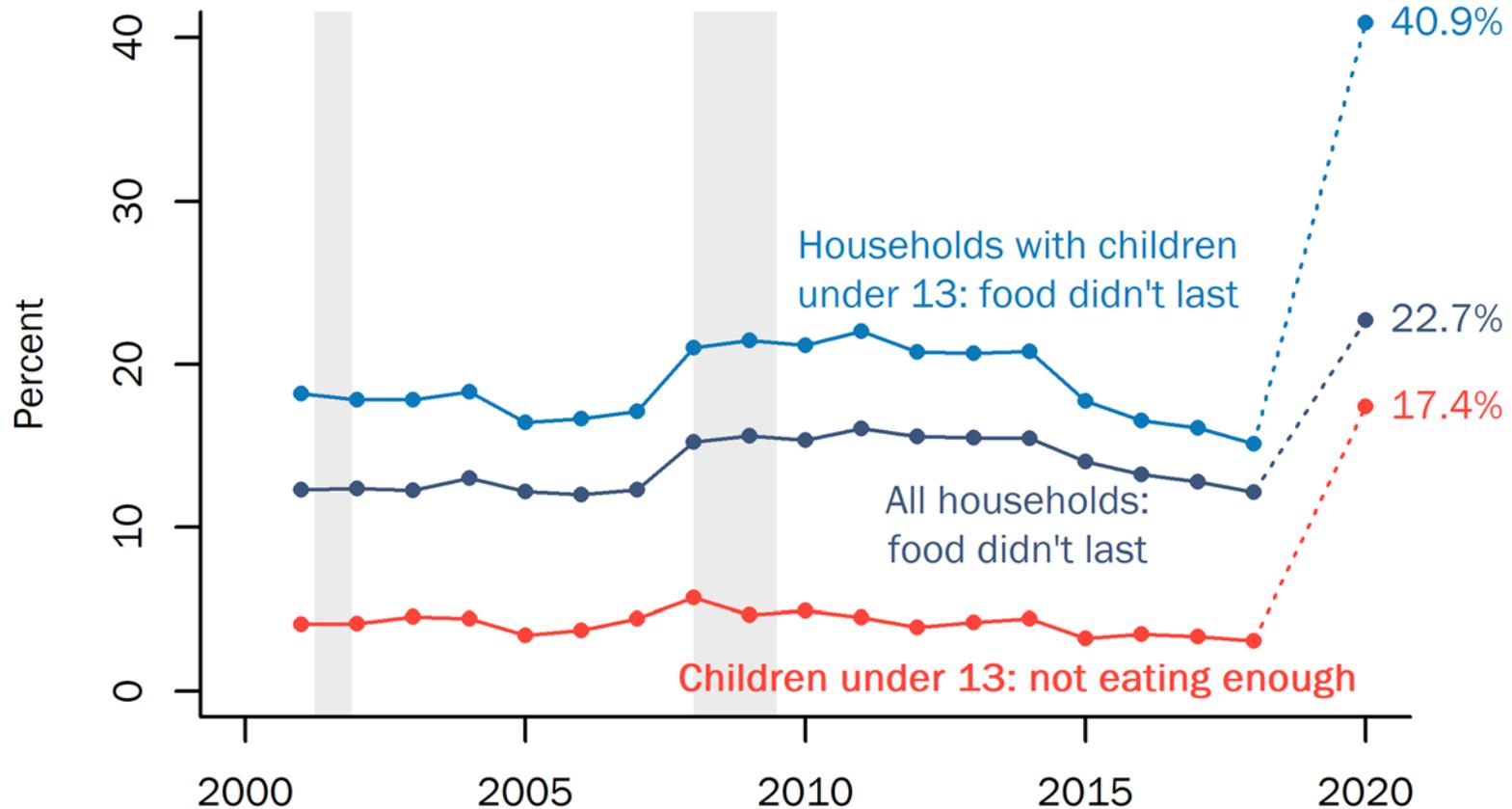
*Thank you to Nasia Daley, Tiffany Rasmussen, and  
Jania Stewart-James.*



# OVERVIEW

- Food security and the pandemic
- Nutrition assistance policy response
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Other USDA programs and sources of food assistance
- Vulnerable groups and inequality
  - Senior health and hunger
- Income support policy; relief checks
- Questions throughout  
(live chat discussion welcome!)

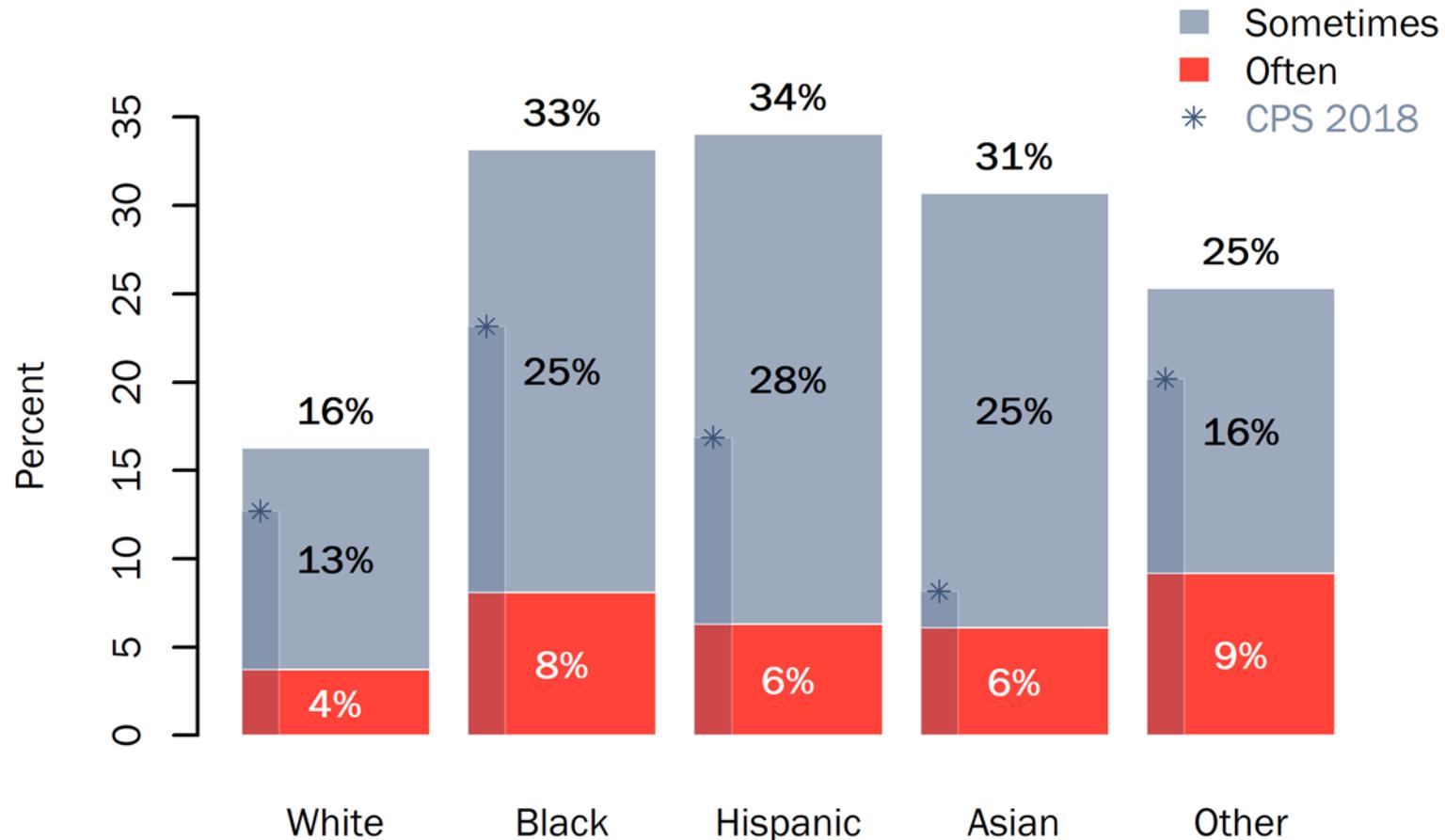
# Food Insecurity in the United States



[https://www.hamiltonproject.org/blog/the\\_covid\\_19\\_crisis\\_has\\_already\\_left\\_too\\_many\\_children\\_hungry\\_in\\_america](https://www.hamiltonproject.org/blog/the_covid_19_crisis_has_already_left_too_many_children_hungry_in_america)

