

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)		EID/Public Assistance	Patricia Rivers, x1344 Jessica Crothers, x1332 LaTonya Harris, x1329 LaNette Anderson, x1343 Maria Diaz, x1033
Program Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase SNAP participation rate and amount of SNAP benefits issued to eligible Arlington County residents. 		
Program Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) targets those individuals who are food insecure to the extent that their income and assets are below limits prescribed by Congress for their family size. This benefit supplements the individuals' and families' nutritional needs. SNAP permits low-income households to have a more nutritious diet through normal channels of trade by increasing the food purchasing power for eligible households. The program also provides food in the event of a disaster. In June of 2024, State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2024 SNAP issuance was \$1,587,283 which is a 7% increase in spending over the previous year and over 166% increase over the pre-pandemic issuance of \$596,682 in June 2019. The number of SNAP applications increased during the COVID pandemic and has remained elevated beyond the pandemic. Most temporary policy changes instituted to assist staff processing during the pandemic have been removed. During the pandemic, the state of Virginia made significant policy changes to manage the influx of SNAP applications and maximum benefits available to residents. Temporary policy changes included waiving initial interviews, delaying SNAP renewals and Interim Review to ensure uninterrupted participation, issuing the maximum benefit allotment to households based on zero income, and issuing separate EBT cards managed by the school system to students eligible for free and reduced lunches. In addition, stimulus payments were not countable in the SNAP budget; and there was a statewide exemption of the work requirement. Many of these flexibilities ended on May 11, 2023. Virginia has continued to waive initial SNAP interviews through October 2024. Broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE) was introduced effective July 1, 2021, and continues requiring screening for eligibility. The criterion for broad-based categorical eligibility consists of at least one person receiving or authorized to receive a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funded service, which benefits the entire household. This includes non-cash or in-kind service funded by TANF. BBCE households 1) income must be at or below 200% of gross income limit and 2) resource test is not applicable. As a result of this policy, the program had an increase in expedited SNAP applications by 40% this year. Public Assistance (including SNAP, Medicaid and TANF) caseloads increased from an average of 700 to over 1,400 during the pandemic and have not decreased. 		
Service Delivery Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SNAP program continued to be delivered in a hybrid format in SFY 2024. The Public Assistance Bureau staff most often provided virtual customer service while teleworking four days a week and in the office one day per week. The SNAP interview waivers have been extended through October 2024; therefore, service delivery in FY 2025 should remain the same for the first quarter. We anticipate that service delivery will remain the same unless the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) makes other adjustments to policies. 		

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

PM1: How much did we do?

Staff	Total 21.5 FTEs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2.0 FTE Supervisor (50% of 3 Supervisors and 25% of 2 Supervisors) 1.5 FTE (50% of 2 Case Aides (CAs) and 25% of 2 CAs) 18 FTEs Program Benefits Specialists (50% of 34 PBSs and 25% of 4 PBSs) 					
Customers and Service Data		SFY 2021	SFY 2022	SFY 2023	SFY 2024	
	Applications	3,851	4,299	4,578	5,097	
	People receiving benefits in June of each year	7,129	8,805	9,478	9,715	
	Households receiving benefits in June of each year	4,280	5,171	5,571	5,680	

PM2: How well did we do it?

2.1	Application processing timeliness
2.2	Quality assurance accuracy rate

PM3: Is anyone better off?

