

SNAP for People Experiencing Homelessness and Returning Citizens in D.C.



D.C. Hunger Solutions

Ending hunger in the nation's capital

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Introduction to D.C. Hunger Solutions

❑ Founded as an initiative of the Food Research & Action Center in 2002, D.C. Hunger Solutions seeks to create a hunger-free community and improve the nutrition, health, economic security, and well-being of low-income District residents by:

- Improving public policies to end hunger, reduce poverty, promote nutrition, and increase the availability of healthy, affordable food in low-income areas;
- Maximizing participation in all federal nutrition programs; and
- Educating the public about both the stark reality of hunger's existence in the midst of plenty and the real opportunities for effective solutions.



Topics to Be Covered

- ❑ Overview of Food Insecurity
- ❑ D.C. Landscape
- ❑ SNAP Refresher
- ❑ Specific Rules and FAQs
- ❑ Other Supports
- ❑ Q+A

Food Insecurity in the U.S.

❑ The USDA defines food insecurity as, "a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food."
(Rabbitt, M. P., Reed-Jones, M., Hales, L. J., & Burke, M. P. (2024)

❑ In 2023,

- Roughly 14% of households in the US reported experiencing food insecurity at least once during the year
- Among households with children, roughly 18% reported food insecurity
- Households made up of Black and Hispanic individuals experienced higher food insecurity than other groups at 23.3% and 21.9% respectively

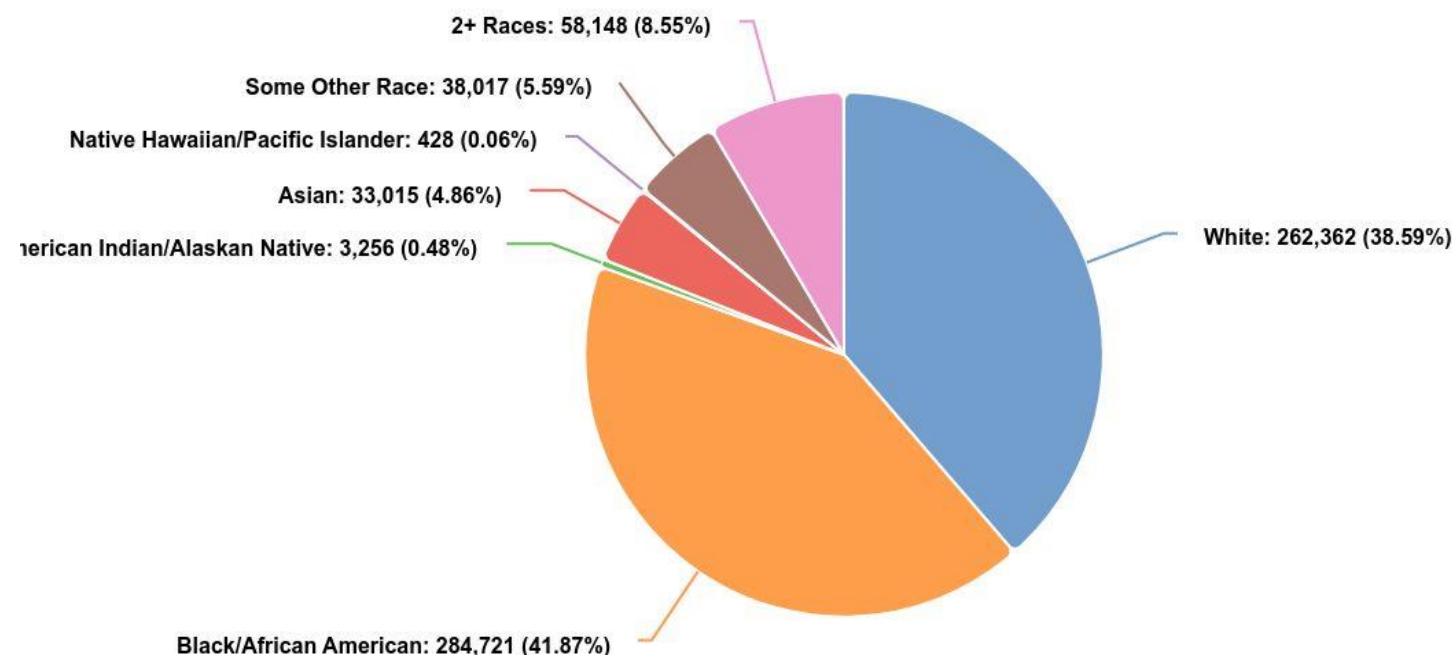
Food Insecurity in D.C.