# Food Security by Race/Ethnicity

## Food didn't last, not enough money

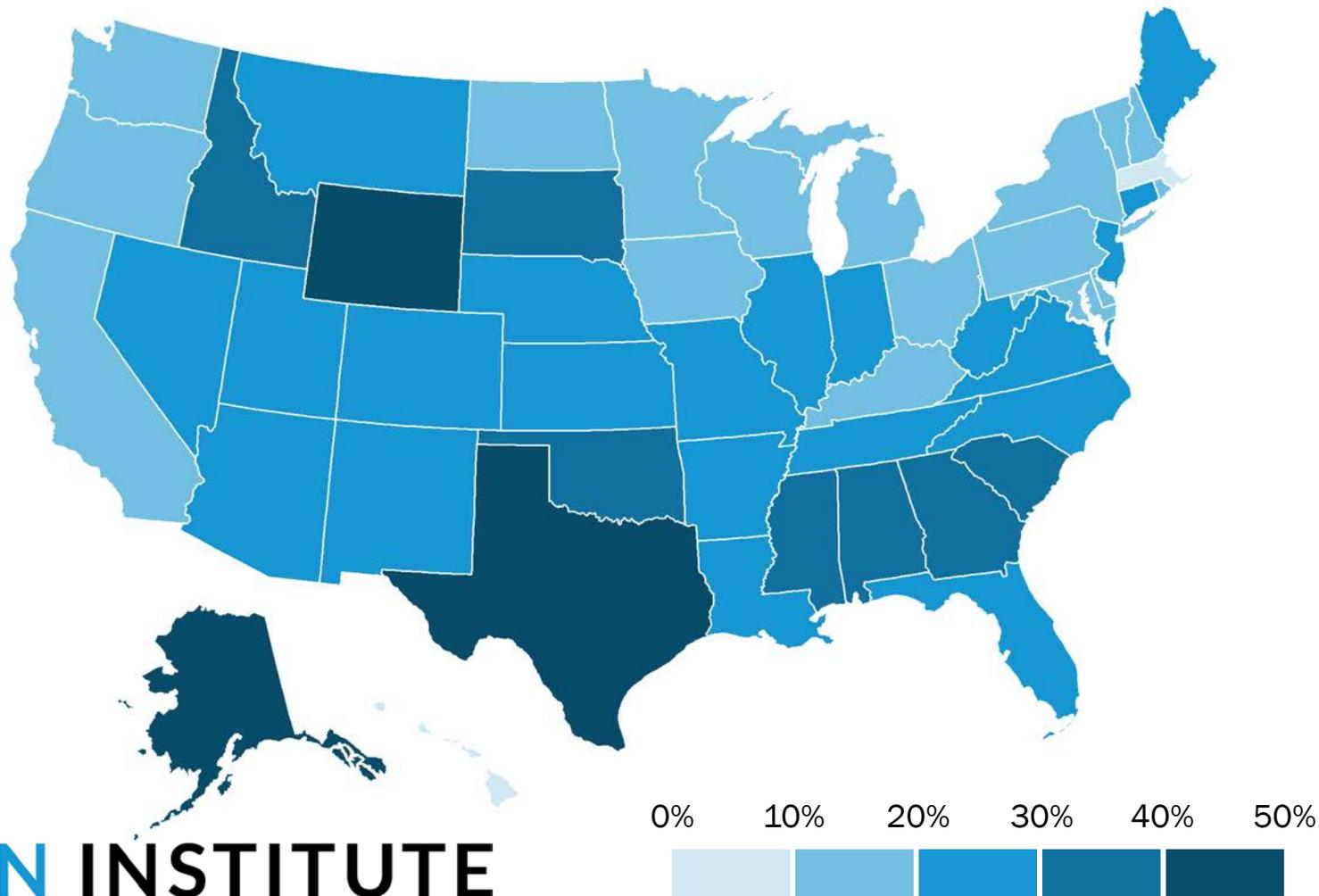


Abigail Wozniak, Joe Willey, Jennifer Benz, and Nick Hart. [COVID Impact Survey: Version 2 \[dataset\]](#). Chicago, IL: National Opinion Research Center, 2020.



# Food Service Workers

## Uninsurance rate of food service workers by state, 2017



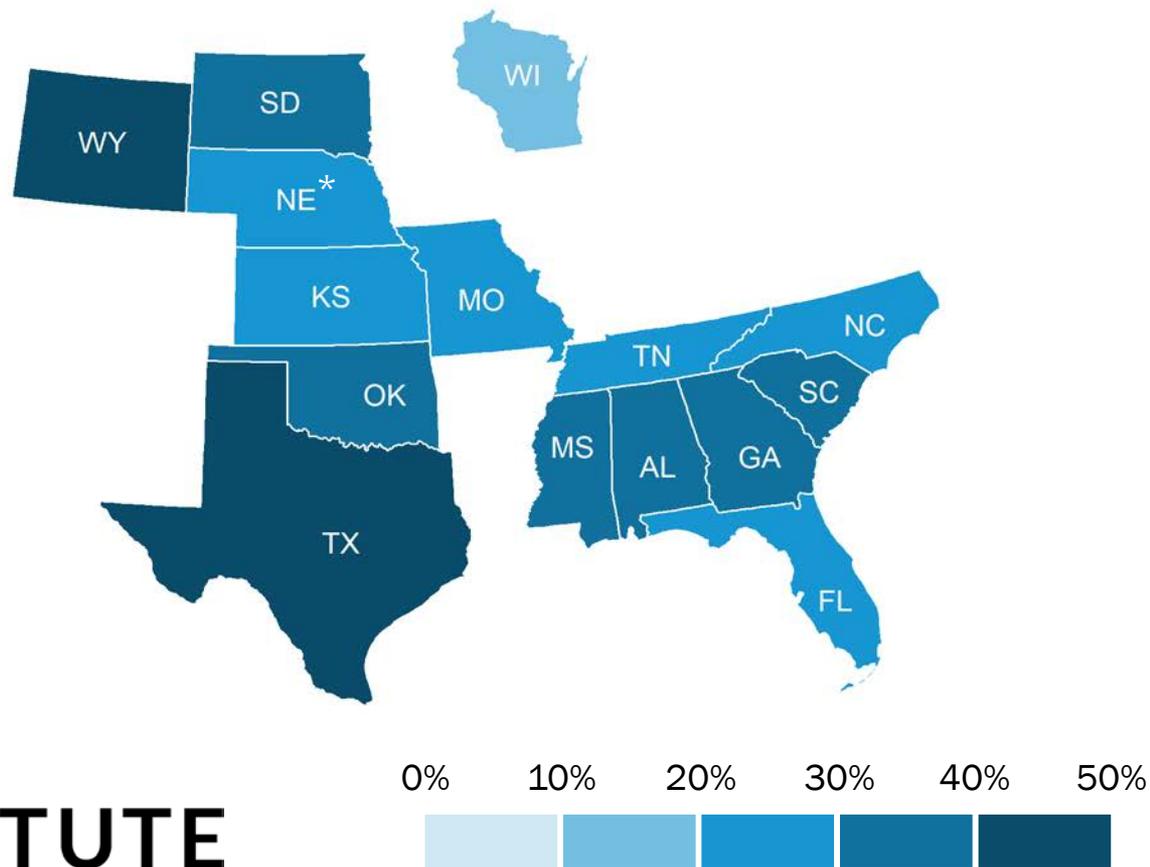
**URBAN INSTITUTE**

[urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/101931/supporting\\_food\\_service\\_workers\\_during\\_covid-19\\_pandemic.pdf](https://urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/101931/supporting_food_service_workers_during_covid-19_pandemic.pdf)

# Food Service Workers

Uninsurance rate of food service workers by state, 2017

Medicaid nonexpansion states (32.6% on average)



URBAN INSTITUTE

[urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/101931/supporting\\_food\\_service\\_workers\\_during\\_covid-19\\_pandemic.pdf](https://urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/101931/supporting_food_service_workers_during_covid-19_pandemic.pdf)



Volunteers hand out potatoes donated by Washington potato farmers in Auburn, Washington, on May 7. According to Grant Morris of Schneider Farms, the food service industry slowdown has resulted in a million pounds of excess potatoes in the state. *Jason Redmond/AFP/Getty Images*

<https://www.vox.com/2020/5/9/21251895/food-banks-lines-pandemic>



Cars line up for food in the Maverik Center parking lot in West Valley City, Utah, on April 24. *Rick Bowmer/AP*

<https://www.vox.com/2020/5/9/21251895/food-banks-lines-pandemic>



A line for lunch at Sharing & Caring Hands in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on March 24. *David Joles/Star Tribune/Getty Images*

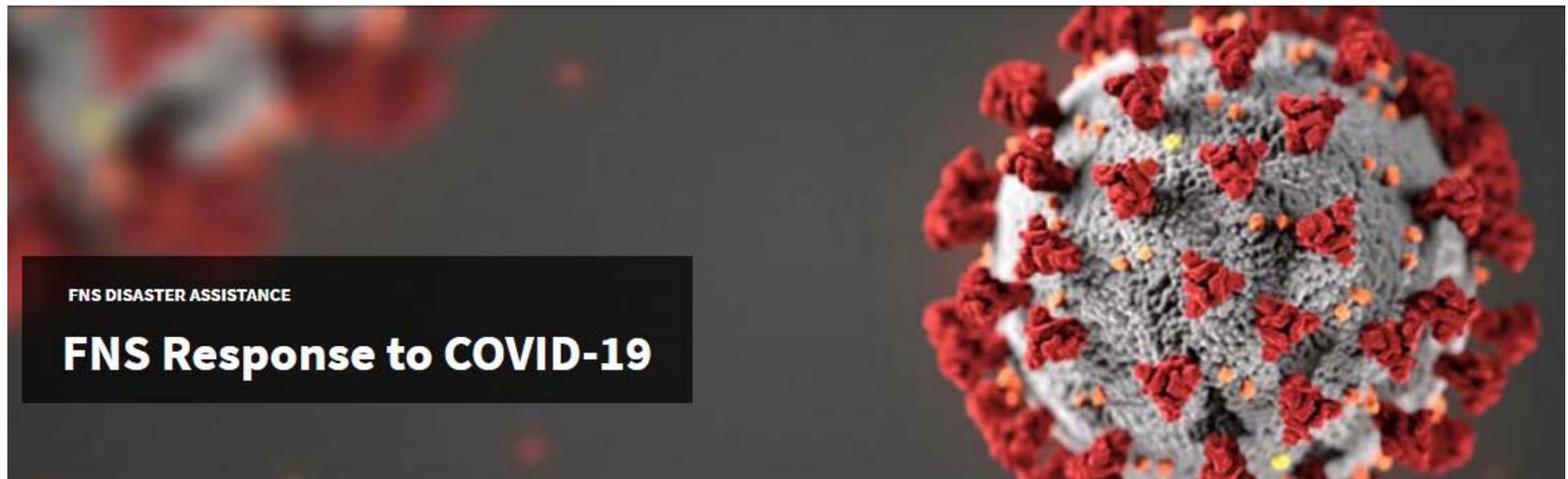
<https://www.vox.com/2020/5/9/21251895/food-banks-lines-pandemic>

# U.S. COVID-19 Policy Response

- March 6, 2020: Coronavirus Preparedness and Response Supplemental Appropriations Act
- March 18, 2020: Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)**
- March 27, 2020: Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act**
- April 24, 2020: Paycheck Protection Program and Health Care Enhancement Act

# Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

U.S. Department of Agriculture



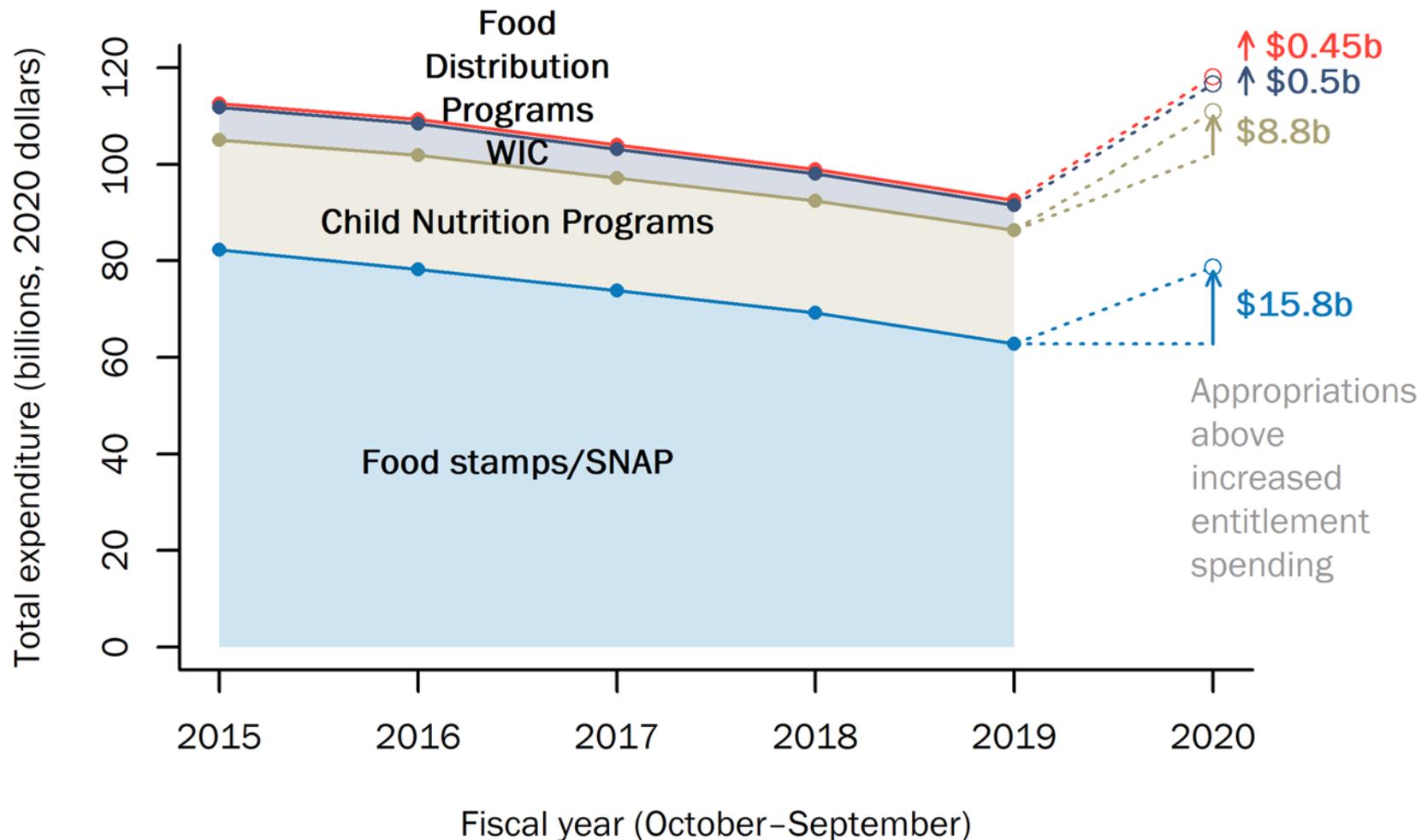
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19>

# Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or “food stamps”)**
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (**WIC**)
- Child Nutrition programs; **school meals**
- Food Distribution Programs
  - The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

# CARES Act Nutrition Appropriations

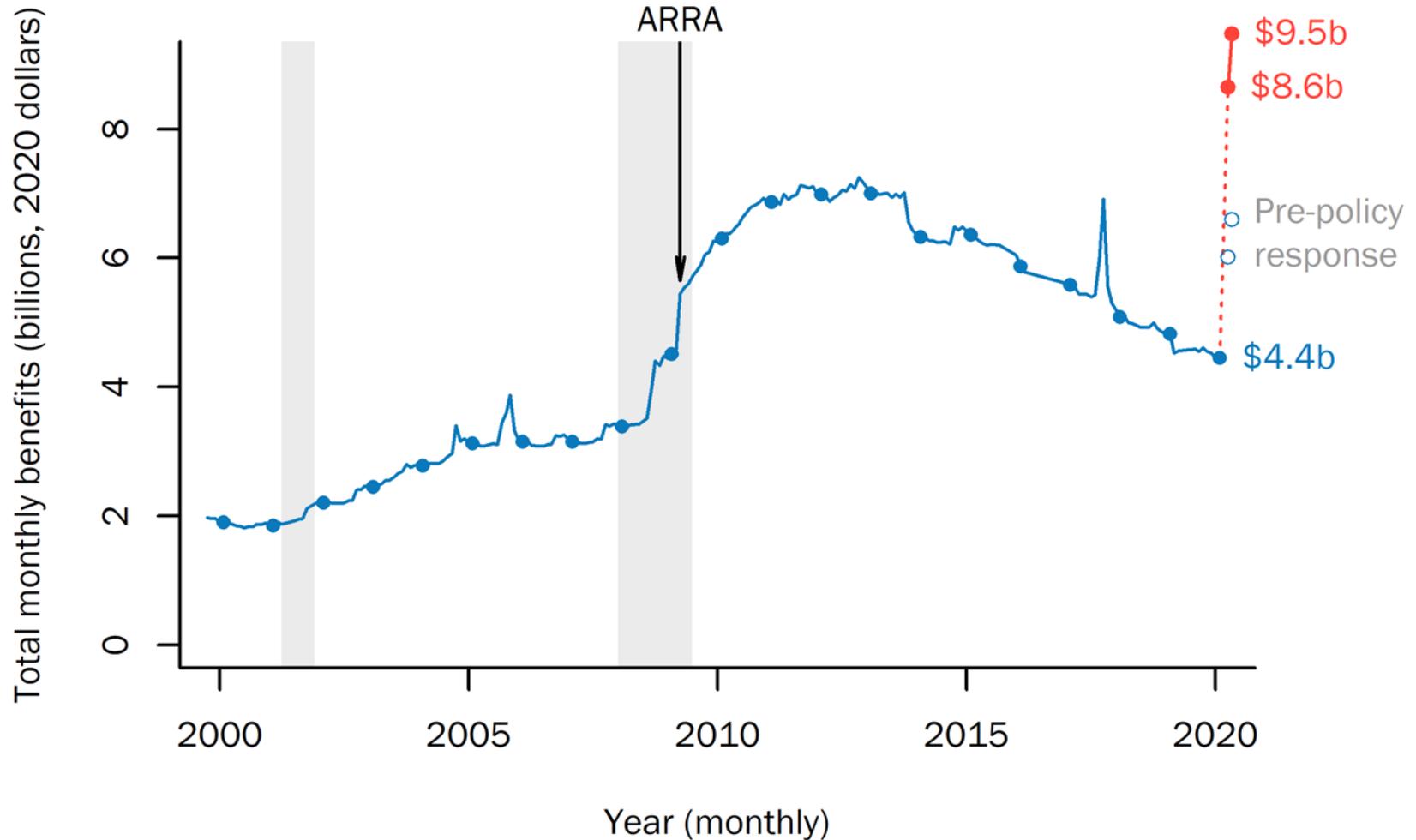
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/annual-4.xls>  
[appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Coronavirus%20Supplemental%20Appropriations%20Summary\\_FINAL.pdf](https://appropriations.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Coronavirus%20Supplemental%20Appropriations%20Summary_FINAL.pdf)



# SNAP Total Monthly Benefits

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pd/SNAPZip69throughCurrent.zip>

<https://www.covid-impact.org>



# Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Food stamps/SNAP



# Food stamps/SNAP Adjustments

## Emergency Allotments

- Supplements to bring eligible households up to the maximum benefit (2-month limit)

## Pandemic EBT

- Benefits to children who normally would receive free or reduced-price school meals

## Able-bodied Adults without Dependents

- Suspended time limits associated with work requirements during national emergency

# Emergency Allotment: Who Benefits?

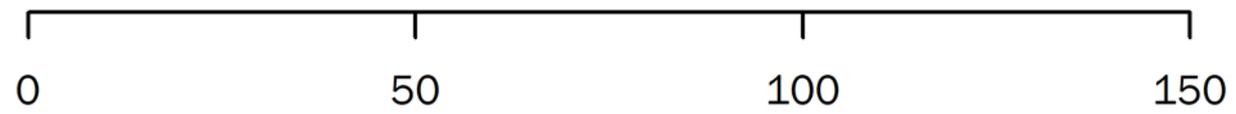
	On average (based on recent and peak est.)
Percent of units receiving the maximum benefit	About 40% would not benefit from emergency allotments

Average: 20%  
Median: 0%

Families in deep poverty:  
Already receiving maximum benefit,  
No emergency allotments

Average: 85%  
Median: 80%

Typical  
emergency  
allotment  
recipients



Income-to-needs ratio (percent)

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/snap-quality-control-data> (comparing 2013 and 2018 estimates)

# Policy Recommendations



- 15% ↑ Thrifty Food Plan
- Suspend time limits/  
work requirements  
(until economy improves)
- Fund state admin. costs
- *Suspend new restrictions*

Dottie Rosenbaum,  
CBPP senior fellow

## BROOKINGS

- 20% ↑ Thrifty Food Plan
- Suspend time limits/  
work requirements  
(next 4 months)
- Extend recertification

Bradley Hardy, American  
University, and Jim Ziliak,  
University of Kentucky  
Center for Poverty Research

# SNAP Adjustment Requests

## How will States know what kinds of requests FNS is approving?

All incoming requests will be posted to the FNS website within 10 days of receipt. Responses will be sent to State agencies, disseminated by Regional Offices, and posted to the FNS website within 10 days of issuance. Blanket approvals issued by FNS for adjustments under FFCRA will also be posted to the FNS website within 10 days.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/snap-waivers-flexibilities>