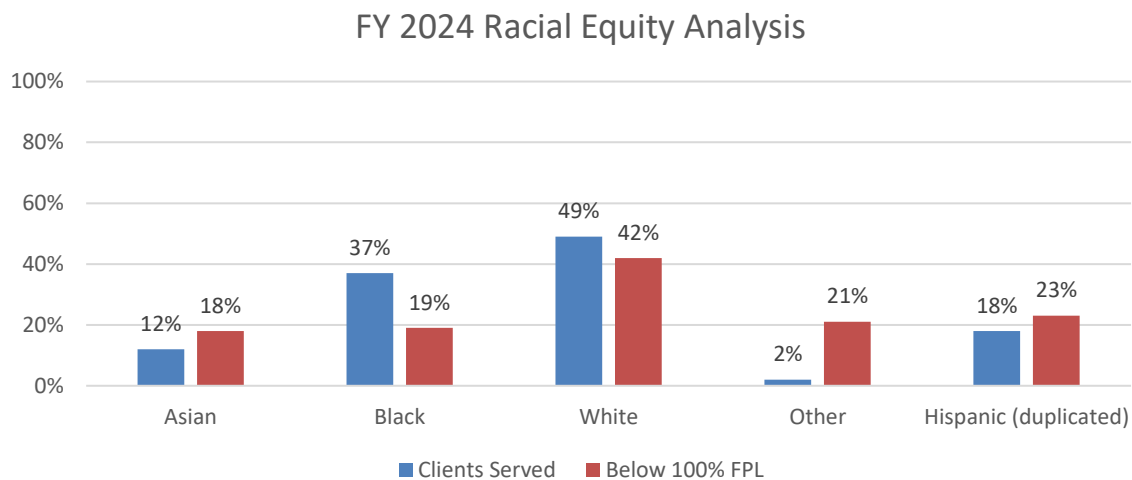
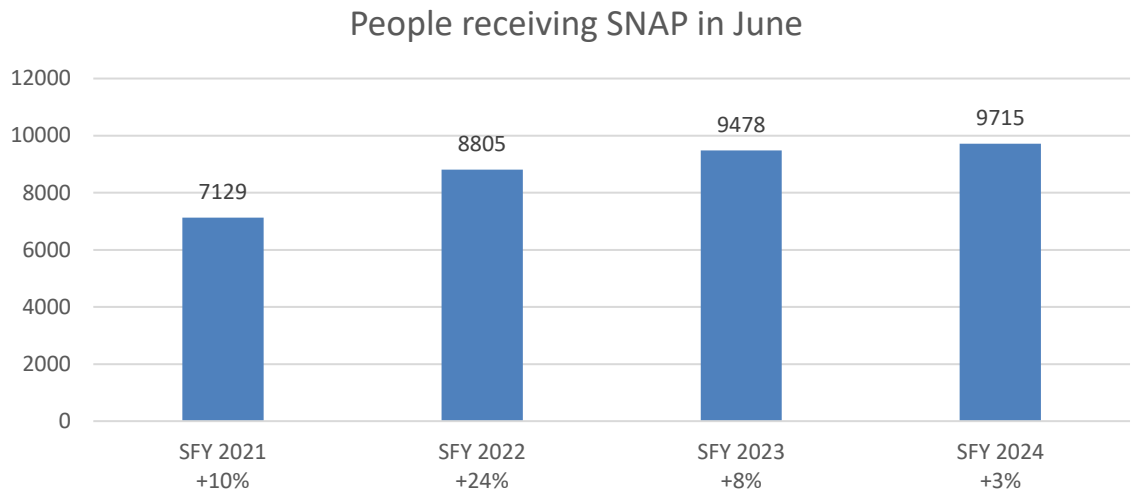
3.1	Participation rate among eligible Arlington residents
3.2	Amount of benefits issued and corresponding economic impact

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

SNAP

Measure **1** **Clients served**

Data



Data Summary

- Between SFY 2021 and SFY 2024, the number of people receiving SNAP in June of each year increased 36%.
- Statistical data on SNAP recipients are obtained from the Fusion page: [SNAP Reports \(virginia.gov\)](https://www.virginia.gov/reports/snap-reports)
- Data is reported from the VaCMS data system. VaCMS does not have an option for clients to identify as "Other", so clients who may have identified as "Other" on the census would have needed to choose a different option in VaCMS.
- The demographics of SNAP recipients generally aligned with the demographics of Arlington residents with incomes below the Federal Poverty Level. Asian and Hispanic individuals were under-represented.
- Race data was missing/unknown for 115 clients.

What is the story behind the data?

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

- In SFY 2024, SNAP recipients increased by 3% over the previous year.
- Program participation continued to increase during the past four years. Initially the increase was attributed largely in part to the COVID-19 pandemic and temporary SNAP policy changes. Although the Public Health Emergency ended over 12 months ago, SNAP applications and enrollment continue to increase.
- Food insecurity rates have increased in SFY 2023 and 2024, due in part to rising inflation and the cost of food.
- Since SFY 2022, participation increased significantly due to the introduction of broad-based categorical eligibility (BBCE).
- In SFY 2022, SNAP Renewals and Interim Reviews guidance was reinstated to pre-pandemic processing requirements, which had little to no effect on SNAP participation.
- In comparison to the population of Arlington residents with incomes less than the federal poverty level, the program serves a lower proportion of Asian and Hispanic residents. In addition to income requirements, SNAP recipients must meet additional non-financial eligibility guidelines.
- The nonprofit Real Food For Kids has been doing consistent SNAP outreach for the past 3 years, specifically targeting families with children who are US citizens.

