

The characteristics of married-head households with children varied considerably from those of single-adult households with children. Of the 5.6 million single-adult SNAP households with children, 2.3 million (42 percent) had earnings, about 877,000 (16 percent) received TANF, 681,000 (12 percent) received SSI, and 528,000 (9 percent) received Social Security. Of the 1.8 million married-head households with children, 1.2 million (69 percent) had earned income, 185,000 (10 percent) received SSI, 177,000 (10 percent) received Social Security, and 124,000 (7 percent) received TANF. Among single-adult households with children, 963,000 (17 percent) had zero gross income whereas among married-head households, 178,000 (10 percent) had zero gross income (Table 3.3).

The average monthly SNAP benefit for single-adult households with children was lower than that of married-head households with children (\$375 versus \$454) because of the smaller size of single-adult households (Table 3.4). However, the benefit per person was higher for people in single-adult households with children than for people in married-head households with children (\$129 versus \$103) because single-adult households were poorer. Single-adult households with children had a substantially lower gross monthly income than married-head households with children (\$841 versus \$1,426).

Among all households with children, 1.8 million (18 percent) received child support (Table A.6).

Households with Elderly Individuals

In each month of fiscal year 2014, SNAP served an average of about 4.3 million households with elderly individuals (age 60 and older). These households represented 19 percent of all SNAP households, compared to 17 percent of all SNAP households in fiscal year 2013 (Table 3.2). Households with elderly individuals had an average household size of 1.3 people (Table 3.4).

In fiscal year 2014, the average SNAP benefit for households with elderly individuals was \$129, compared to \$283 for households without elderly individuals (Table A.2). Elderly SNAP recipients tended to receive relatively small benefit amounts for two reasons. First, they typically had higher average gross and net incomes than other households. Households with elderly individuals had average gross and net incomes of \$876 and \$407, compared to \$732 and \$319 for households without elderly individuals. Second, elderly SNAP recipients often lived alone and thus were eligible for smaller maximum benefit amounts than other households.²¹

In fiscal year 2014, 82 percent of all SNAP households with elderly individuals were single-person households (Table 3.2). Elderly SNAP recipients who lived alone received an average SNAP benefit of \$110 per month, compared to \$160 for multiperson households composed of only elderly individuals and \$256 for multiperson households with both elderly and non-elderly individuals (Table A.15). The average size of households with elderly individuals not living alone was 2.4 people (Table 3.4).

A majority of SNAP households with elderly individuals received either SSI or Social Security income. In fiscal year 2014, 37 percent of all SNAP households with elderly individuals received SSI, 69 percent received Social Security income, and 85 percent received income from at least one of those two sources (Table A.6).

²¹ In this report, we use the term “living alone” to refer to individuals who reside in one-person SNAP households, although others may live in the same residential unit.