- ❑ Grocery store access, public transportation access, housing costs, racism, and historic disinvestment all affect food insecurity rates in D.C. (Jones, L.N. (2024))
- ❑ 679,947 people live in the District
- ❑ In 2023, roughly 9% of households in D.C. were food insecure



D.C.'s Population by Race

Population by Race
City: District of Columbia



Claritas, 2024. www.dchealthmatters.org



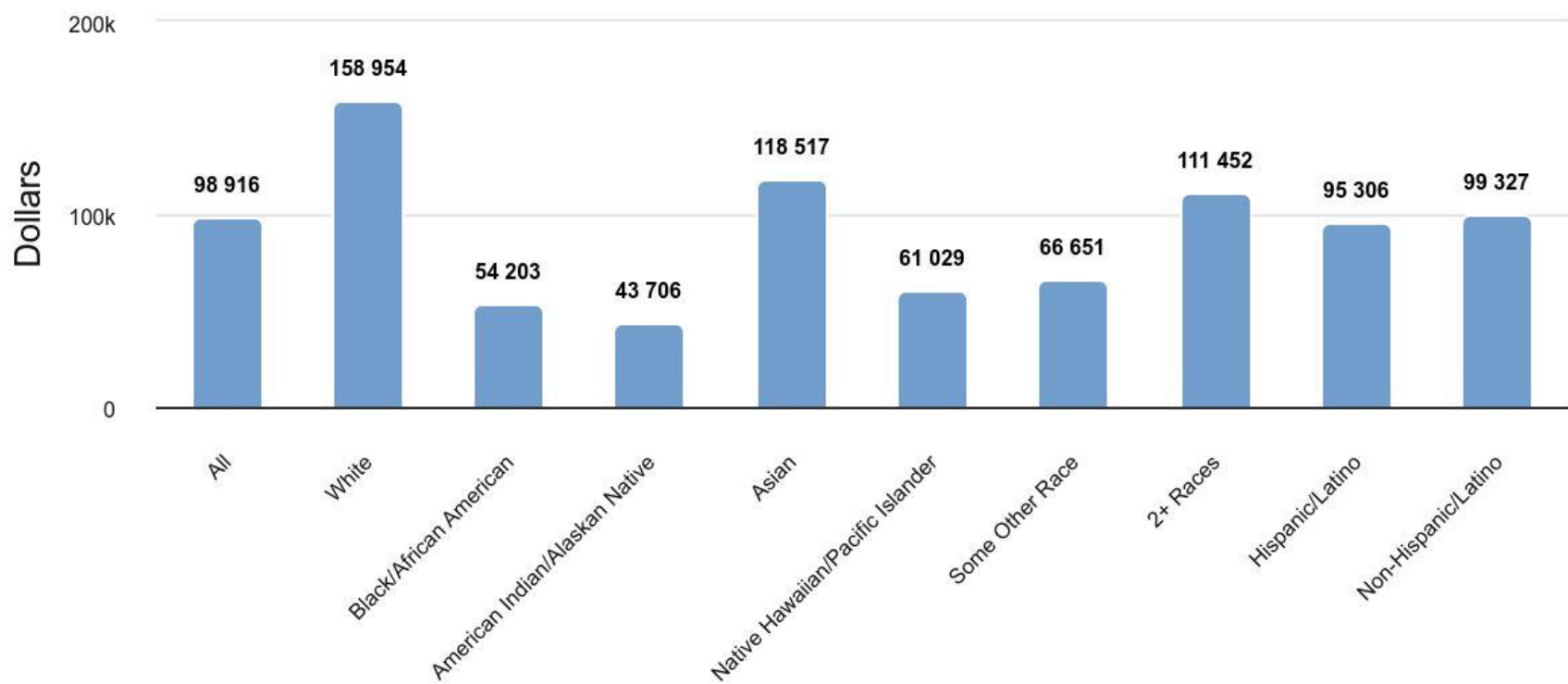
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D.C.'s Wealth Gap