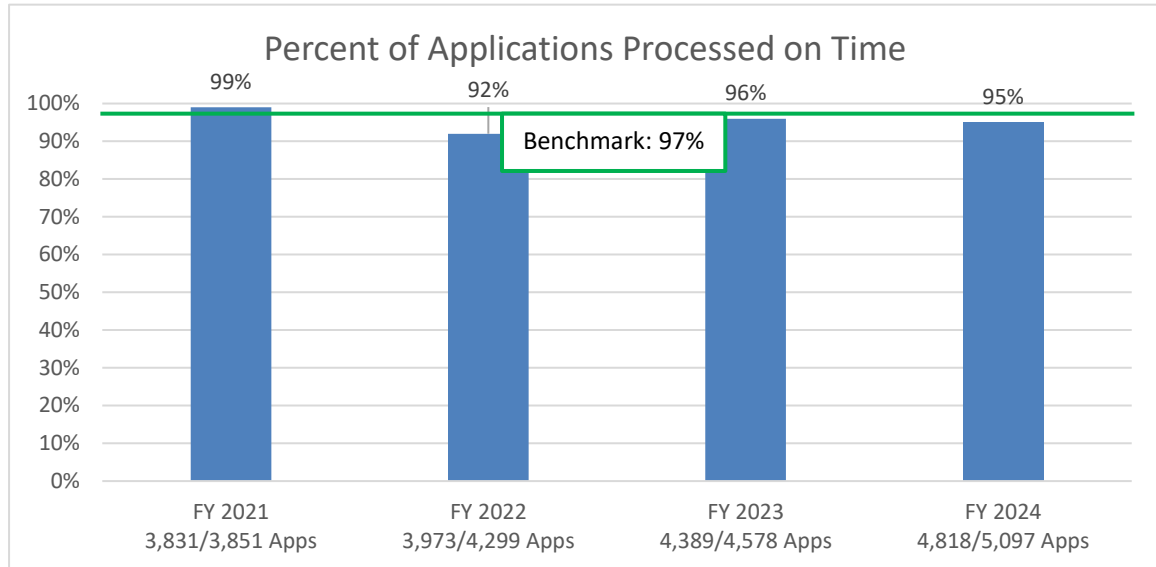
Recommendations	Target Dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to prioritize staff and resources to meet the SNAP needs for the Arlington community.• Seek alternate methods of meeting our staffing needs, including hiring former SNAP staff and retirees to assist with increasing case processing needs.• Work with the Food Security Coordinator to target outreach to underserved communities in Arlington as capacity allows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing• Ongoing• Ongoing
Forecast	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In SFY 2025, we anticipate the number of recipients will continue to increase by 5% to approximately 10,200 due to the continuing high costs of rent and food.	

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

SNAP

Measure 2.1 Application processing timeliness

Data



Data Summary

- In SFY 2024, 95% of applications were processed in a timely manner.
- Monthly data is obtained from the VDSS Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Application Tracking system, data warehouse, and annual statistics are compiled by program staff.
- In SFY 2022, SFY 2023, and SFY 2024, program staff did not meet the federal target for SNAP compliance of 97%.
- Timeliness data is obtained from the VACMS data system and the Fusion page: [Performance Indicator Monthly Report \(virginia.gov\)](https://www.virginia.gov/performance-indicator-monthly-report)

What is the story behind the data?

- Federal policy requires applications be processed within 7 days for expedited benefits and within 30 days for non-expedited benefits.
- Applications have increased 35% since June 2020. In July 2021, Virginia adopted Broad Based Criteria eligibility (BBCE) which removed asset limits and increased expedited applications over 45% in SFY 2022, 41% in SFY 2023, and 41% this year. SNAP income limits increased in July 2021 to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level with no resource evaluation needed. From SFY 2019 pre-pandemic to SFY 2024, SNAP applications increased 119%. With no additional staff and consistent staff turnover, the bureau was not able to keep up with application processing demands. Arlington did not meet the Federal guidelines for timely processing of SNAP applications in the past three years.
- Since October 19, 2020, local agencies have been given the option to waive all types of interviews (face-to-face or telephonic/initial and reviews), to maximize resources in the face of the influx of requests for assistance. Theoretically, this policy provided greater flexibility for agencies to allow operational efficiencies and increase timeliness of processing as the crisis continued. However, with the introduction of BBCE which is now permanent policy, the increased application volume erased much of the efficiency of the waivers and temporary policies.

