

Receipt of One or More Means-Tested Benefits: 2024

Survey of Income and Program Participation Snapshots

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31% of people received benefits from at least one means-tested social safety net program.

Of those who received benefits from at least one program, more than half received benefits from only one program, 26 percent received benefits from two programs, and 21 percent received benefits from three or more programs.

73% of those who received any means-tested benefits got means-tested health insurance through Medicaid or CHIP.

60 percent of those who received means-tested benefits got nutrition assistance (SNAP, WIC, or free or reduced-price school meals), 19 percent got rental or energy assistance, and 10 percent got cash assistance (TANF or SSI).

1 in 2 people who received three or more means-tested programs were children.

35 percent were ages 18 to 64, and only 14 percent were age 65 or over. Several programs, such as free or reduced-price school meals, CHIP, and WIC, are partially or fully restricted to certain age groups.

What Are Means-Tested Benefits?

Means-tested programs provide health and income security benefits as part of the social safety net. Eligibility is partially determined by available resources of a household or individual. This fact sheet explores how the following programs help people meet their needs: Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP); the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); free or reduced-price school meals; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); rental assistance; and energy assistance.

More information on means-tested programs and other social safety net programs is available in [fact sheets](#), [detailed program participation tables](#), [interactive data visualizations](#), and [reports](#).

Percentage of People Receiving Select Combinations of Public Safety Net Programs by Age: 2024

(In percent)

