

Support for SNAP Strategies

Table 1. Surveys that assess support for SNAP strategies among SNAP participants and/or other people with low incomes

Author, Year	Participants	Location	Benefit Increase	Fruit and Vegetable (F&V) Incentive	Retail Food Environment	Sugar-Sweetened Beverage (SSB) Purchases in SNAP	Combined: F&V Incentive + SSBs not in SNAP	Other
Harkin Institute, 2021 ¹	100 adults who used SNAP in last 12 months (% of participants that said each strategy would be helpful or very helpful to support healthy eating)	Iowa		81% support providing more SNAP dollars for fruits and vegetables in grocery stores	68% support ensuring stores have a wide variety of affordable, healthy foods	32% support removing soda/soft drinks from the list of products eligible for purchase with SNAP	64% Support providing extra money for fruits and vegetables while not including sugary beverages as a SNAP-eligible product	57% support providing information on healthier eating options through nutrition or cooking classes
Wolfson, 2021 ²	1,808 adults with low incomes (SNAP participation status unknown)	National	87% support increasing benefits by 15% 89.6% support increasing the minimum from \$16 to \$30	85.3% support extra money specifically for F&V	76.9% support subsidizing online grocery delivery fees 84.4% support allowing purchase of hot prepared foods with SNAP	44% support removing SSBs from list of foods eligible for purchases through SNAP		85.3% support increased funding for nutrition education for SNAP participants 87.9% support allowing low-income college students to receive SNAP 78.5% support more frequent benefit distribution throughout month

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CSPI, 2019 ³	248 SNAP participants (% of participants that said each strategy would be helpful or very helpful to support healthy eating)	Massachusetts		83% support providing SNAP recipients with more money to buy fresh fruits and vegetables in grocery stores	77% support ensuring stores having a variety of affordable, healthy foods 67% support stores offering more healthy food options in place of unhealthy options in main areas (i.e., checkout, endcaps)	46% support removing soda and other sugary drinks from the products that can be purchased using SNAP benefits	64% support removing sugary drinks from the products people can purchase with SNAP benefits and in return get more money to be used to purchase fruits, vegetables, or other healthy foods	67% support giving information to SNAP recipients about healthier eating through nutrition or cooking classes
Franckle, 2018 ⁴	387 SNAP participants	National	86% support providing SNAP participants with additional benefits	83% support providing participants with additional benefits for the sole purchase of F&Vs or other healthful foods 90% support providing SNAP participants with additional benefits based on amount of F&V purchased		48% support removing sugary drinks from the allowable products for purchase with SNAP benefits		When asked how frequently benefits should be issued, 14% preferred once monthly, 31% preferred twice monthly, 21% supported giving participants the option to choose the frequency that works best for them, and 30% reported no preference

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Leung, 2017 ⁵	118 SNAP participants	National	89% support providing SNAP participants more benefits to guarantee enough to eat and good nutrition	88% support providing additional money for fruits, vegetables, or other healthful foods		54% support removing sugary drinks from products allowed under SNAP	76% supported both providing additional money for healthful foods and removing sugary drinks from products allowed under SNAP.	81% support providing more nutrition education or cooking classes
	269 people experiencing food insufficiency and not enrolled in SNAP	National	84% support providing SNAP participants more benefits to guarantee enough to eat and good nutrition	89% support providing additional money for fruits, vegetables, or other healthful foods		80% support removing sugary drinks from products allowed under SNAP	81% supported both providing additional money for healthful foods and removing sugary drinks from SNAP products.	90% support providing more nutrition education or cooking classes
Long, 2014 ⁶	418 SNAP participants	National	82% support providing SNAP participants with more dollars to guarantee that they can afford a healthy diet	86% support providing additional \$\$ to SNAP participants that can only be used on fruits, vegetables, or other healthful foods		54% support removing sugary drinks from the list of products that can be purchased with SNAP	Of the 46% who initially opposed removing sugary drinks, 45% supported removing SNAP benefits for sugary drinks if the policy also included additional benefits to purchase healthful foods	80% support educating SNAP participants by providing nutrition or cooking classes
Leung, 2015 ⁷	889 SNAP participants	California	93% support the provision of more program benefits "to guarantee enough to eat and good nutrition."	90% support providing additional money for fruits, vegetables, and other healthful foods		74% support removing sugary drinks from the list of products purchased with CalFresh (California SNAP)	78% support the combination of sugary drink removal and incentivizing healthy purchases	

