

Federal Nutrition Program in Utah House District 3

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
Provo – Orem	10.5%
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

The box below lists the school districts located within District 3 and the percentage of students who are eligible for free and reduced price school meals during the 2015-2016 school year.

<u>School District</u>	<u>% F/R Total</u>
Alpine	22.87%
Canyons	26.56%
Carbon	41.22%
Emery	43.86%
Grand	49.16%
Granite	47.05%
Nebo	31.62%
Provo	43.60%
San Juan	73.52%
Wasatch	30.96%
Statewide	35%

- 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

District 3 has approximately 15,262 households currently receiving SNAP benefits, representing about 38,155 individuals.

Utah SNAP Demographics – August, 2015		
Run Date: 11/27/2015		
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		
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		
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.

Shelby, Provo

Shelby is a college graduate, a wife, and a mother of two young children. Her husband works part-time while he goes to school full-time. When her first child came, she and her husband made the difficult decision to apply to WIC after her sister recommended it to her. They later decided to try SNAP as well, and were overwhelmed by the difference it made in their budget as well as their diets. She recalls being near tears when they received their first SNAP benefits. **“I don’t know how we would have survived some months without it.”**

Sometimes Shelby feels embarrassed to admit that her family uses food assistance programs, but she tries to remember what her husband told her: “We aren’t going to be on these programs forever; we are just struggling as students right now. That’s the reason they have these programs, and we are going to give back when we are done with school.” Shelby and her family don’t plan to use SNAP and WIC forever, but are grateful for the help it provides them now as a young, struggling family.