# SNAP Adjustments: New York State

## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

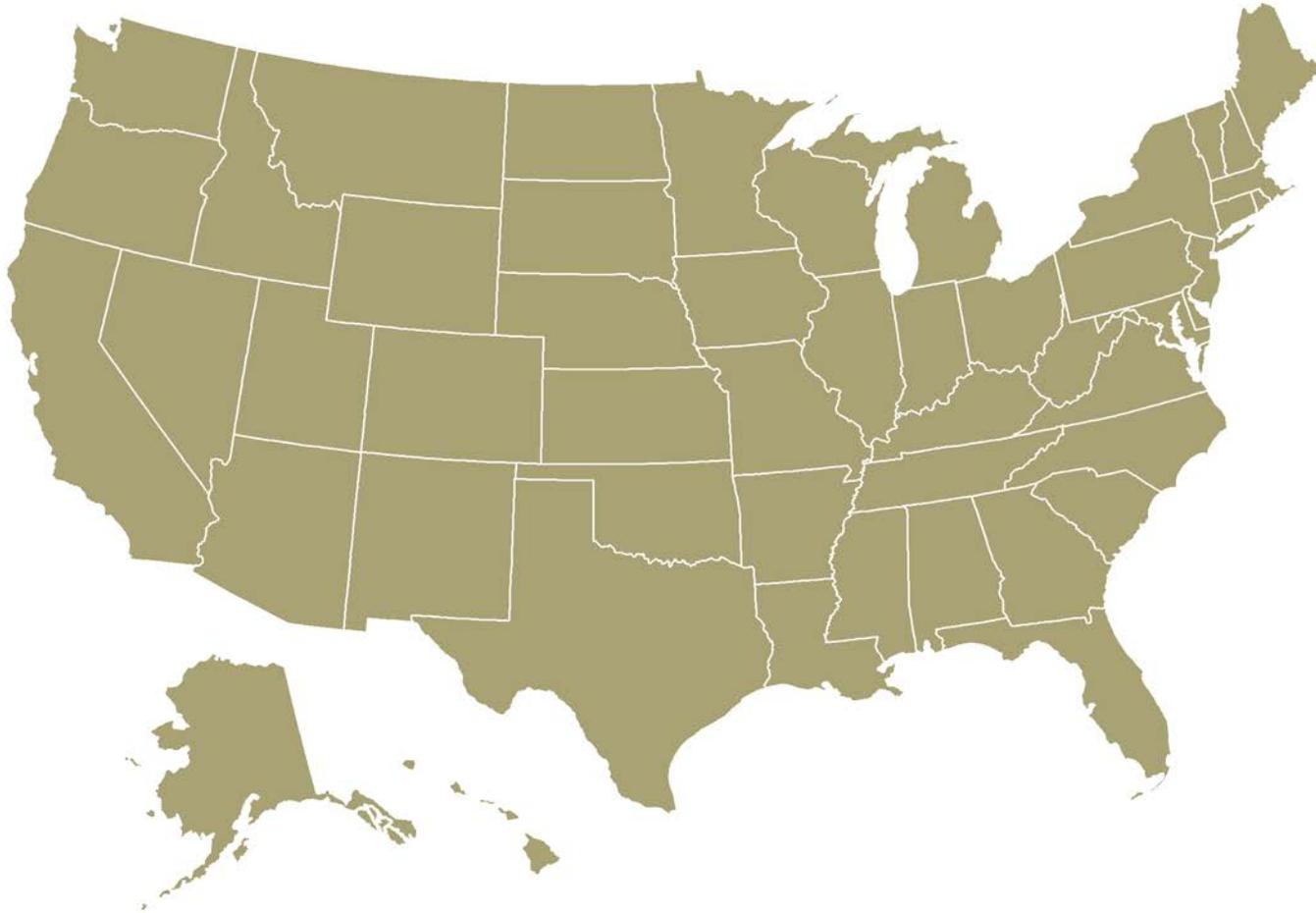
Date	Request	Status
3/19/2020	QC Case Review Extension	<a href="#">State Selected Option</a>
3/23/2020	Extended Certification Periods; Waive Periodic Reporting ( <a href="#">Received: 3/21/2020</a> )	<a href="#">Approved</a>
3/26/2020	Adjustments to Interview Requirements	<a href="#">State Selected Option</a>
4/2/2020	Emergency Allotments to Current SNAP Households ( <a href="#">Received: 3/31/2020</a> )	<a href="#">Approved</a>
4/10/2020	Suspend Student Eligibility Rules ( <a href="#">Received: 4/9/2020</a> )	<a href="#">Mass Denial</a>
	Pandemic EBT ( <a href="#">Received: 3/25/2020</a> )	<a href="#">Approved now</a>
	QC Hold Harmless ( <a href="#">Received: 4/8/2020</a> )	



<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/media/file/NY-SNAP-COV-EmergencyAllotments-Approval.pdf>

# Approved: Emergency Allotment

*All states are approved*



[fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/snap-waivers-flexibilities](https://fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/snap-waivers-flexibilities); updated May 2, 2020



# SNAP, Technology, and Health

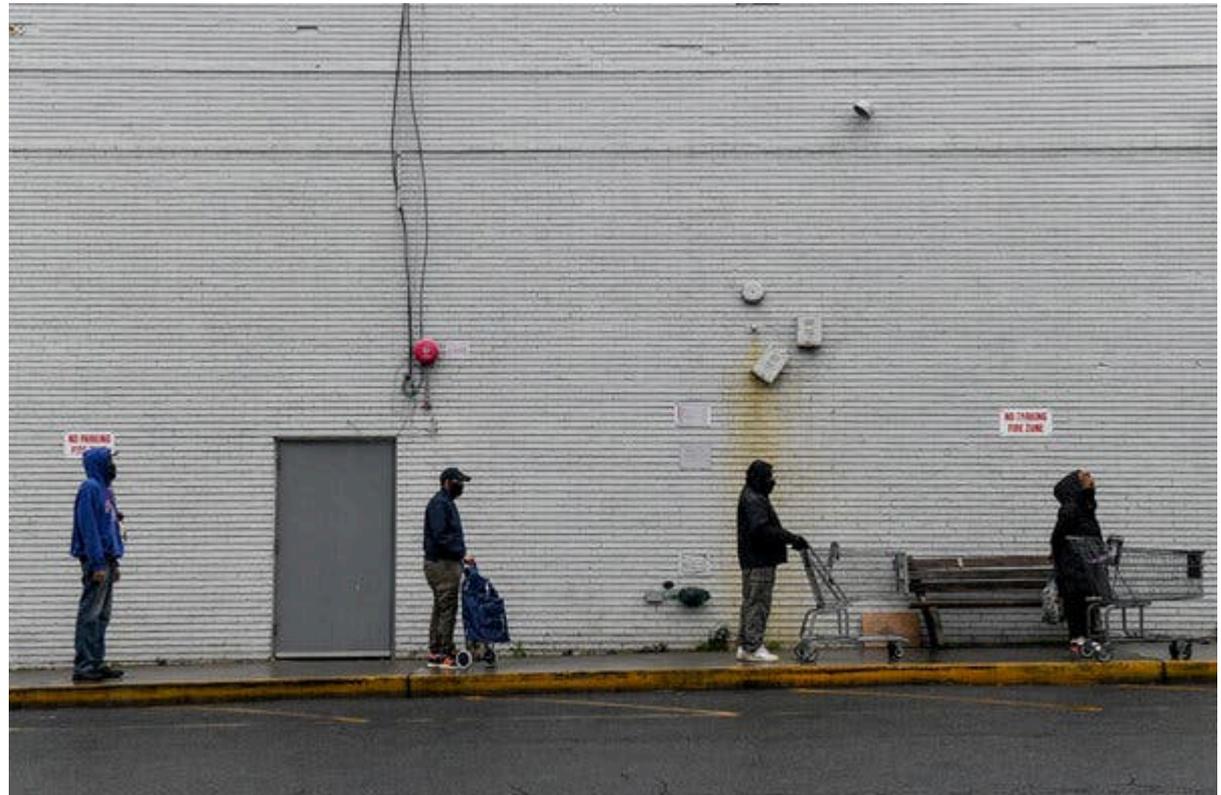
## *For Most Food Stamp Users, Online Shopping Isn't an Option*

The New York Times



By Tara Siegel Bernard

May 1, 2020

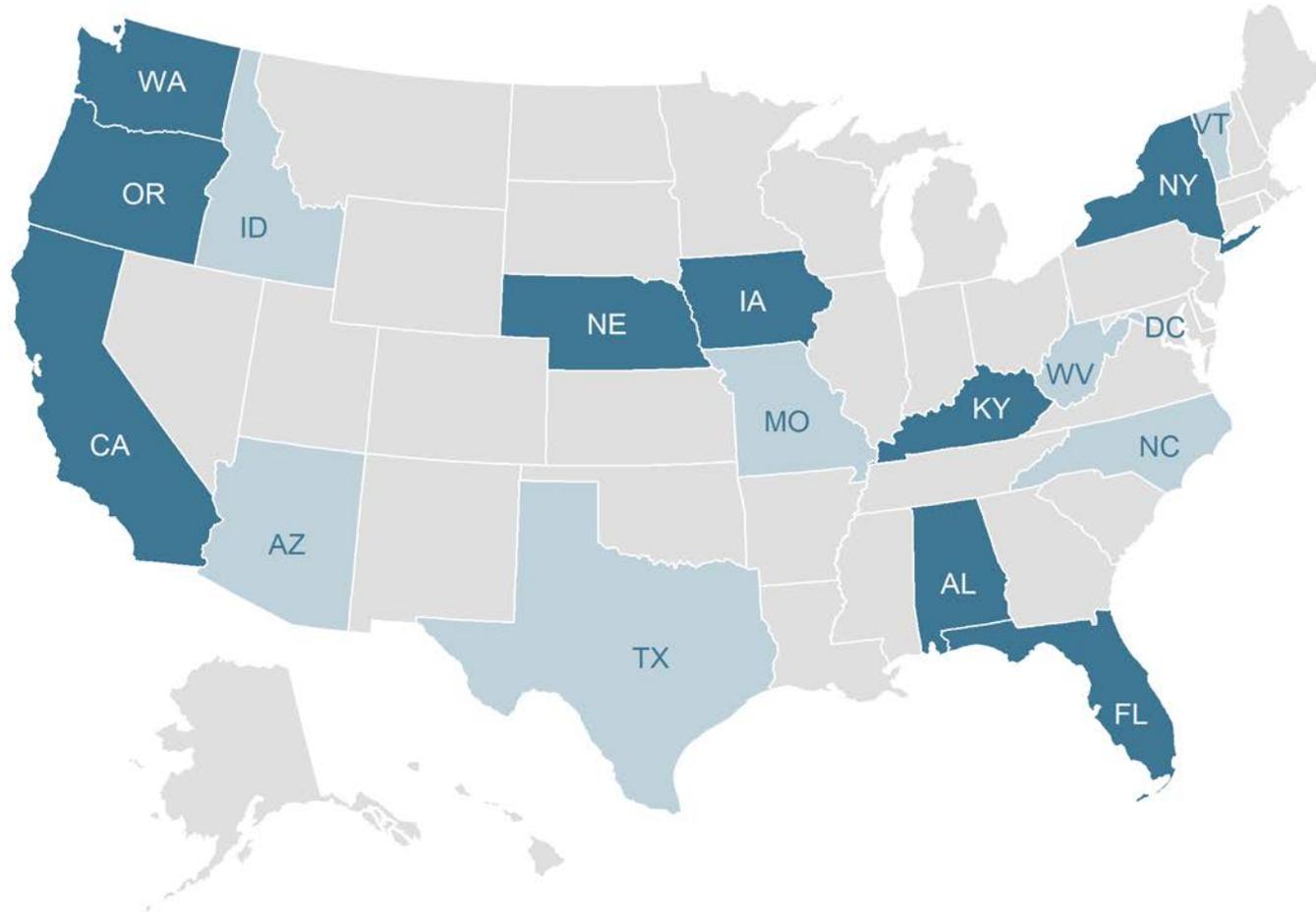


An expanding pilot program that lets food stamp recipients use their benefits online is helping them avoid lines at supermarkets like this one. Desiree Rios for The New York Times

