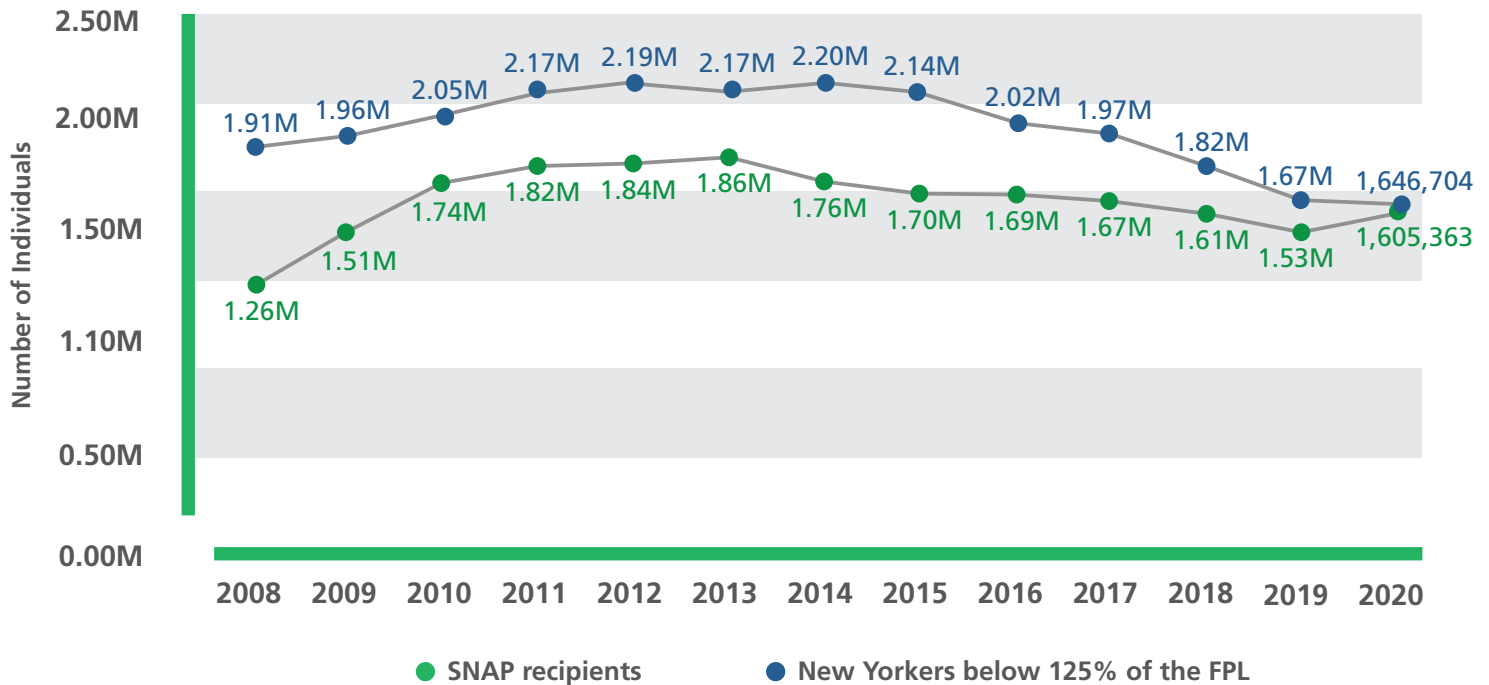




OF ENROLLMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN NEW YORK CITY¹

FIGURE 1 SNAP Recipients & New Yorkers below 125% Federal Poverty Line, 2008 – 2020



SNAP recipients in New York City

In 2020, **1.61 million** New York City residents received SNAP benefits to help purchase food. The number of SNAP recipients rose for several years after the Recession of 2008. This number plateaued above 1.80 million from 2011 to 2013, fell substantially in 2014, and decreased slightly each year until the economic disruption and expansion of the federal safety net associated with the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in 2020; this trend is shown in Figure 1.

Those below 125% of the Federal Poverty Line

NYC has seen significant declines in poverty since 2016. Figure 1 also shows the number of people in NYC with family income below 125% of the federal poverty line (FPL) – a group likely eligible for SNAP benefits.

► This number fell slightly to 1.65 million New Yorkers in 2020

(the latest year for which data is available). Despite record rates of unemployment triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic recession, unprecedented government aid to families experiencing hardship mitigated its impact.²