Median Household Income by Race/Ethnicity
City: District of Columbia



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D.C.'s Grocery Stores

- ❑ As of 2024, Ward 3 has 14 grocery stores while there is only one store East of the River (Giant on Alabama Ave SE)
- ❑ While grocery stores continue to be built in other wards, Wards 7 and 8 have been left behind



Food Insecurity Among People Experiencing Homelessness and Returning Citizens

- ❑ In FY2025, 1,837 were released from the D.C. Department of Corrections (Department of Corrections, (2025).
 - Returning citizens are twice as likely to experience food insecurity compared to the general population (Jones, A., Landon, J. (2024).
- ❑ According to the 2024 Point-in-Time Count, 539 families and 3,960 unaccompanied individuals were experiencing homelessness in D.C. (The Community Partnership, (2024).

SNAP Refresher

- ❑ Households
- ❑ Income
- ❑ Deductions
- ❑ Ways to Apply

What is SNAP?

- ❑ The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal nutrition program that provides monthly benefits on an EBT card to eligible individuals. It can be a useful tool to help households pay for groceries and maximize their budgets.
- ❑ SNAP can be used at most stores that sell food. It can be used to purchase non-prepared foods, as well as plants and seeds to grow your own food.

SNAP in the District

- ❑ About 141,300 District residents participate in SNAP
- ❑ For every \$1 spent on SNAP, \$1.80 of economic activity is generated. SNAP is a **stimulus program**.



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What is a SNAP Household?

- ❑ A group of people who live together, buy food as a group, and prepare meals as a group. They do not have to be related.
- ❑ There are many scenarios in which more than one SNAP household can share the same residence.
- ❑ A SNAP household does not necessarily need a permanent address.

SNAP Income Guidelines

❑ Two income guidelines:

❑ Gross income: amount of income a household receives before taxes and deductions

❑ Must be at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines

❑ Households with older adults (60+) and people with disabilities not subject to gross income limits

❑ Net income: amount of income a household has after taxes and deductions

❑ Must be at or below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines

SNAP Income Guidelines – effective **10/1/2024 to 09/30/2025**

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income for Categorical Eligibility (200% FPL)	Maximum Net Monthly Income (100% FPL)	Maximum SNAP Allotment
1	\$2,510	\$1,255	\$292
2	\$3,408	\$1,704	\$536
3	\$4,304	\$2,152	\$768
4	\$5,200	\$2,600	\$975
5	\$6,098	\$3,049	\$1,158
6	\$6,994	\$3,497	\$1,390
7	\$7,890	\$3,945	\$1,536
8	\$8,788	\$4,394	\$1,756
Each Additional Member	+\$898	+\$449	+\$220



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Deductions

- ❑ A household's benefit level is determined by net income.
- ❑ Net monthly income = gross income minus applicable deductions
- ❑ The more expenses you have, the more likely you are to be eligible and the higher your benefit level could be.

Deductions

- ❑ Earned Income Deduction: 20% of earnings from a job
- ❑ Dependent Care Deduction: out-of-pocket dependent care expenses that are necessary for a household member to work or go to school
- ❑ Excess Shelter Deduction: for housing costs exceeding half of net income (capped at \$712 unless at least one household member is an older adult or a person with a disability)

Deductions

- ❑ Child Support Deduction: for legally-obligated child support a household member pays
- ❑ Medical Expense Deduction: for out-of-pocket medical expenses greater than \$35/month (only for older adults and people with disabilities)
- ❑ Standard Utility Allowance Deduction: for households who pay utilities such as gas, electric, water, and phone)
- ❑ Standard Deduction: all households – accounts for basic costs

Ways to Apply

- ❑ After determining potential eligibility, you can apply in a few ways.
 - ❑ Online on the District Direct website (<https://districtdirect.dc.gov/>) or on the District Direct mobile app.
 - ❑ D.C. Hunger Solutions can help households fill out the application over the phone.
 - ❑ In-person or via fax or mail after completing a paper application.
 - ❑ **D.C. Hunger Solutions can submit an application on behalf of a household.**
 - ❑ Applications can be mailed or dropped off at any open ESA Service Center.
 - ❑ Try to keep a copy of your application in case it is lost by a Service Center.