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

- In SFY 2023, the Bureau converted one Benefits Program Specialist (BPS) position to a full-time training position to ensure we have trained staff to manage applications, reviews, and customer changes. This position was filled in the 4th quarter of SFY 2023, and we were allocated an Overstrength Senior position to also serve in the training capacity.
- The program has had consistent BPS turnover and has not been fully staffed in over five years.
- United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) required the state to report the number of waived interviews; therefore, local departments of social services (LDSSs) were required to track and send a weekly report to home office. Arlington elected to waive most intake and redetermination interviews.

Recommendations

- Continue prioritizing tasks and reallocating resources to ensure timeliness standards are met.
- Continue to provide weekly pending reports of outstanding applications approaching processing deadlines to workers.
- Recruit for five Overstrength BPS positions.

Target Dates

- Ongoing
- Ongoing
- SFY 2025 Q2

Forecast

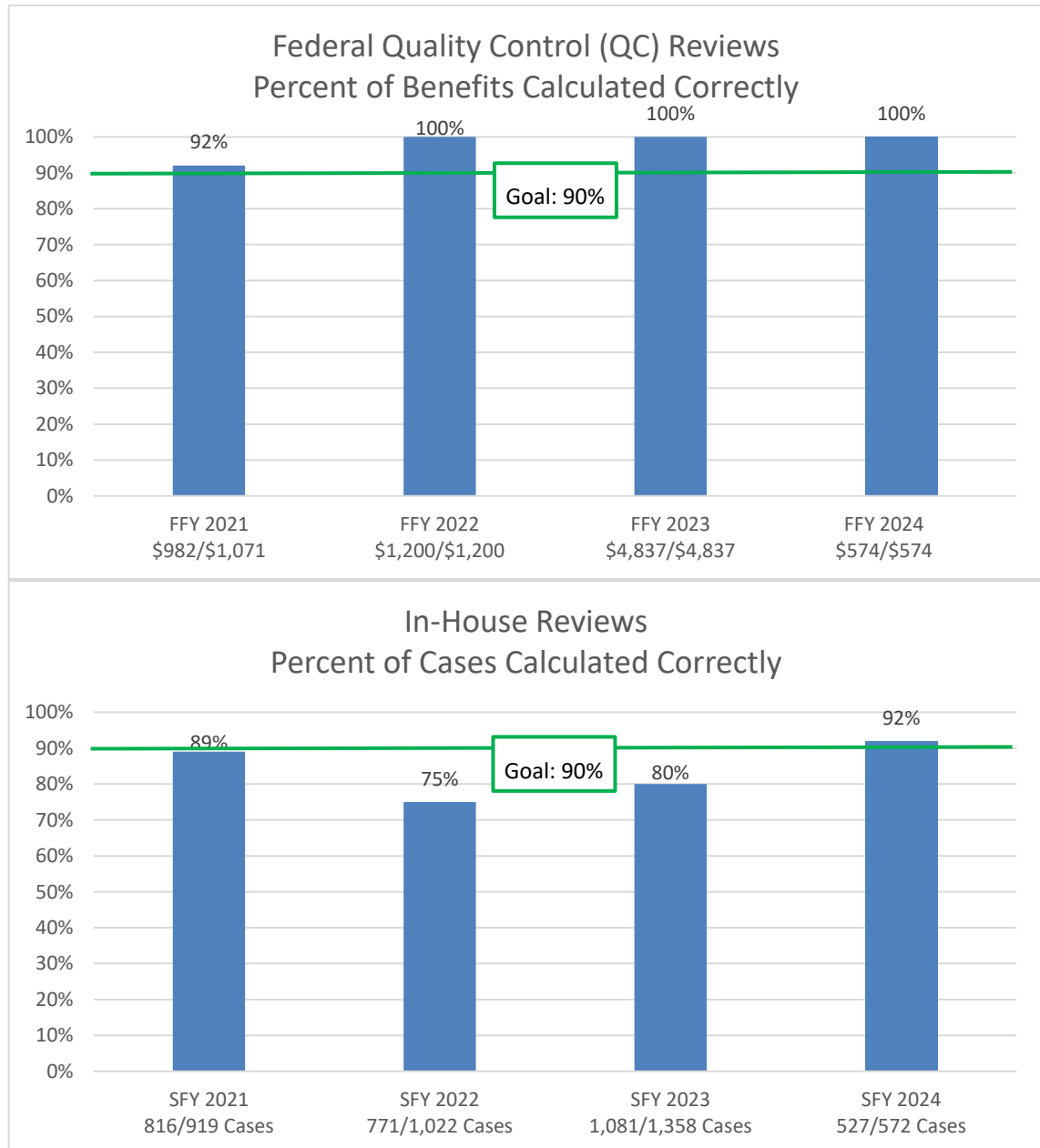
- In SFY 2025, SNAP application timeliness is projected to be 97%.

