



TANF and SNAP in Mississippi

Federal safety-net programs like the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are critical programs that help reduce poverty and hardship in Mississippi.

By providing cash support for Mississippians with low wages, these and similar programs reduce the extent and severity of poverty, lessen hardship and hunger, promote equity, protect the overall economy, improve health outcomes, improve child outcomes, and more.

However, the effectiveness of these programs has weakened substantially over time. Making federal programs like TANF and SNAP more impactful requires both federal and state legislative and administrative reforms. More importantly, these reforms require that the voices of those who benefit from these programs and those who may not have access to the programs but qualify for or need the services are uplifted.



TANF in Mississippi



\$86 Million

Federal TANF funds received by Mississippi.



\$57 Million

Federal TANF funds spent by Mississippi.

In 2021, Mississippi was awarded \$86 million in federal TANF funds and spent about \$57 million. Six percent of the funds spent were on basic assistance, including cash assistance. The state was ranked 42nd for the percentage of TANF funds spent on basic assistance.

Before increasing TANF benefits in 2020, Mississippi provided the lowest cash assistance benefits for over 50 years. The monthly payment increase went from \$170 to \$260, a \$90 increase for a family of three with no other income. The state is now at the nation's fourth lowest benefit level.

SNAP in Mississippi

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutritional support for working families with low wages, older adults (60 years and older) with low incomes, people with disabilities living on fixed incomes, and other individuals and households with low incomes.

In 2022, 413,700 Mississippians, or 14% of the state's population, received SNAP benefits.



More than 72% of SNAP participants are in families with children.



More than 36% are in families with members who are older adults or are disabled.



More than 43% are in working families.

SNAP lifted 103,000 people above the poverty line in Mississippi, including 47,000 children, per year between 2014 and 2018, on average.



TANF Reforms Needed

- Increase Basic Assistance spending to raise benefits and caseloads.
- Increase benefits pegged to at least 25% of the federal poverty line or adjusted annually using a cost-of-living adjustment.
- Provide cash assistance to more families who need help.
- Restrict all TANF funds to people at or below 200 percent of the poverty level.
- Impose income eligibility requirements on college scholarships to people with incomes at or below 200 percent of the poverty line.
- End behavioral control and restrictions to accessing assistance.
- Maximize the use of work exemptions.
- Allow and encourage parents to pursue higher education.

SNAP Reforms Needed

- Increase the number of SNAP benefits to provide more support to Mississippians with low incomes.
- Modernize SNAP benefits to better reflect the cost of a healthy diet.
- Increase the program's participation rate to ensure that individuals who qualify for SNAP benefits receive them.
- Adjust eligibility requirements by modifying the program's certification period and reporting requirements to ensure efficiency and integrity within the program.