Support for Healthy Eating in Iowa
2019 survey to understand Iowans’ support for healthy eating among low-income individuals using Food Assistance

The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Civic Engagement surveyed 500 Iowans in December 2019 to gather feedback on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and determine if Iowans favor or oppose changes to SNAP that may influence the purchase patterns and food choices of people using Food Assistance in Iowa. In Iowa, SNAP is known as Food Assistance and is operated by the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS).

Findings
Of the 500 Iowans surveyed, the majority live in rural Iowa (70.8% rural counties vs. 29.2% urban); respondents represent 96 of the 99 Iowa counties.

Among Iowa SNAP beneficiaries, 81.0% agree that providing additional money for fruit and vegetables would be very helpful/helpful. The view that this strategy would be helpful/very helpful was highest among Democrats (82.7%) and over 70% of Independents and Republicans (71.0% and 70.5% respectively; not significantly different from total).

There is overall high support for providing more money to buy fresh fruits and vegetables among all income categories. This is highest in people making less than $50,000 at 79.3%, compared to incomes greater than $100,000, 72.5%, and between $50,000-$99,999, 70.3%.

Level of education also is shown to have an impact (76.6% high school graduate or less; 74.1% some college/2 year/technical/vocation; 75.1% college graduate or above) on support for providing more money to buy fresh fruits and vegetables.

Survey respondents also strongly favored additional strategies that could make it easier to buy more healthy foods and fewer unhealthy foods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Very helpful/helpful Adults overall/SNAP recipients</th>
<th>Neither helpful nor unhelpful Adults overall/SNAP recipients</th>
<th>Unhelpful/very unhelpful Adults overall/SNAP recipients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing Food Assistance recipients with more money to buy fresh fruits and vegetables in grocery stores. For example: For every $1.00 spent on fresh fruits and vegetables, recipients would get another $1.00 to spend on more fresh fruits and vegetables.</td>
<td>75.0%/81.0%</td>
<td>16.6%/13.0%</td>
<td>8.4%/6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring that grocery stores, including convenience and corner stores, have a wide variety of affordable, healthy foods—such as fruits, vegetables, lean meats, low-fat milk, and whole grains.</td>
<td>68.0%/68.0%</td>
<td>22.6%/27.0%</td>
<td>9.4%/5.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providing information to Food Assistance recipients on healthier eating options through nutrition or cooking classes.</td>
<td>59.8%/57.0%</td>
<td>29.2%/32.0%</td>
<td>11.0%/11.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This project was funded in part by the Telligen Community Initiative to initiate and support, through research and programs, innovative and farsighted health-related projects aimed at improving the health, social well-being and educational attainment of society, where such needs are expressed.
Support for Healthy Eating in Iowa
Demographics of respondents

- 500 Survey respondents
- 96/99 Iowa counties represented
- County:
  - Rural 70.8%
  - Urban 29.2%
- 20% have used SNAP in the past 12 months.
- Gender:
  - Female 54.4%
  - Male 45.4%
  - Non-binary/Transgender 0.2%
- Age:
  - 18 –34 24.6%
  - 35 –44 10.8%
  - 45 –54 9.6%
  - 55 –64 23.4%
  - 65+ 31.6%
- Number of adults in household 18+: 22.8%
  - 1 62.4%
  - 2 10.6%
  - 3 3.2%
  - 4 1.0%
  - 5+ 0.2%
- Annual household income: 18.8%
  - <$25,000 10.8%
  - $25,000-$29,999 7.0%
  - $30,000-$34,999 5.0%
  - $35,000-$39,999 6.0%
  - $40,000-$49,999 8.2%
  - $50,000-$59,999 11%
  - $60,000-$74,999 17.2%
  - $75,000-$99,999 5.8%
  - $100,000-$124,999 3.4%
  - $125,000-$149,999 3.2%
  - $150,000-$199,999 3.6%
  - >$200,000 0.4%
- Employment Status:
  - Retired 30.2%
  - Work full-time 30.0%
  - Work part-time 12.6%
  - Not employed currently/unable to work 8.6%
  - Homemaker 8.6%
  - Self-employed 5.6%
  - Student 2.4%
  - Looking for work 2.0%
- Highest completed education
  - Some high school 2.2%
  - High school graduate 23.4%
  - Some college 22.8%
  - Two-year college/technical or vocational 15.0%
  - Four-year college degree 18.8%
  - Some postgraduate work 2.2%
  - Postgraduate degree 15.2%
  - Other 0.4%
- Political Affiliation:
  - Democrat 34.6%
  - Strong Democrat 15.0%
  - Lean Democrat 19.6%
  - Republican 34.6%
  - Strong Republican 18.8%
  - Lean Republican 15.8%
  - Independent 26.2%
  - Other 4.6%
- Grocery shopping location
  - Grocery stores 89.8%
  - Big box stores 61.2%
  - Small discount stores 25.8%
  - Convenience stores 12.6%
  - Drug stores/pharmacy 6.8%
  - Other places 2.2%

Designed by Kasey Springsteen, Class of 2021
Support for Healthy Eating in Iowa

Shopping Habits
- 89.8% of Iowans buy their groceries at grocery stores.
- 25.8% buy at discount stores.
- 12.6% buy at convenience stores.

A majority of Iowans buy their groceries at grocery stores. Rural Iowans are more likely to purchase groceries from discount stores.

More Money for Fresh Produce
- 75% of respondents think providing Food Assistance recipients with more money to buy fresh fruits and vegetables in grocery stores would be very helpful or helpful.

Well-stocked Stores
- 68% of respondents think that ensuring that grocery stores, including convenience and corner stores, have a wide variety of affordable, healthy foods would be very helpful or helpful.

Educational Opportunities
- 59.8% of respondents think providing information to Food Assistance recipients on healthier eating options through nutrition or cooking classes would be very helpful or helpful.

Political Support
- 82.7% of Democrats
- 71% of Independents
- 70.5% of Republicans

Widespread Support
- 81% of SNAP beneficiaries agree that providing additional money for fruit and vegetables would be very helpful.
- 73.6% of non-SNAP beneficiaries agree that providing additional money for fruit and vegetables would be very helpful.

Survey of Respondents
- 500 Iowans surveyed
- 54.4% of respondents are women
- 70.8% live in a rural county
- 77.2% live in a household with two or more people age 18+
- 57.4% are married
- 73.6% own their home

Additional money for Food Assistance recipients to purchase fruit and vegetables is supported by people from different political parties.

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