

Federal Nutrition Program in Utah

House District 2

Representative Chris Stewart

According to the Food Research and Action Center’s report: “*How Hungry is America*,” food hardship is an issue for Utah families. The question is part of a survey conducted by Gallup as part of the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, in which 177,281 households participated; answering yes to the question: *Have there been times in the past 12 months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?* indicates a household is experiencing food hardship.

Food Hardship	All Households
Salt Lake	15%
Utah	12.9%

Federal nutrition programs help these vulnerable families make ends meet, and while there are more Utahns than ever accessing these programs, many eligible Utah families do not participate in them.

Child Nutrition

District 2 has higher rates of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch than the state average. The box below lists the school districts located within District 2 and the percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced price school meals during the 2015-2016 school year.

District	% F/R
Beaver	40-45%
Davis	22.89%
Garfield	40-45%
Granite	47.12%
Iron	45-49%
Kane	40-45%
Millard	52.15%
Piute	68.28%
Salt Lake	57.37%
Sevier	40-45%
South Sanpete	49.19%
Tintic	35.78%
Tooele	34.12%
Washington	30.95%
Wayne	40-45%
Statewide	35.00%

- Research shows that when a child’s nutritional needs are met, the child is more attentive in class, has better attendance, and fewer disciplinary problems. The National School Lunch Program meets the nutritional needs of children by providing a nutritionally balanced meal that contains one third or more of the nutrients they need each day. (FRAC, *Child Nutrition Fact Sheet, Spring 2009*)
 - Compared to children who do not eat breakfast or eat breakfast at home, children who eat school breakfast:
 - are less likely to be overweight,
 - have improved nutrition,
 - eat more fruits,
 - drink more milk,
 - consume a wider variety of foods
- (FRAC, *Breakfast for Health, Spring 2014*)

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Congressional District 2 has the highest number of households accessing the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program, in the state. **District 2 has approximately 21,404 households currently receiving SNAP benefits, representing about 53,510 individuals.**

Utah SNAP Demographics – August, 2015		
<i>Run Date: 11/27/2015</i>		
Individuals	Count	% of Total
Children 17 or Younger	123,647	53.87%
With Disability	26,516	11.55%
60 and Older	12,611	5.49%
Total	229,518	
Income	Count	% of Total
Earned Income Only	24,371	27.33%
Unearned Income Only	33,007	37.01%
Earned & Unearned	9,850	11.04%
No Income	21,961	24.62%
Total	89,189	
Households	Count	% of Total
Single Parent	31,623	35.46%
With Children	53,188	59.64%
With Disability	25,061	28.10%
With Elderly	11,603	13.01%

SNAP is our nation’s strongest and most responsive program to address hunger and food hardship. The Council of Economic Advisers report, *Long Term Benefits of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*, found that:

- SNAP benefits lifted at least 4.7 million people out of poverty in 2014—including 2.1 million children. SNAP also lifted more than 1.3 million children out of deep poverty.
- Children in low income households with access to Food Stamps during their childhood had a decreased likeliness to need the program as an adult.
- SNAP benefits are often insufficient to make it through the month, which results in decreased calorie intake and increased health issues at the end of the month.

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:

- SNAP kept 53,000 people out of poverty in Utah, including 29,000 children, per year between 2009 and 2012, on average.

Amber Jo & Ross, Salt Lake City

Amber Jo & Ross lived together for 8 years without any major problems. Then job loss and mounting medical bills forced the two out of their apartment and they spent a year living in their car. Initially a friend helped them out, but they quickly came to rely on food stamps and the food bank to survive, which helped get them off the streets and into a motel. “Getting food stamps has helped us be able to afford to stay in actual housing instead paying all this money to have place and have nothing to eat,” Amber explained. “For 8 years we were doing fine making decent money and then all this happened and we need food stamps to help us through everything,” added Ross. Food stamps, along with Amber’s Medicare, are crucial to the couple. **“The resources are very important to survive.”**

“I am thankful for these places and that they are here but I want to move on and do everything on my own real soon...I am extremely thankful for the programs out there...without them I don’t know where we would be.”