SNAP FAQs for Returning Citizens and People Experiencing Homelessness

- ❑ General SNAP FAQs
- ❑ SNAP FAQs for Returning Citizens and People Experiencing Homelessness

General SNAP FAQs

- ❑ Do I need to work to receive SNAP benefits?
 - ❑ No, D.C. has a waiver that removes time limits based on employment status. In other states, adults ages 16-59 must meet certain requirements to keep SNAP benefits for longer than 3 months.
 - ❑ D.C. residents still need to register their work or participation in a job training program unless they meet one of the exemptions below:
 - ❑ You are caring for a child under 6 or an incapacitated person,
 - ❑ You are unable to work due to a physical or mental health limitation, or
 - ❑ You are participating regularly in an alcohol or drug treatment program.

General SNAP FAQs

❑ How long will it take to receive my SNAP benefits?

❑ For regular service, DHS has 30 days to process your application.

❑ For expedited service, DHS has 7 days to process your application.

❑ How long will my benefits last?

❑ **12 months** for most households

❑ **36 months** for households comprised entirely of people aged 60 or older or with disabilities AND with no earned income

❑ **6 months** for households experiencing homelessness

General SNAP FAQs

- ❑ How do I get a new EBT card if mine is lost or stolen?
 - ❑ To report a lost or stolen card and/or to request a new card, you can visit an EBT Card Distribution Center or call (888) 304-9167.
 - ❑ To report stolen benefits, visit the DHS [Stolen Benefits Instructions](#) webpage.
- ❑ Do SNAP benefits expire?
 - ❑ SNAP benefits expire after nine months of not using your EBT card. Your monthly benefits will transfer over to the next month if you do not use them all.

SNAP FAQs – Returning Citizens and People Experiencing Homelessness

- ❑ Can I receive SNAP benefits if I have a criminal record?
 - ❑ You may be eligible for SNAP even if you have a criminal record. The only relevant criminal history for SNAP in the District is if you are out of compliance with the terms of your parole or probation, or if you have been convicted of selling SNAP benefits.
 - ❑ While not a criminal offense, if you have been charged with an Intentional Program Violation (IPV), this will affect your ability to receive benefits. The penalties associated with IPV varies depending on the number and type of IPV.
 - ❑ You cannot apply for SNAP benefits before being released from a correctional institution. You must wait until the day you are released.

SNAP FAQs – Returning Citizens and People Experiencing Homelessness

- ❑ Can I receive benefits if I do not have a permanent address?
 - ❑ You can receive benefits even if you do not have a permanent residence. You will need to have a mailing address to receive notices about your case.
 - ❑ You will need to provide proof that you live in the District of Columbia. This can be a driver's license or state ID, a DC voter registration card, or a proof of residency form completed by an individual who lives in D.C. or a D.C. social service agency.

SNAP FAQs – Returning Citizens and People Experiencing Homelessness

- ❑ What documents do I need to provide to receive SNAP benefits?
 - ❑ Everyone applying for SNAP will need to provide proof of identity and proof of D.C. residency.
 - ❑ If you have income or expenses, you will need to provide proof of these.

SNAP FAQs – Returning Citizens and People Experiencing Homelessness

- ❑ Can I receive SNAP if I am living and receiving meals at a homeless shelter?
 - ❑ Yes, residents of homeless shelters are typically eligible for SNAP. This is also the case for residents of rehabilitation or treatment centers for drug and alcohol use and shelters for domestic violence survivors.
 - ❑ However, "if a customer lives in a facility that provides more than 50 percent of three meals daily as a part of the facility's normal services, ESA considers them to be living in an institution. In general, people living in an institution cannot receive SNAP benefits" (ESA SNAP Policy Manual (2025).

Other Supports for Returning Citizens and People Experiencing Homelessness

- ❑ Local Programs
- ❑ Strategies for Addressing Hunger

Local Programs

- ❑ The READY Center – supports people within 12 months of release
 - ❑ [The READY Center](#)
- ❑ Emergency Food/Food Banks
 - ❑ [Capital Area Food Bank](#)
- ❑ Local Community-Based Organizations
- ❑ Churches
- ❑ Mutual Aid Groups

Moving Forward to Address Hunger

- ☐ Ensure the safety net is sufficient to address basic needs insecurity.
- ☐ Promote community-informed and community-centered solutions to homelessness and justice.
- ☐ Create many ways to get information to transient populations.
- ☐ Create one-stop shops for gaining information so people don't have to search for resources in many different places.
- ☐ Connect returning citizens with relevant resources upon release.

Questions?

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