HEALTHY MECK

# SNAP HELPS FAMILIES, CHILDREN, AND SENIORS IN MECKLENBURG COUNTY

*How SNAP supports food access, health, and the local economy*

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**What is SNAP?**

SNAP, called **Food and Nutrition Services (FNS)** in North Carolina, helps eligible households buy food each month.

People use SNAP benefits through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. Benefits can be used at grocery stores, supermarkets, farmers markets, and other approved food retailers.

**Who does SNAP help in Mecklenburg County?**

In August 2026:

- **119,195 Mecklenburg County residents** received SNAP/FNS.
- That is approximately **9.7% of the county's population**, or nearly 1 in 10 residents.
- An estimated **51,000 participants are children**.
- An estimated **13,000 participants are adults age 65 or older**.

Many households use SNAP to help stretch limited budgets and keep food on the table throughout the month.

**SNAP and the charitable food system**

Food pantries, food banks, community meal programs, faith communities, and nonprofit organizations play an important role in helping people facing hunger.

SNAP works alongside these community resources, but it operates on a much larger scale.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services notes that food banks provide only a fraction of the food assistance supported through SNAP. SNAP allows families to buy groceries directly while supporting local retailers and preserving choice and dignity for participants.

**SNAP supports Mecklenburg County's economy**

Healthy Meck estimates that SNAP brings approximately **$270 million to $295 million** in federal food benefits into Mecklenburg County each year, with **$280 million** used as a midpoint estimate.

SNAP benefits can be used at **685 approved retailers** in Mecklenburg County.

Those federal dollars help:

- Residents buy groceries.
- Grocery stores and food retailers serve customers.
- Food dollars remain in the local economy.
- Families better manage periods of financial hardship.

**Why Healthy Meck cares about SNAP**

Food access is one of the building blocks of health.

When residents have reliable access to nutritious food, communities are better positioned to support health, learning, employment, and overall well-being.

Healthy Meck supports efforts that strengthen food access and connect eligible residents with available resources.

**Learn more**

Community members who would like additional information can explore:

- **Stronger with SNAP**, a project of the North Carolina Alliance for Health, which provides stories, research, and educational resources about SNAP in North Carolina.
- NCDHHS Food and Nutrition Services reports and statistics.
- USDA SNAP retailer resources and retailer locator tools.

**Sources**


- NCDHHS Food and Nutrition Services Caseload and Participation Reports https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/social-services/program-statistics-and-reviews/fns-caseload-statistics-reports
- NCDHHS Impact of H.R. 1 on SNAP in North Carolina https://webservices.ncleg.gov/ViewDocSiteFile/104981
- USDA SNAP Retailer Location Data https://usda-snap-retailers-usda-fns.hub.arcgis.com/datasets/snap-retailer-location-data/about

- U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: Mecklenburg County, North Carolina https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/mecklenburgcountynorthcarolina/PST045225
- Stronger with SNAP, North Carolina Alliance for Health https://www.ncallianceforhealth.org/partnerships/stronger-with-snap-2/

**Methodology**

- The figure of **119,195 SNAP/FNS participants** comes directly from county-level NCDHHS data for August 2026.
- Estimates for children and older adults are based on statewide SNAP participant demographics reported by NCDHHS and applied proportionally to Mecklenburg County participants.
- The estimated annual SNAP benefit range of **$270 million to $295 million** is derived using county participation levels and statewide SNAP funding information. The midpoint estimate is **$280 million**.
- The count of **685 SNAP-authorized retailers** was calculated from the USDA retailer database downloaded in September 2026.