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/your-money/food-stamps-snap-coronavirus.html>

# SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot

As of May 1, 2020:  Participating  Planning phase

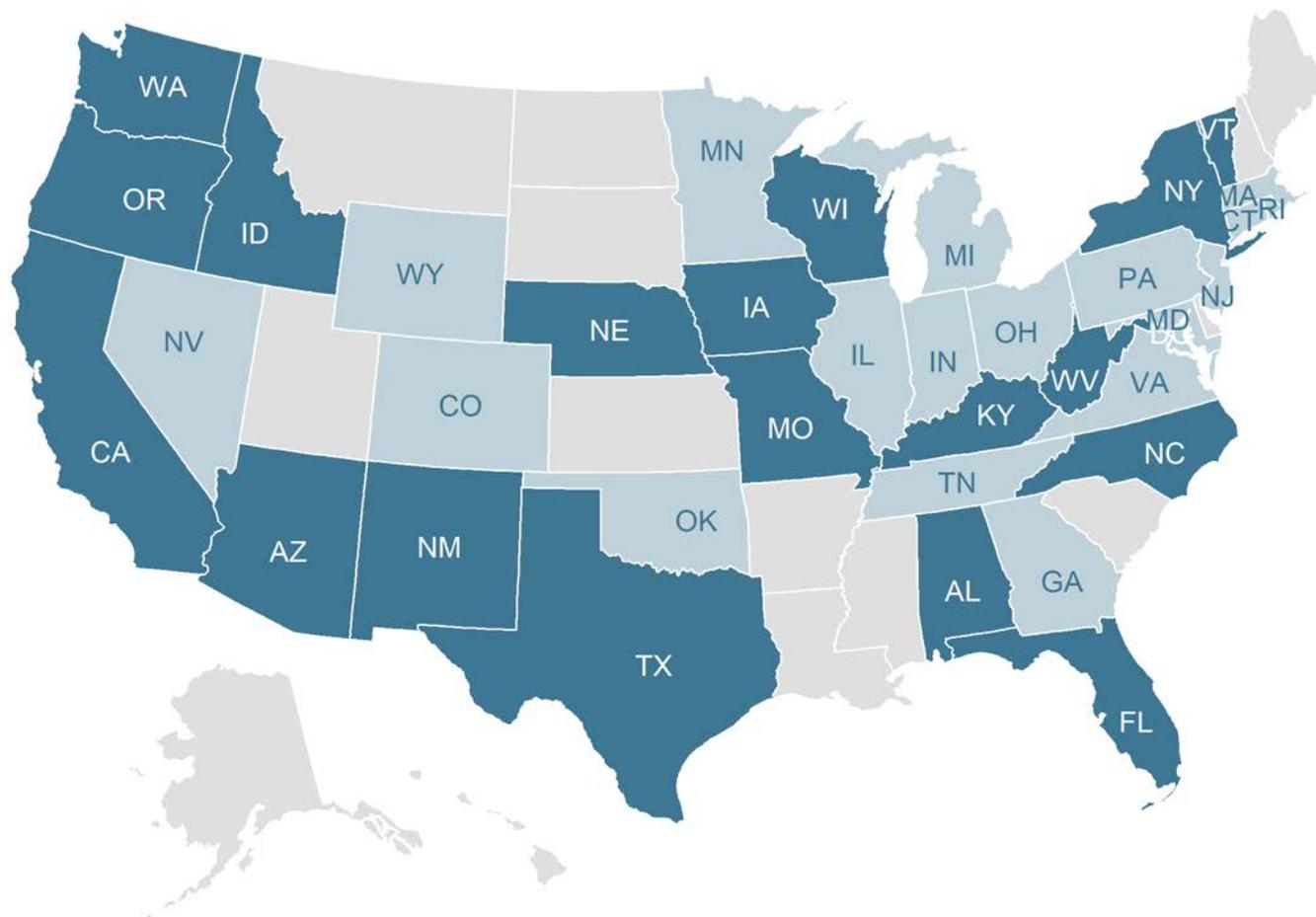


- In New York:
- Amazon
  - ShopRite
  - Walmart

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/your-money/food-stamps-snap-coronavirus.html>

# SNAP Online Purchasing Pilot

As of May 23, 2020:  Participating  Planning phase



- In New York:
- Amazon
  - ShopRite
  - Walmart

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot>

# SNAP can reach more families



**The Hamilton Project** @hamiltonproj · 1h

"For every meal that is provided through a food bank, SNAP provides 9 meals, which is why [...] we need benefit increases to solve this issue."  
#SNAPmatters

Watch Hamilton Project's @laurenbauer's segment on @CNNSitRoom:

**The Situation Room** @CNNSitRoom · 15h

A new study found that in nearly 20% of US households, young children aren't getting enough to eat. "We've lost that frontline program that prevents mass nutritional problems with children, the school meals programs," Brookings fellow Lauren Bauer says.

GLOBALLY	
TOTAL CASES	DEATHS
4,420,743	301,160

IN THE UNITED STATES	
TOTAL CASES	DEATHS
1,411,466	85,489

**CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**  
STUDY: YOUNG CHILDREN NOT GETTING ENOUGH TO EAT IN NEARLY 20% OF AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS

2:49 24.6K views is in the United States of

“For every meal that is provided through a food bank, **SNAP provides 9 meals**, which is why [...] we need benefit increases to solve this issue.”

<https://twitter.com/hamiltonproj/status/1261287302321655808>

# Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

\$19 billion intermediate relief program



# Coronavirus Food Assistance Program

CFAP will use the funding and authorities provided in the CARES Act, the Families First Act, and other USDA existing authorities.

- 1. Direct Support to Farmers and Ranchers:** \$16 billion in direct support based on actual losses for agricultural producers.
- 2. USDA Purchase and Distribution:** USDA will partner with distributors to purchase \$3 billion to provide a pre-approved box of fresh produce, dairy, and meat products to food banks, community and faith-based organizations, and other non-profits.

<https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/04/17/usda-announces-coronavirus-food-assistance-program>

# Legislation and Food Assistance



<https://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2020/04/13/farmers-destroy-food-banks-lemon-ctn-vpx.cnn>

# Legislation and Food Assistance



Courtesy Paul Allen

**CORONAVIRUS CRISIS**

**DISCONNECT BETWEEN GROWING DEMAND AT FOOD BANKS  
AND FARMERS DESTROYING FRESH FOOD**

**CNN**

6:27 PM PT

**CNN TONIGHT**

<https://www.cnn.com/videos/us/2020/04/13/farmers-destroy-food-banks-lemon-ctn-vpx.cnn>