Table 2. Focus groups and interviews that assess support for SNAP strategies among SNAP participants

Author, Year	Participants	Location	Benefit Increase	Fruit and Vegetable (F&V) Incentive	Retail Food Environment	Sugar-Sweetened Beverage (SSB) Purchases in SNAP	Combined: F&V Incentive + SSBs not in SNAP	Other
Food Insight Group in collaboration with CSPI, 2021 ⁸	North Carolinian adults who participated in SNAP between March 2019 and July 2020. 27 participants in focus groups (pre-COVID) and 14 participants in interviews (post-COVID)	North Carolina	All interviewees and focus group participants supported benefit increases.	14 out of 14 interviewees supported double-buck style programs. Many focus group participants indicated support for double buck style programs but specified that only incentives with an instantaneous benefit would be helpful.	Online shopping: 2 out of 14 interviewees supported using SNAP online. Very few focus group participants wanted to use SNAP online. Most were not comfortable with others selecting their groceries. Other retail- ideas: Requiring marketing of new SNAP programs to increase awareness; more immediate discounts at the register; increased retailer stocking requirements (for more kinds of produce and other items)	5 out of 14 interviewees supported sugary beverage restrictions in SNAP. Focus group participants had both positive and negative feelings about restrictions.	13 out of 14 interviewees supported increased benefits for healthy behaviors (not purchasing soda). Focus group participants had both positive and negative feelings about incentives combined with disincentives.	Other ideas proposed by SNAP participants: Broader dissemination about SNAP programmatic activities; removing cultural barriers to healthy eating; facilitating direct-from-farmer purchases with SNAP dollar; and allow some hot food purchases.

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Harvard Catalyst in collaboration with CSPI, 2020 ³	43 adult SNAP participants living in Massachusetts	Massachusetts	SNAP participants described how the benefits are not enough to feed them and their families and make it challenging to eat healthy. Some reported that benefits could change unexpectedly and quickly and expressed frustration that they do not adjust with inflation and corresponding increases in cost of living.	SNAP participants reported overwhelming support for receiving increased funds towards healthy items . There was broad support for the idea of introducing more food items beyond fresh fruits and vegetables for eligibility for HIP or other incentives programs, including for whole grain bread, milk, and frozen and canned fruits and vegetables.	Pricing strategies (such as sales on healthy items) were the most appealing type of marketing strategy , but only if the items were already included in their shopping plan. The participants also thought that healthy items often feel hidden, so a prominent display would be helpful. Many expressed interest in the opportunity to sample healthy items in stores.	SNAP participants expressed great concerns and a lack of support for using disincentive strategies , like removing sugary drinks from eligible SNAP items, to promote healthy eating and drinking. Recipients would work around the rule and use cash to buy sugary drinks instead of using SNAP benefits, noting that SNAP often does not cover all of their grocery expenses for the month anyway.	Similar to sentiments about SSB restriction alone, SNAP participants were not supportive , citing discrimination and lack of impact, regardless of receipt of incentives.	There was broad support for increasing access to nutrition educational programs and activities in community and retail settings.

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Harkin Institute in collaboration with CSPI, 2021 ¹	37 adult SNAP participants living in Iowa	Iowa	Increasing benefits was highly supported by SNAP participants. The most common barrier to purchasing healthy foods and healthy eating was cost.	All strategies for SNAP incentives (more benefits for produce, matching dollar for dollar incentives, and more benefits for other healthy items) were supported by SNAP participants.	Strategy: In-Store Signs and Labels This was not supported as they already have a plan for shopping when entering stores. Strategy: 2-for-1 Specials. The reactions were largely positive as it would save money and encourage healthy eating. Strategy: Healthy Options in Easy to Reach Locations They had mixed reactions to this strategy. Some felt this strategy could help make healthy purchases, while others thought the display of unhealthy items would overpower the healthy items.	This strategy received very little support with many SNAP participants stating that this disallowing SSBs in SNAP is unfair.	This strategy received positive support relative to SSB restriction alone. Some felt that this strategy could help motivate them not to drink SSBs.	SNAP participants were supportive of educational opportunities where they could find healthy recipes and learn the basics of healthy food and meal preparation.

For more information, please contact the Center for Science in the Public Interest at policy@cspinet.org.

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