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

SNAP

Measure 2.2 Quality assurance accuracy rate

Data



Data Summary

- In FFY 2024, 100% of the one federally reviewed Quality Control SNAP benefits cases were correct with benefits totaling \$574. Arlington had no payment errors. Data is obtained from [VDSS SPARK reports](#) and the Quality Control Findings Report provided by the state after an audit.
- In SFY 2024, 92% of cases reviewed in-house by managerial staff were correct. Supervisors target reviewing 3 cases per worker per month, and all denials and closures are reviewed by senior staff. Data is maintained in a spreadsheet.

What is the story behind the data?

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

- The accuracy goal of 90% for in-house reviews was met in SFY 2024. The goal for State and Federal Quality Control reviews was met and exceeded in FFY 2024.
- Because federal QC selects such a small number of benefits to review, program supervisors conduct in-house reviews to ensure quality.
- Federal QC reviews are based on the amount of benefits issued in the cases that are reviewed and issued with correct benefits. The one case reviewed issued \$574 in total benefits correctly.
- In-house payment accuracy is based on the total number of cases reviewed that are timely, accurate, and have proper coding in the VACMS system. Timeliness and proper computer coding were added to the monitoring process over the past three years. SFY 2022 and SFY 2023 data include cases audited by our regional consultants as well.
- The number of cases monitored decreased in SFY 2024 due to vacancies. Benefit Programs Specialists process more than one state/federal eligibility program, with numerous program and system changes throughout the fiscal year. Most new staff are hired with little to no program knowledge which puts an extra responsibility on bureau supervisors and the new Senior BPS staff to train new staff and monitor more cases. Our current in-house trainers and supervisors continue to manage increased caseloads, coverage of vacant caseloads, and increased training responsibilities.
- With high turnover and higher caseloads, the bureau reallocated resources and hired a full-time trainer position in March 2023. Unfortunately, due to continued turnover, the trainer must still maintain a caseload as well as train new staff.

Recommendations

- Continue to review all denials and closures for accuracy monthly.
- Continue to monitor three cases per worker per month.
- Continue to ensure that all monitored cases are submitted to the statistician and recorded if applicable.

Target Dates

- Ongoing
- Ongoing
- Ongoing

Forecast

- The federal QC accuracy rate will be 97% for FFY 2025. The in-house accuracy rate will continue to meet or exceed 90% for SFY 2025 as additional staff and trainers are onboarded.