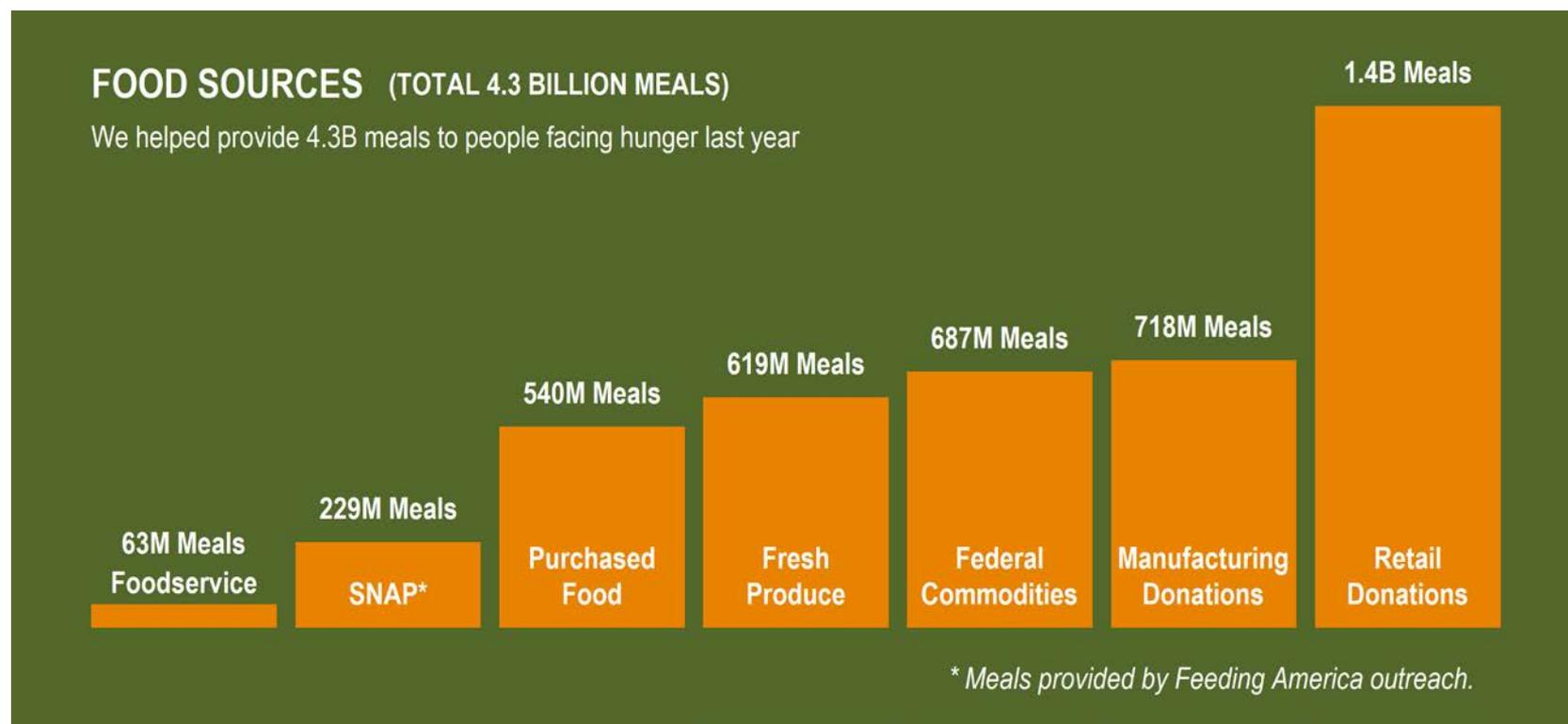
# Finding your local food bank



Finding your local food bank

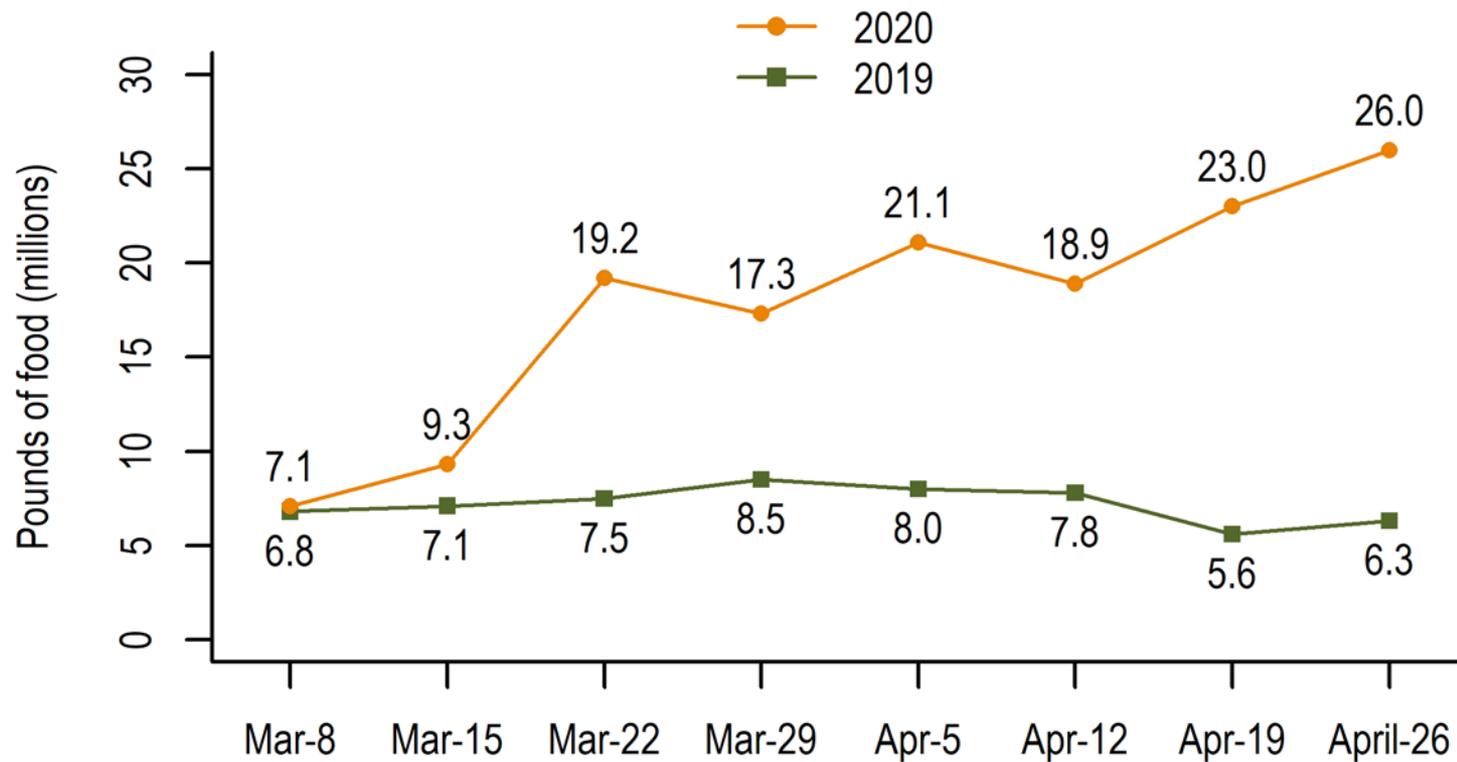
<https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank>

# Feeding America, 2018



<https://www.feedingamerica.org/our-work/our-approach>

# Food Sourced to Food Banks, by Year



<https://www.feedingamerica.org/our-work/our-approach>



# NYC Food Assistance Resources

**NYC** [NYC.gov/getFood](https://www.nyc.gov/getFood)

- **FoodHelp NYC:** Map of free food resources across the city, including food pantries and Grab & Go meals at NYC Schools, available for all children or adults in need
- **ACCESS HRA:** To sign up for SNAP benefits or cash assistance from home
- **HelpNowNYC:** For ways to donate food, cash, or supplies to those in need
- **NYC Food Delivery Assistance:** If you cannot go out to get food, no one can bring you food, and you are not able to use private delivery options, New York City will deliver emergency meals to you for three days. Check your eligibility and sign up

# Food Bank for New York City



1,202,000,000+  
Free meals provided



1,800+  
NYC charities served



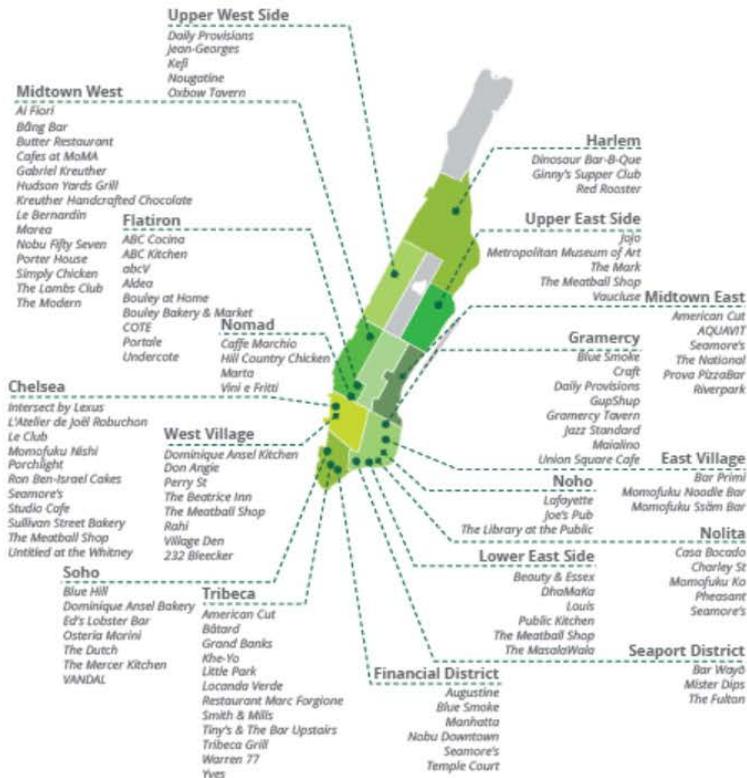
\$1,069,000,000  
Returned to the community



# City Harvest

# CITY HARVEST

RESCUING FOOD FOR NEW YORK'S HUNGRY

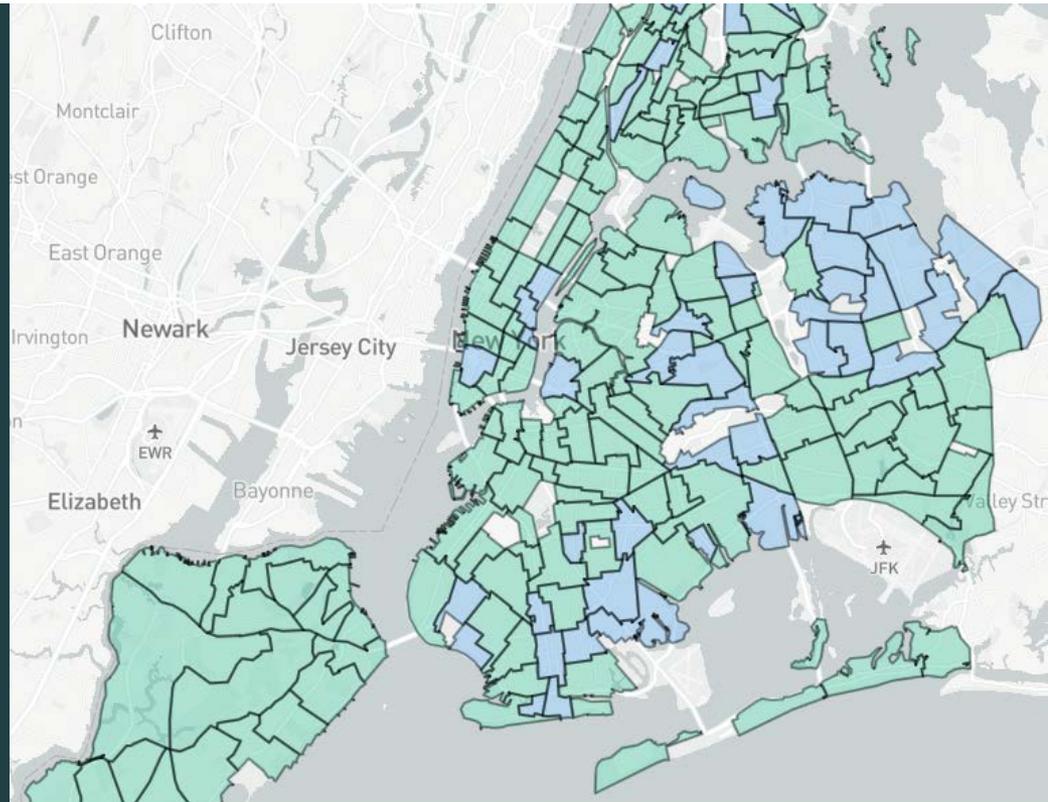


Restaurants that supply to City Harvest

As of February 2020

# Mutual Aid

- Being created throughout the country to respond to COVID: <https://mutualaid.nyc>
- Resources: Technology, translation, design



