

A Review of SNAP Nutritional Incentive Programs

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There are over 40 million Americans in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamps Program. Despite this program attempting to eliminate food insecurity for people 130% below the poverty line, it does little to prevent nutrition related health disparities between SNAP participants and people who are more financially stable. Nearly every state has nutrition incentive programs attempting to address these nutritional health disparities that SNAP does not address. To synthesize a literature review of several of these programs, a search was conducted in PubMed, PubAg, and Google Scholar databases using terms such as “SNAP” and “nutritional incentive program,” along with date restrictions for 2013 or later. This search resulted in a total of 54 articles, however only 35 were used following screening. Included articles were screened first by abstract and then article content to determine relevancy. The literature suggests that programs address nutritional health disparities by providing financial interventions for SNAP participants to make nutritionally conscious decisions about the food they purchase and consume. There were three categories of interventions that were suggested by the literature: incentives, discounts, and restrictions. Regardless of the intervention, each of these categories of intervention were praised by SNAP participants. Participants were able to purchase and consume more fruits and vegetables, focus on nutrition, and financially support local farmers markets and supermarkets. This review discusses these different interventions to allow for new or existing programs to be developed to best address nutritional health disparities using scholarly evidence.