

Nutrition Security: Ensuring Latino Families Have Access to Healthy Food

Millions of Latino families rely on federal nutrition programs to access healthy food, yet rising food costs and economic disparities continue to fuel food insecurity. Programs like SNAP, WIC, and free school meals play a critical role in preventing hunger, improving health outcomes, and supporting economic stability.

Key Nutrition Programs Supporting Latino Families

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Helps [10 million](#) Latinos, including 5 million children, afford food each year.
 - A critical lifeline for hard-working families struggling with food costs.
- Free & Reduced-Price School Meals
 - In 2021, [half](#) of all U.S. schoolchildren participated in these programs.
 - Two-thirds of Latino children rely on school meals to prevent hunger.
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
 - Provides nutritious food, health education, and breastfeeding support.
 - 43% of WIC participants are Latino, including [2.7 million](#) Hispanic mothers and children.
 - Improves birth [outcomes](#), reduces obesity rates, and enhances school readiness.

Food Insecurity and Health Risks in Latino Communities

- Latino families earn less, making it harder to afford food:
 - In 2023, Latinos were [10%](#) more likely to be in the workforce than non-Hispanic whites.
 - Yet, the median Latino income was 25% lower (\$915 vs. \$1,196 per week).
- Hunger is rising:
 - Nearly [2 in 5](#) Latinos reported not having enough food in 2023—the highest rate among racial/ethnic groups.
- Diet-related illnesses are a crisis:
 - Latinos are [70%](#) more likely to develop diabetes.
 - Latinos are [30%](#) more likely to die from diabetes than non-Hispanic whites.
- Food costs create financial strain:
 - [1 in 8](#) Latino adults has gone into debt to feed their families.

SNAP Benefits Must Keep Up with Rising Food Prices

- SNAP provides only [\\$6.20](#) per person per day—insufficient for a balanced diet.
- Food prices have skyrocketed, yet SNAP benefits have not kept pace.
- In 2021, SNAP covered the cost of a healthy diet in [79%](#) of U.S. counties—today, that number has dropped to just 2%.

SNAP Supports Employment & Family Stability

- Most SNAP recipients already [work](#) but earn poverty-level wages with unpredictable hours.
- Cutting SNAP benefits does not increase employment—instead, it leads to:
 - Higher poverty and [hunger](#) rates.
 - Increased household [debt](#) and financial insecurity.
 - Greater healthcare [costs](#) due to worsening physical and mental health.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Expands School Meal Access

- CEP eliminates paperwork and ensures free meals for children in low-income schools.
- Schools with CEP [report](#):
 - Better academic performance.
 - Fewer behavioral issues.
- CEP participation has grown from 14,000 schools (2014) to 48,000 (2023).