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

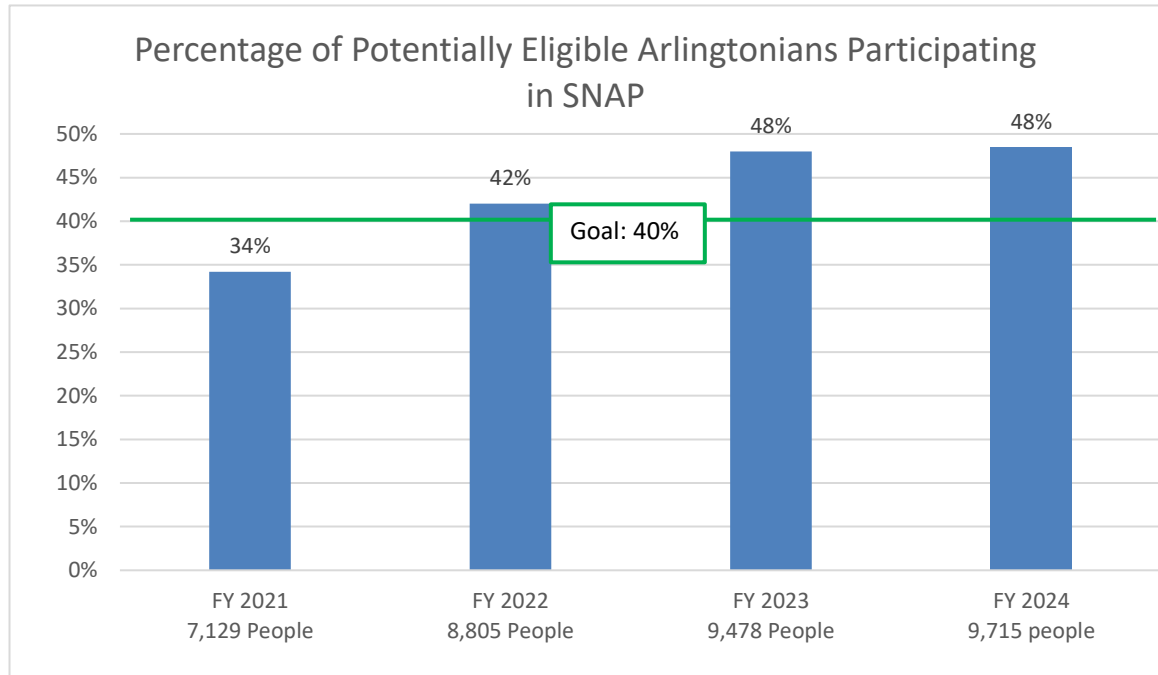
SNAP

Measure

3.1

Participation rate among eligible Arlington residents

Data



Data Summary

- We met our goal participation rate in SFY 2022 through SFY 2024.
- In FY 2024, 48% or 9,715 of all potentially eligible Arlington residents received SNAP benefits. This is an increase over the past few years due to the inclusive measures by the state of Virginia to maintain SNAP eligibility during the pandemic and more household became eligible for SNAP due to BBCE policy which allowed applicants with income less than 200% of the FPL and no resources to qualify.
- Potentially eligible Arlington residents are those whose income is at or below 133% of the federal poverty level (FPL), and who meet other criteria. The U.S. Food and Nutrition Service calculates program access based on the number of residents whose income is below 125% FPL, however. According to data from the 2022 American Community Survey, 20,038 or 8.6% of Arlington County residents have income at or below 125% of the poverty level; a slight decrease from the previous year. Based on the BBCE standards, 13.8% or 32,237 of residents have income less than 200% of the FPL.
- In addition to income, a household must also meet residency, citizenship/immigration status, and resource guidelines. The percentage of Arlington residents who also meet these additional criteria is unknown.

What is the story behind the data?

- According to the American Community Survey, the percentage of Arlington residents meeting the income threshold for SNAP participation is slowly decreasing. In the 2017 survey, 10.6% of residents had income within the limit; in 2022 only 8.6% are within the limits.
- The Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependent Children (ABAWD) provision was waived during the pandemic in SFY 2021 and reinstated effective SFY 2024. The age range for ABAWD was

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

increased from 18-50 to 18-54. These able-bodied clients are required to work or actively seek employment to receive SNAP.

- Because SNAP imposes more stringent guidelines than Medicaid, fewer residents apply for this program. In addition, many qualified immigrants do not apply for SNAP benefits due to beliefs that their children may be required to repay benefits or be barred from attending college, or that they will be prevented from future citizenship consideration. Ongoing customer education and outreach efforts are conducted to address these misunderstandings, as well support of informational legal references/workshops.
- In SFY 2024, the number of SNAP applications continued to increase by 11%, recipients increased by 2.5% and households increased by 2%. The bureau, like surrounding localities, continued to experience high staff turnover and high caseloads.
- In Arlington, 9% of the population, or 21,862 people were registered to receive free food from the Arlington Food Assistance Center (AFAC), the largest source of food assistance in Arlington besides SNAP, in FY 2024.
- Since SFY 2021, the program and the Food Security Coordinator have worked with the non-profit Real Food For Kids (RFFK) to conduct onsite outreach at local food pantries, homeless shelters, schools, and other sites. In addition, the Food Security Coordinator developed a SNAP Ambassadors program to train community partners to assist residents in applying for SNAP. School support staff have also received training on SNAP. RFFK became a VDSS SNAP Outreach Partner as of SFY 2024. RFFK staff and volunteers are frequently out in the community doing SNAP outreach at food distributions, the diaper bank, and other events with low-income populations. In FY 2025, Our Lady Queen of Peace Church began doing regular SNAP outreach and enrollment assistance at their food pantry and clothing distribution, largely targeting the Latino immigrant population.

