

**The Shah Family Foundation  
P-EBT / SNAP Survey**

Survey of 10,650 parents and guardians in 14 selected Massachusetts public school districts  
Field Dates: April 9-May 30, 2021

How familiar are you with P-EBT (Pandemic EBT), which provides money for families and caregivers to buy food while schools are closed due to COVID-19?

Very familiar	50%
Somewhat familiar	33%
Not too familiar	9%
Never heard of it	6%
Unsure	2%

P-EBT provides money to students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals at school. P-EBT helps pay for food while schools are closed due to COVID. P-EBT funds come either on a P-EBT card, or an existing DTA EBT card.

Did you get P-EBT?

Yes, I got a P-EBT card in the mail	57%
Yes, I got P-EBT on my DTA EBT card	26%
No, I never got P-EBT	14%
Unsure	3%

*Asked of those who received P-EBT; N=8,809.*

Have you used your P-EBT to buy food?

Yes	98%
No	1%
Unsure	<1%

*Asked of those who received but didn't use P-EBT; N=125.*

Why didn't you use your P-EBT? Please check all that apply.

I didn't need the help	49%
I don't want to take handouts from the government	6%
P-EBT was too confusing to use	8%
I couldn't activate/ PIN my P-EBT card	20%
I was afraid using P-EBT would impact my immigration status	3%
Another reason	19%
Unsure	10%

Asked of those who used P-EBT; N=8,644.

Overall, how helpful was P-EBT in buying food for your household during the pandemic?

Very helpful	94%
Somewhat helpful	5%
Not very helpful	1%
Not helpful at all	<1%
Unsure	<1%

How familiar are you with SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called food stamps)?

Very familiar	45%
Somewhat familiar	29%
Not too familiar	15%
Never heard of it	10%
Unsure	2%

Asked of those “very” or “somewhat” familiar with SNAP; N=7,801.

When you think of SNAP (food stamps), what are the first words that come to mind? *Open-ended. Responses were coded into categories. Responses could be coded into multiple categories, so percentage total > 100%.*

Food	49%
Grateful	22%
Program Descriptions	19%
Mentioned children / family	17%
Support for people in need	9%
Eligibility Concerns	2%
Health and Nutrition	2%
Other	6%
None / No response / Unsure	2%

SNAP provides money for households who qualify to purchase healthy food. Have you ever received SNAP? Please check all that apply.

Yes, during the pandemic	32%
Yes, before the pandemic	30%
Never received	41%
Unsure	7%

Asked of those who received SNAP at any point; N=5,563.

How would you rate each aspect of your experience with SNAP?

<i>Order rotated</i>	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Not too satisfied	Not at all satisfied	Unsure
Applying for SNAP	61%	22%	7%	3%	6%
The number of places where I can use SNAP	82%	14%	1%	<1%	2%
The different items I can buy with SNAP	80%	16%	2%	<1%	2%
Buying food with SNAP at checkout	84%	13%	1%	1%	1%
SNAP benefit amount	56%	29%	9%	3%	2%

Asked of those who never received SNAP; N=5,087.

Have you or another member of your household ever applied for SNAP? Please select all that apply.

Yes, applied during the pandemic	6%
Yes, applied before the pandemic	9%
No, haven't applied	12%
Unsure	73%

Next set of questions asked of respondents in districts other than Chelsea who did not apply for SNAP; N=3,225.

You said you did not apply for SNAP. How much do each of the following apply to you?

<i>Order rotated; sorted by "strongly" for display</i>	Applies to me strongly	Applies to me somewhat	Does not apply to me	Unsure
I think I make too much money to get SNAP	43%	15%	24%	18%
My family doesn't need SNAP	32%	16%	32%	20%
I didn't know how to apply	13%	13%	58%	16%
I was afraid SNAP would impact my immigration status	7%	3%	78%	11%
I don't want to receive a handout from the government	7%	12%	65%	16%
The amount I would get from SNAP is too low to be worth applying for	6%	6%	60%	28%
Applying for SNAP was too complicated	6%	8%	64%	23%
I didn't want to share personal information like my Social Security Number or contact info.	6%	7%	72%	15%
I was getting unemployment, so I thought I couldn't get SNAP	4%	4%	78%	14%
I've heard SNAP is too hard to use	3%	4%	69%	24%
I didn't want to share information about people I live with	3%	5%	78%	14%

Are there any other reasons why you did not apply for SNAP? *Open-ended. Asked of those who didn't apply for SNAP; N=3,677. Responses were coded into categories. Responses could be coded into multiple categories, so percentage total > 100%.*

No / unsure	45%
Eligibility Concerns	17%
Don't need / don't want to take from those who need it	10%
Lack of Information	9%
Other	6%
Imm. Status / don't have a SSN	6%
Application process (didn't know how / too complicated / sharing info.)	5%
NA / Doesn't Apply to me	4%

*Asked of those who applied but did not receive SNAP; N=744.*

Why were you denied SNAP? Select all that apply.