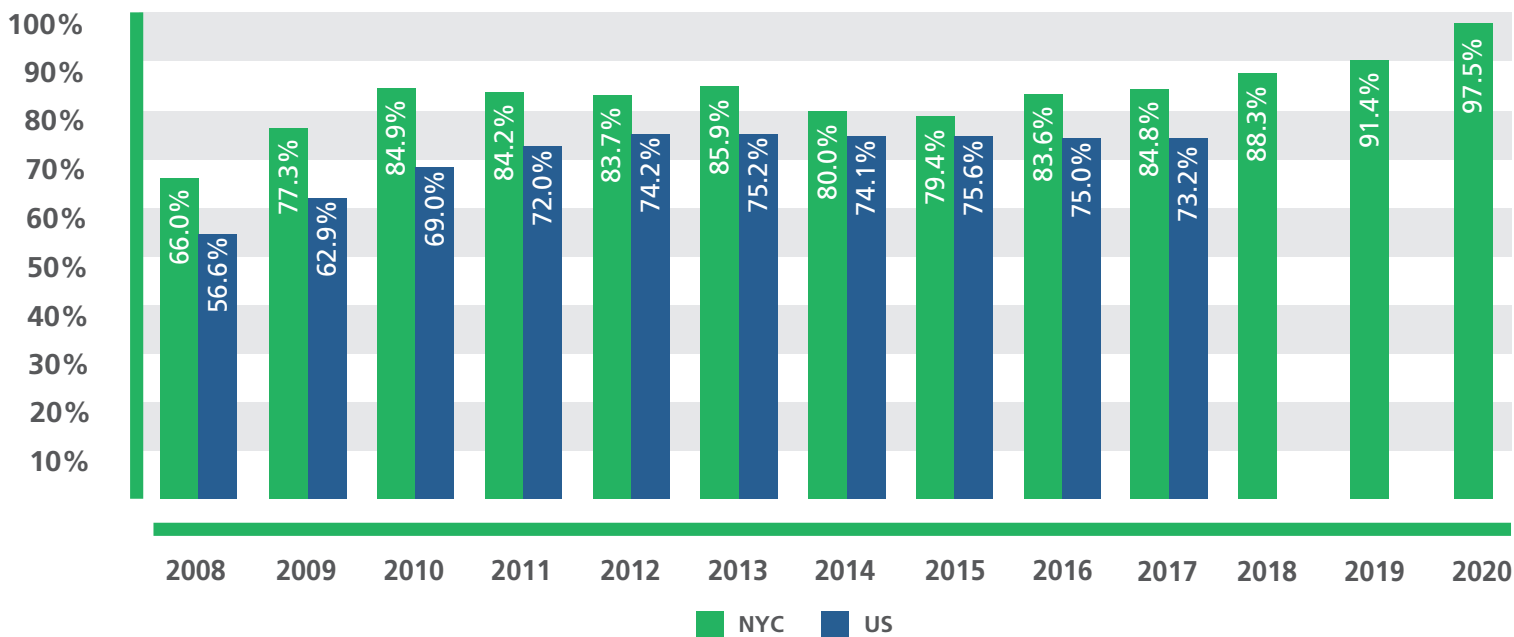
1. Note: Analyses of poverty and the SNAP participation rate are based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS). Due to challenges associated with data collection during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Census Bureau adjusted its methodology to produce “experimental” data for the 2020 ACS. Findings presented in this brief, particularly comparisons to prior years, should therefore be interpreted with caution.

Source: NYC Human Resources Administration for SNAP enrollment; U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) Census.data.gov table S1701 for number of residents below 125% of the official poverty line.

Note: Number of SNAP recipients is the monthly average for the calendar year.

2. See e.g., Parolin, Z., M. Curran, and C. Wimer. (2020). “The CARES Act and Poverty in the COVID-19 Crisis.” Center on Poverty and Social Policy at Columbia University, *Poverty & Social Policy Brief 4 (8)*.

FIGURE 2 SNAP Program Access Index (PAI), 2008 – 2020
 (The PAI measures the fraction of people below 125% FPL who receive SNAP benefits)



As a metric of SNAP’s reach, USDA’s Program Access Index (PAI) tells us the fraction of people below 125% FPL who receive SNAP. In NYC, the reach of SNAP expanded again in 2020, with the PAI rising to 97.5% from 91.4% 2019 (Figure 2). NYC’s PAI has historically outpaced the nation’s, remaining near or above 80% since 2010, while the national PAI has yet to reach this level.

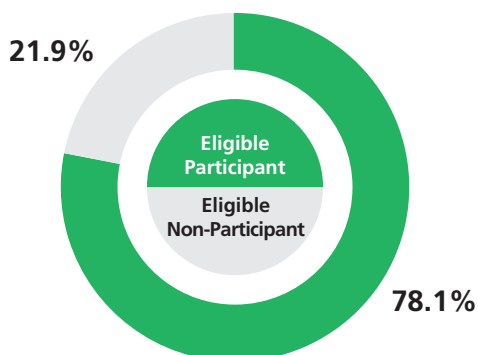
Source: NYC Human Resources Administration for SNAP enrollment; U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) American FactFinder Table S1701 for number of residents below 125% of the official poverty line. The U.S. PAI is calculated by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, data for 2018-2020 have not yet been published.

Note: Number of SNAP recipients is the monthly average for the calendar year.

SNAP Program Access Index increase from 2015-2020:

97.5%
 ↑
79.4%

FIGURE 3 NYC SNAP Participation Rate, 2020



We estimate the SNAP participation rate among all SNAP-eligible New Yorkers, taking into consideration household composition and state eligibility rules.³ More than three quarters of New York City residents who appeared eligible for SNAP benefits received them in 2020 (78.1%), comparable to rates released by Civis Analytics and Columbia University.^{4,5}

Source: NYC Human Resources Administration for SNAP enrollment; U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample 1-year for estimated SNAP-eligible population; NYC Opportunity Poverty Research Unit data to estimate SNAP-ineligible noncitizen populations for 2020.

Note: The Participation Rate is calculated for the calendar year, using annual income from the ACS and average monthly SNAP enrollment.

3. The USDA’s national and state participation rates do not reflect expanded state eligibility rules, making our estimate more conservative.

4. See Civis Analytics report “Locating Eligible New Yorkers for Benefit Programs: Fighting Poverty with the Robin Hood Foundation” and Columbia Population Research Center 2017 brief “Spotlight on SNAP: Going Hungry: Which New Yorkers Are Leaving Food on the Table?”

5. The PAI is higher than the participation rate because the income eligibility cutoff for SNAP is higher than 125% FPL (the gross income limit is 130%, 150%, or 200% in NYS depending on household composition), resulting in a larger denominator for the participation rate than the PAI.

Note: The Participation Rate is calculated for the calendar year using annual income from the ACS and average monthly SNAP enrollment.