Recommendations	Target Dates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to pursue to partner with the Food Security Coordinator, the DHS Community Outreach Program, and Real Food For Kids to share information and provide enrollment assistance for SNAP at food distributions and other targeted community events. Target outreach to populations commonly eligible such as unhoused individuals and those returning from incarceration, as well as those that are under-enrolled. Continue to send SNAP applications to Medicaid recipients whose reported income is within the SNAP income guidelines. Continue to ensure BPS workers and Consultants in the Customer Services Center are explaining SNAP guidelines during each contact with applicants applying for other programs. Continue to ensure accuracy of information being disseminated to customers and potential customers regarding the local, state, and federal policies surrounding SNAP. Stay abreast of immigrant and state policy changes regarding public charge. Actively reference the Immigration Legal Referral List for all recipients requesting closure or denial of SNAP benefits. Continue to meet with the Food Security Coordinator regularly to discuss possibilities to increase enrollment. Explore Race & Ethnicity breakdown and comparison for this measure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing SFY 2025 Q4

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

Forecast

- The percentage of potentially eligible residents participating in SNAP will likely remain consistent in SFY 2025, due to consistent food insecurity and increased applications.

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

SNAP

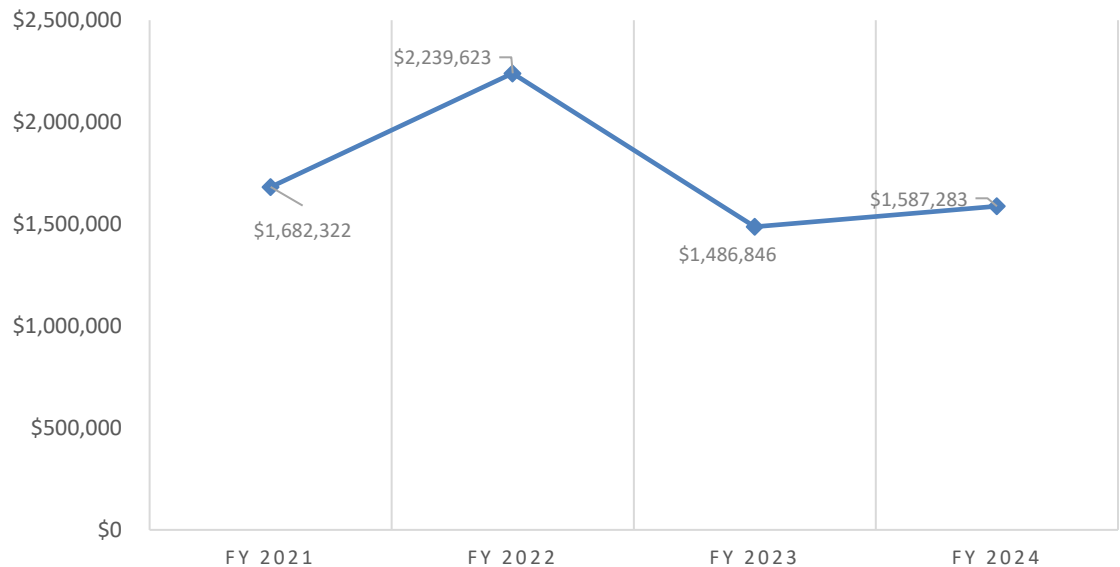
Measure

3.2

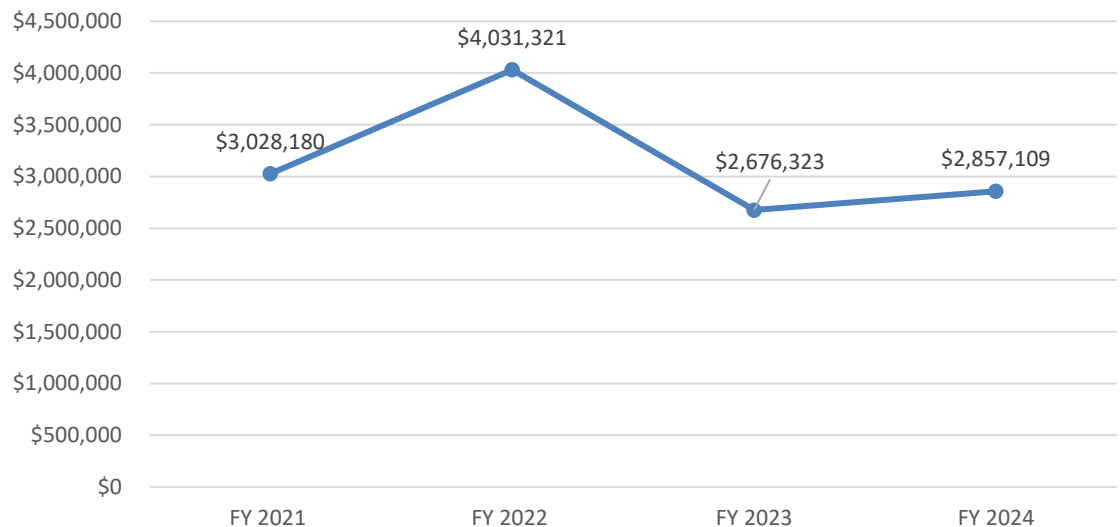
Amount of benefits issued and corresponding economic impact

Data

BENEFITS ISSUED JUNE OF EACH YEAR



Economic Impact To The Community Resulting From SNAP Benefit Issuance



Data Summary

- Both the amount of benefits issued, and the economic impact increased in SFY 2024.
- Data is obtained from VDSS FUSION reports [SNAP Reports \(virginia.gov\)](https://www.virginia.gov/snap-reports). According to the [USDA Economic Research Service](https://www.usda.gov/economic-research-service), for each \$5 of SNAP issued, the resulting stimulus to the economy is approximately \$9. An increase in SNAP benefits provides a fiscal stimulus to the economy during an economic downturn. When resources are underemployed, the increase in SNAP benefits starts a multiplier process in which inter-industry transactions