I was told I got too much in unemployment	7%
I missed a deadline for applying	2%
I make too much money to qualify	39%
I could not get all the paperwork or information DTA asked me for	7%
My immigration status	7%
Some other reason	8%
I don't know why I was denied	13%
Prefer not to say	21%

*Asked of those who used P-EBT but did not apply for SNAP; N=2,995.*

Many families who get P-EBT may also be eligible for SNAP. Why didn't you apply for SNAP?

I didn't know I could also get SNAP	48%
With the P-EBT money, I didn't think we needed SNAP	20%
I didn't know how to apply for SNAP	17%
Some other reason	17%
Prefer not to say	12%

*Asked of all:*

During COVID-19, many SNAP rules have changed:

- All eligible households will get the maximum amount of SNAP dollars.
- The extra \$300 per week in unemployment that started in January 2021 does NOT count for SNAP eligibility.
- It is easier to apply for SNAP now.

Did you know SNAP had changed in any of these ways during COVID?

Yes	27%
No	59%
Unsure	14%

*Asked of those who did not apply for SNAP and were unaware of the changes since COVID; N=4,317.*

Given these changes to SNAP during COVID, would you have applied for SNAP during the pandemic?

Yes, I would have applied	34%
No, I wouldn't have applied	41%
Unsure	25%

Next two asked of all non-Chelsea respondents:

Were you aware that applying for or getting SNAP for yourself or your eligible child(ren) does not affect immigration status?

Yes, I was aware	46%
No, I wasn't aware	44%
Unsure	10%

Were you aware that the DTA (Department of Transitional Assistance) will NOT share immigration status information with immigration authorities for those who apply for or get SNAP?

Yes, I was aware	41%
No, I wasn't aware	49%
Unsure	10%

Asked of all:

Household Size	Gross Monthly Income Limit	Monthly Maximum SNAP Amount
1	\$2,147	\$234
2	\$2,903	\$430
3	\$3,660	\$616
4	\$4,417	\$782
5	\$5,173	\$929
6	\$5,930	\$1,114
7	\$6,687	\$1,232
8	\$7,443	\$1,408
9+	+\$757 for each additional HH member	+\$176 for each additional HH member

The table above shows the highest monthly income households of different sizes can make and still get SNAP.

It also shows how much money from SNAP each size household can get during COVID.

Is the amount of money your size household can make and still get SNAP...

Higher than you thought	28%
Lower than you thought	14%
About what you expected	26%
Unsure	32%

Is the amount of money your size household could get from SNAP...

Higher than you thought	29%
Lower than you thought	11%
About what you expected	26%
Unsure	33%

To the best of your knowledge, how can people apply for SNAP? Select all that apply.

Online	61%
By calling DTA (Department of Transitional Assistance)	45%
In person in your community	33%
Unsure	22%

To the best of your knowledge, can SNAP be used to buy food online?

Yes	31%
No	15%
Unsure	54%

Do you know whether your school district has a staff member to help parents and caregivers apply for SNAP?

Yes, they do	13%
No, they do not	12%
Unsure	74%

These next questions are about the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months, since April of last year. Please select the most appropriate choice for each prompt.

<i>Order rotated</i>	Often	Sometimes	Never	Prefer not to say
The food that we bought just didn't last, and we didn't have money to get more.	12%	37%	40%	11%
We couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.	13%	38%	38%	11%

In the last 12 months, since last April, did you or others in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

Yes	26%
No	60%
Prefer not to say	14%

*Asked of those who cut / skipped meals; N=2,792.*

How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

Almost every month	28%
Some months but not every month	52%
Only 1 or 2 months	14%
Prefer not to say	5%

In the last 12 months, did people in your household ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?

Yes	23%
No	63%
Prefer not to say	15%

In the last 12 months, were people in your household very hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?

Yes	9%
No	76%
Prefer not to say	14%

## DEMOGRAPHICS

### Parent Race / Ethnicity

White	41%
Black / African American	5%
Hispanic / Latino	47%
Asian or Pacific Islander	4%
All others	2%
Prefer not to say	4%

### Parent Age

Less than 18 to 29	12%
30 to 34	18%
35 to 39	24%
40 to 44	22%
45 to 49	14%
50+	10%
Prefer not to say	1%

### Parent Gender

Male	12%
Female	88%
All Others / Prefer not to say	<1%

### Parent Education

11th grade or less	14%
High school graduate	27%
Less than two years of college	17%
Two years of college or more / Associate's degree	13%
Bachelor's degree	16%
Advanced degree	9%
Prefer not to say	5%

## About the Poll

These results are based on a survey of 10,650 parents and guardians from 14 selected districts from across Massachusetts. The Chelsea Public school district was the pilot district for the survey, followed by Lawrence, Fall River, Malden, Chicopee, Pittsfield, Everett, North Adams, Brockton, Framingham, Greenfield, Methuen, Attleboro and Dartmouth. The districts included a mix of 9 Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) districts, where all families received P-EBT, regardless of need, 2 mixed districts, and 3 non-CEP districts. Inclusive of the pilot, the poll was conducted from April 9 - May 30, 2021 via text and email to web survey. Participants had the option of taking the survey in 7 different languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, Cape Verdean, Haitian Creole, Arabic and Chinese (Simplified and Traditional). Survey links in these languages were distributed by the participating districts to the K-12 parents and caregivers. The project was sponsored by The Shah Family Foundation.