# Mutual Aid

<https://mutualaid.nyc/resources-groups>



<input type="checkbox"/>	Resource Title	Need	Resource Details	Link to Resource
▼	<b>Exercise and Wellness</b> <span style="float: right;">Count 3</span>			
20	Dance Classes: Gaga	Exercise and Wellness	In order to strengthen our bodies and refresh ourselves during this ...	<a href="https://www.gagapeople.com/en/gaga-online/">https://www.gagapeople.com/en/gaga-online/</a>
21	Yoga Classes: Modo Yoga NYC	Exercise and Wellness	Modo Yoga Studio is a community of inspired students, joined together b...	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/modoyoganyc/">https://www.instagram.com/modoyoganyc/</a>
22	Free online gymnastics classes for children	Exercise and Wellness	Industry Gymnastics offers free online gymnastics and movement classes f...	<a href="https://www.industrygymnastics.com/online-classes">https://www.industrygymnastics.com/online-classes</a>
▼	<b>NEED Food</b> <span style="float: right;">Count 3</span>			
23	Free Meals: Three free meals available daily for any New Yorker	Food	Any New Yorker who wants one can get three free meals a day at more ...	<a href="https://www.opt-osfns.org/schoolfoodny/m...">https://www.opt-osfns.org/schoolfoodny/m...</a>
24	COVID-19 Food Hub NYC	Food	Find resources like how to get funding for food and where to go t...	<a href="http://bit.ly/foodhubnyc">bit.ly/foodhubnyc</a>
25	Coronavirus NYC Neighborhood Food Resource Guides by Hunter College	Food	These guides by the Hunter College Food Policy Center list all food ...	<a href="https://www.nycfoodpolicy.org/coronavirus-nyc-food-...">https://www.nycfoodpolicy.org/coronavirus-nyc-food-...</a>
▼	<b>NEED Food, Social Service Guidance (e.g. su</b> <span style="float: right;">Count 1</span>			
26	Social services for seniors living in	Food, Social Service	The Y provides a variety of social	<a href="http://www.ywashhts.org/em">http://www.ywashhts.org/em</a>

# Focus on Seniors

Health and Hunger Issues  
among the Aging Population



# Senior Hunger and Aging Issues

- Senior centers
- Home care; family care
- Assisted living and nursing homes
- Grocery shopping
- Health and loneliness
- Caretaker availability and well-being



# Senior Hunger and Aging

- Social Security, SSI & SNAP, VA pensions, other pensions
- Senior center
- Meals on wheels
  - Public or Voluntary
  - Some senior centers are delivering
  - Some emergency provision by the NYC and possibly other local government
  - \$1200 is a big replacement of the loss of senior centers
- Home care
  - Impact on home care workers
- Assisted living and nursing homes
  - Impact of infection on workers and residents.
- Family care
  - Need for support and respite
- The role of Medicaid and Medicare

National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs

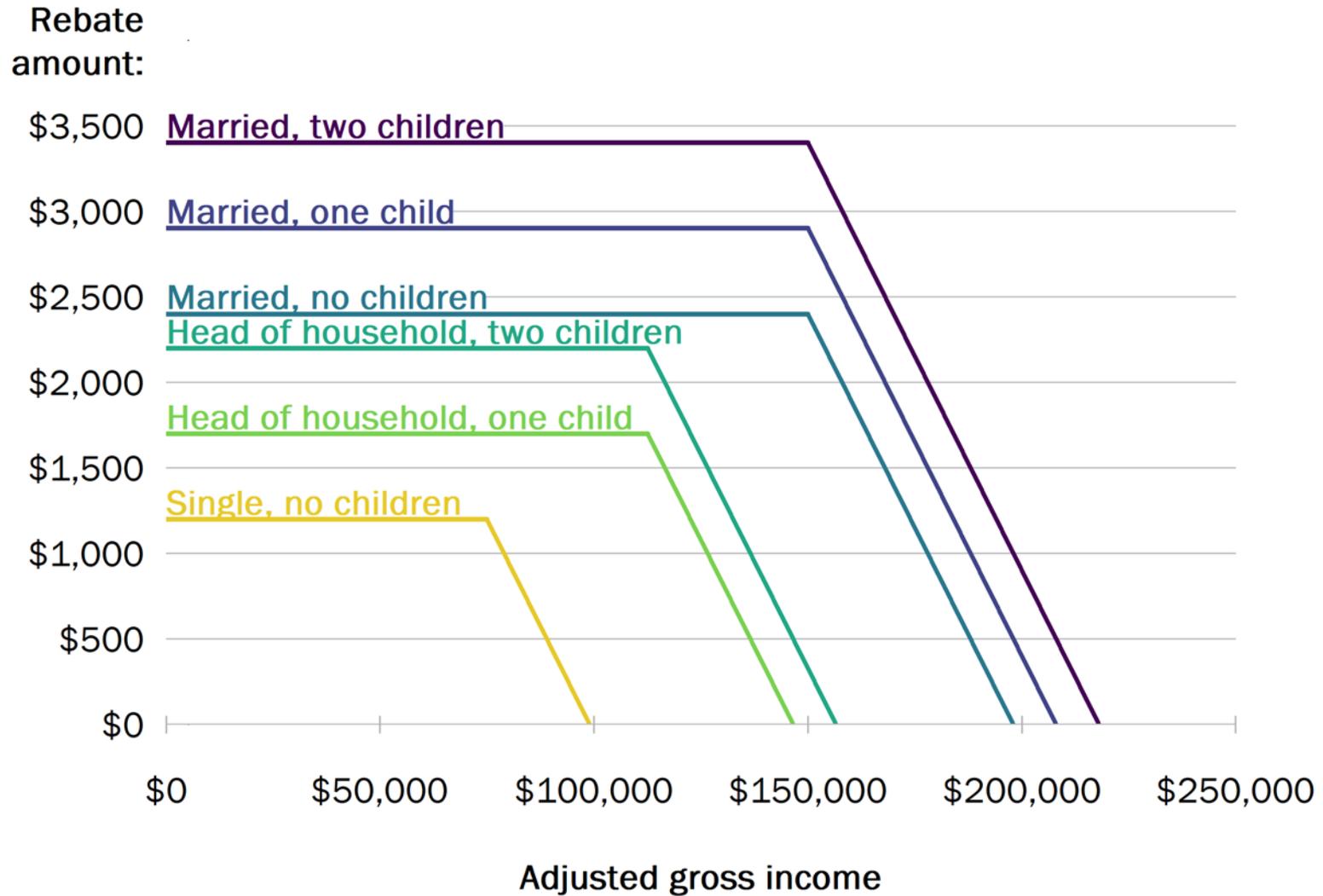
- Older Americans Act emergency guidance and supplemental funding
  - Transportation and personnel costs if sites close where older adults receive meals
  - Preparedness for food stocking, delivery and preventative health measures

[mealsonwheelsamerica.org/learn-more/national/press-room/news/2020/03/09/meals-on-wheels-america-and-nanasp-issue-a-joint-statement-on-covid-19-and-need-for-supplemental-senior-nutrition-funding-and-support](https://mealsonwheelsamerica.org/learn-more/national/press-room/news/2020/03/09/meals-on-wheels-america-and-nanasp-issue-a-joint-statement-on-covid-19-and-need-for-supplemental-senior-nutrition-funding-and-support)

# Income Support

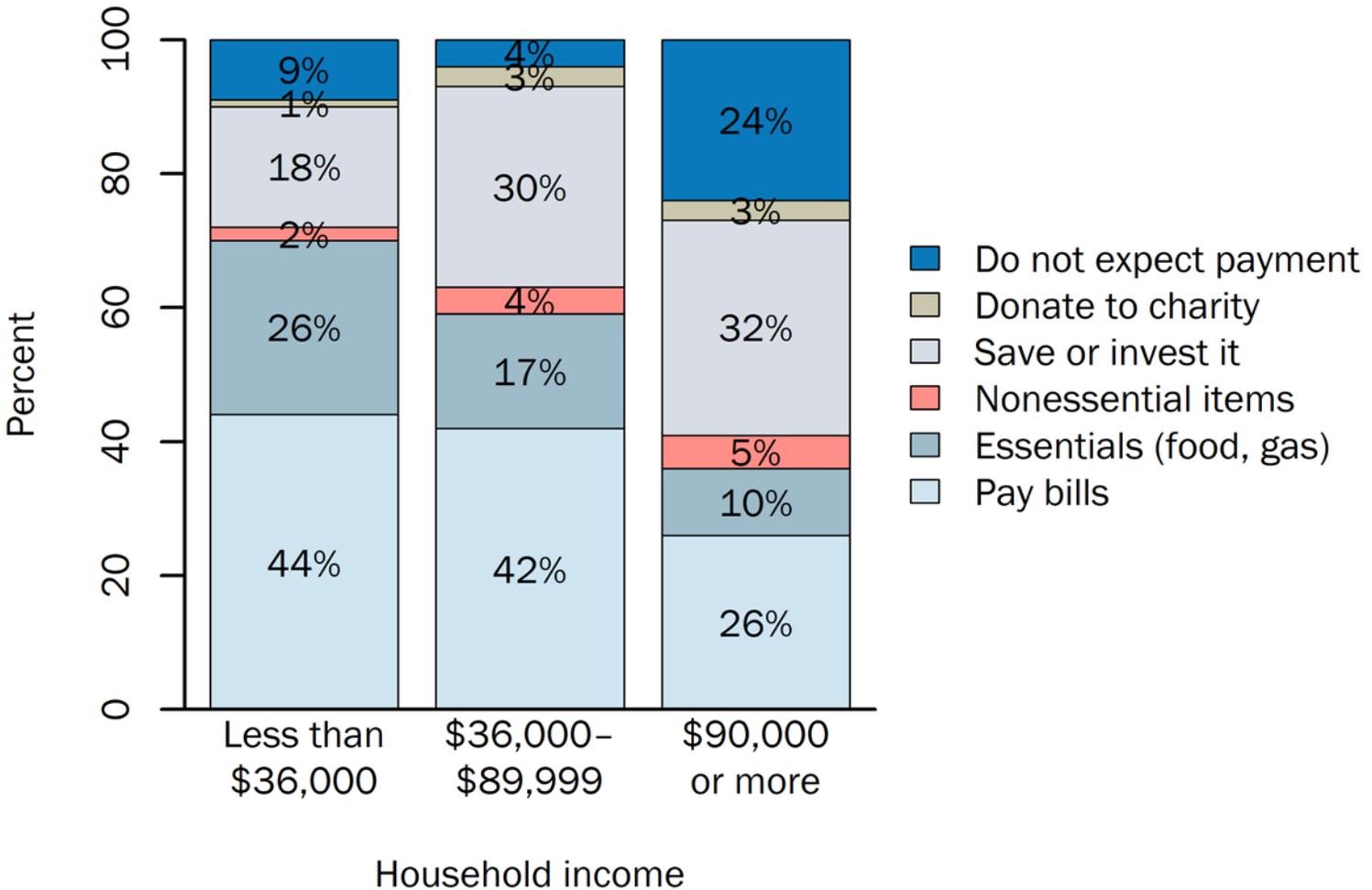
Economic Impact Payment, “relief rebate”,  
and other sources of support

# CARES Act “Recovery Rebate”



# COVID-19 Relief Money Intended Use

GALLUP



<https://news.gallup.com/poll/308177/half-plan-spend-relief-money-bills-essentials.aspx>

# Economic Impact Payment?

[IRS.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments](https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payments)



## Filers: Get Your Payment

Use the "Get My Payment" application to:

- Check your payment status
- Confirm your payment type: direct deposit or by mail?
- Enter your bank account information for direct deposit if:
  - We don't have your direct deposit information and
  - We haven't scheduled your payment yet

[Get My Payment](#)



## Non-Filers: Enter Your Payment Info Here

Use the "Non-Filers: Enter Payment Info Here" application if:

- You **are not required to file** federal income tax returns for 2018 and 2019 for any reason including:
  - Your income is less than \$12,200
  - You're married filing jointly and together your income is less than \$24,400
  - You have no income
- You have qualifying children under age 17 and you receive SSI or VA benefits (you must enter your info **by May 5**)

**Do not** use this tool if you are required to file a 2018 or 2019 tax return; you should file as you normally would.

[Non-Filers: Enter Payment Info Here](#)

# When will the check arrive?

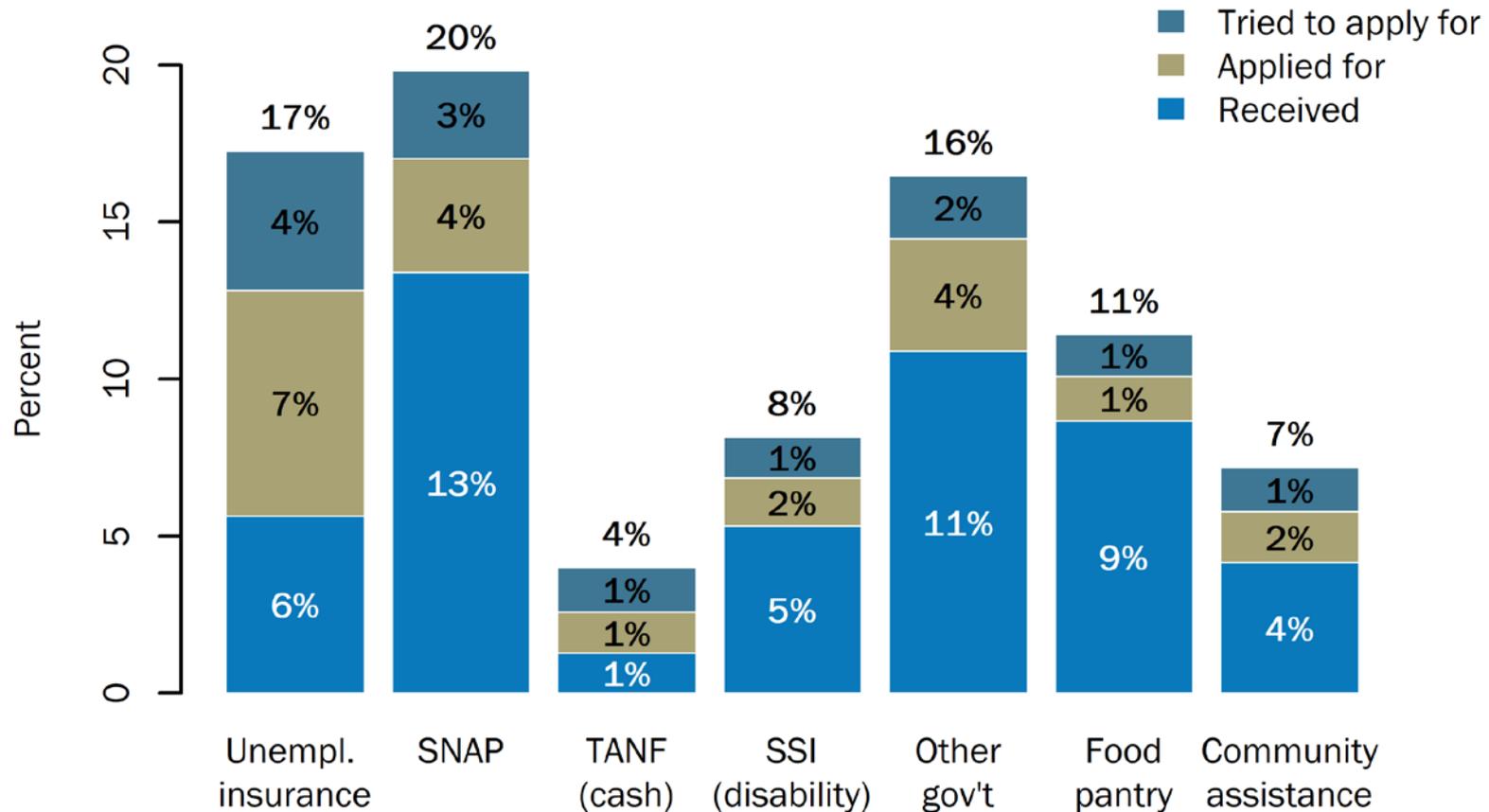
- Up to 200 million Americans will receive a payment
- IRS will be mailing approximately 5 million checks per week, prioritizing lower-income filers
- Disbursement may occur over 6 months

<https://www.irs.gov/coronavirus/economic-impact-payment-information-center>

<https://waysandmeans.house.gov/sites/democrats.waysandmeans.house.gov/files/documents/2020.04.16%20Rebate%20Payment%20Timeline%20FINAL.pdf>

# Where is help coming from?

## Assistance sources: Income < \$100k



Abigail Wozniak, Joe Willey, Jennifer Benz, and Nick Hart. [COVID Impact Survey: Version 2 \[dataset\]](#). Chicago, IL: National Opinion Research Center, 2020.



# Questions?



SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK  
*Make waves. Move mountains. Change lives.*

# APPENDIX



# FNS: Questions and Answers

USDA Food and Nutrition Services provides a series of Questions and Answers related to COVID-19:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/covid-19/questions-answers-related-covid-19>

# SNAP: More information

- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the basics:  
<https://www.cbpp.org/research/food-assistance/policy-basics-the-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap>
- Center on Poverty and Social Policy:  
<https://www.povertycenter.columbia.edu/news>
  - 34% of children in poverty do NOT receive SNAP (Parolin and Harris, March 2020)
  - Recent policies have restricted access:
    - Limiting state waiver requests for work requirements (Hartley, Wimer, and Waldfogel, March 2019)
    - “Public charge” rule affecting non-citizens’ participation (Wimer, Maury, and Bahl, December, 2018)
    - Proposed spending cuts and eligibility restrictions (Laird, Hartley, Pac, Wimer, and Waldfogel, January 2018)



# Food Prices: Low Inflation Expected

“The 2020 CPI forecast indicates a continuation of low inflation at grocery stores and supermarkets. While it is likely that month-to-month volatility will increase as supply chains and the economy adjust to the coronavirus outbreak, we do not now expect big changes to food-at-home prices for the year overall. **In 2020, food-at-home prices are expected to increase between 0.5 and 1.5 percent,** potentially the fifth year in a row with deflating or lower-than-average inflating retail food prices. **Food-away-from-home prices are expected to increase in a range between 1.5 and 2.5 percent in 2020.**”

<https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-price-outlook/summary-findings/>



# Great Recession and ARRA 2009

## American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), April 2009

“ARRA made two important changes to SNAP. The first affected benefit amounts and, in combination with BBCE, expanded the range of incomes at which households would be eligible for some SNAP benefit. The second substantially reduced work requirements for jobless ABAWDs.”

# D.C. et al. v. USDA, March 13, 2020

Nineteen states, the District of Columbia, the City of New York, and three private plaintiffs have moved to enjoin preliminarily and to stay this new federal rule, issued by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), that would limit state-implemented waivers of the work requirements on which receipt of food assistance from SNAP may be conditioned.

- See Final Rule, SNAP: Requirements for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents, 84 Fed. Reg. 66782 [Dec. 5, 2019]

# D.C. et al. v. USDA, March 13, 2020

The low-income Americans targeted by USDA's Final Rule depend on monthly SNAP benefits to avoid hunger. These SNAP participants may wield little political or economic power, but, nonetheless, USDA's proposed changes to take away nutrition benefits from almost 700,000 people prompted *more than 100,000 comments*, the *majority* of which the agency concedes were opposed to the proposed changes.

[https://ecf.dcd.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/show\\_public\\_doc?2020cv0119-51](https://ecf.dcd.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/show_public_doc?2020cv0119-51)



# SNAP Benefit Determination

- Benefits are calculated as normal, and emergency allotments are added up to maximum
  - CARES Act rebates are excluded from income for SNAP eligibility/benefit determination
  - CARES Act unemployment benefits are treated as income similar to usual practice
- ABAWDs may continue regardless of time limits, or if previously disqualified by limits must reapply



# SNAP Program Flexibility

- Application filing (mail, telephone, online)
- Interview by phone instead of in-person
- Use maximum allowable certification periods
- Reduce verification burdens using technology
- Work requirement exemptions?
- Internal capacity for operating call centers or web-based interfaces

# SNAP ADJUSTMENTS: MASS DENIAL

- Waiving restrictions on students' eligibility
- Providing emergency allotments that exceed the maximum benefit for a household's size
- Waiving the state agency's responsibility to reduce or terminate benefits when a household's circumstances change or found to be ineligible
- Treating all applications as if they are eligible for expedited processing
- Waiving requirements to use documentary evidence as the primary source of verification for all items except residency and household size
- Waiving requirements to verify gross non-exempt income

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/SNAP-COVID19-Multiple-Adjustment-Denials.pdf>



# SNAP Adjustment Requests

## Due to Covid-19 [check all that apply]:

- ✓ Residents of the State are confirmed to have contracted Covid-19
- ✓ Some or all areas of the State are containment or quarantine zones
- ✓ Businesses have closed or significantly reduced their hours
- ✓ The State's residents have experienced economic impacts due to job suspensions or losses
- ✓ The State's residents have been directed to practice social distancing

# Indian Tribal Organization Aid

The New York Times

## *Native American Tribes Sue Treasury Over Stimulus Aid as They Feud Over Funding*

A dispute among native populations over \$8 billion in federal coronavirus relief has delayed aid to tribes that are among the hardest-hit by Covid-19.



People lined up in cars to get tested for the coronavirus in Utah's Oljato-Monument Valley, part of the Navajo Nation. Kristin Murphy/The Deseret News, via Associated Press

“The outcome of the lawsuits will dictate how the stimulus funds and any future relief are distributed among the 574 federally recognized tribes, tribal leaders and advocates said. But it also all but guarantees that some of the aid will remain frozen, leaving tribal citizens without critical federal assistance even as the number of virus-related deaths on some reservations eclipses that of entire states.”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/01/us/politics/coronavirus-native-american-tribes-treasury-stimulus.html>