FY 2024 PERFORMANCE PLAN

and induced consumption effects lead to an economic impact that is greater than the initial stimulus.

What is the story behind the data?

- One out of every eight American adults is struggling to afford food. According to October 2023 data from the Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey, nearly 28 million adults nationwide-12.5% of the adult population-were living in homes where there was either sometimes or often not enough to eat in the last week. This is the highest that figure has reached since the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Food insecurity is impacting one out of eight American adults \(usafacts.org\)](https://www.usafacts.org) Food insecurity affected 17.9% of households with children in 2023.
- SNAP benefits are considered one of the fastest and most effective forms of economic stimulus according to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#). According to the USDA, SNAP participation for 6 months was associated with a 5-10% decrease in food insecurity, including households with food insecure children. And for every \$1 billion in cuts to SNAP funding, 11,437 jobs would be destroyed.
- Benefits issued are determined by program participation rate, which has increased during the past fiscal year.
- Arlington had a 2% increase in the number of households participating in SNAP in FY 2024. According to the [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#), a nationwide increase in SNAP participation by 5% would result in 2.2 million low-income Americans receiving \$859 million in SNAP benefits, generating \$1.5 billion in nationwide economic activity.

Recommendations

- Continue targeted comprehensive outreach activities, including collaborating with community partners, WIC program/Public Health Department, public school systems and continue providing SNAP applications to Medicaid recipients at review when reported income appears to meet program income guidelines.
- Continue to ensure Benefit Programs Specialists and Consultants in the Customer Services Center are explaining SNAP guidelines during each contact with applicants applying for other programs.
- Continue to ensure immigrant households understand policies, potential eligibility, and how receiving benefits impacts immigration concerns.

Target Dates

- Ongoing

Forecast

- In FY 2025, based on current trends and continued food insecurity, benefit issuance and corresponding economic impact will likely increase by 5% to approximately \$1,666,647 in benefits and \$2,999,964 in economic impact.