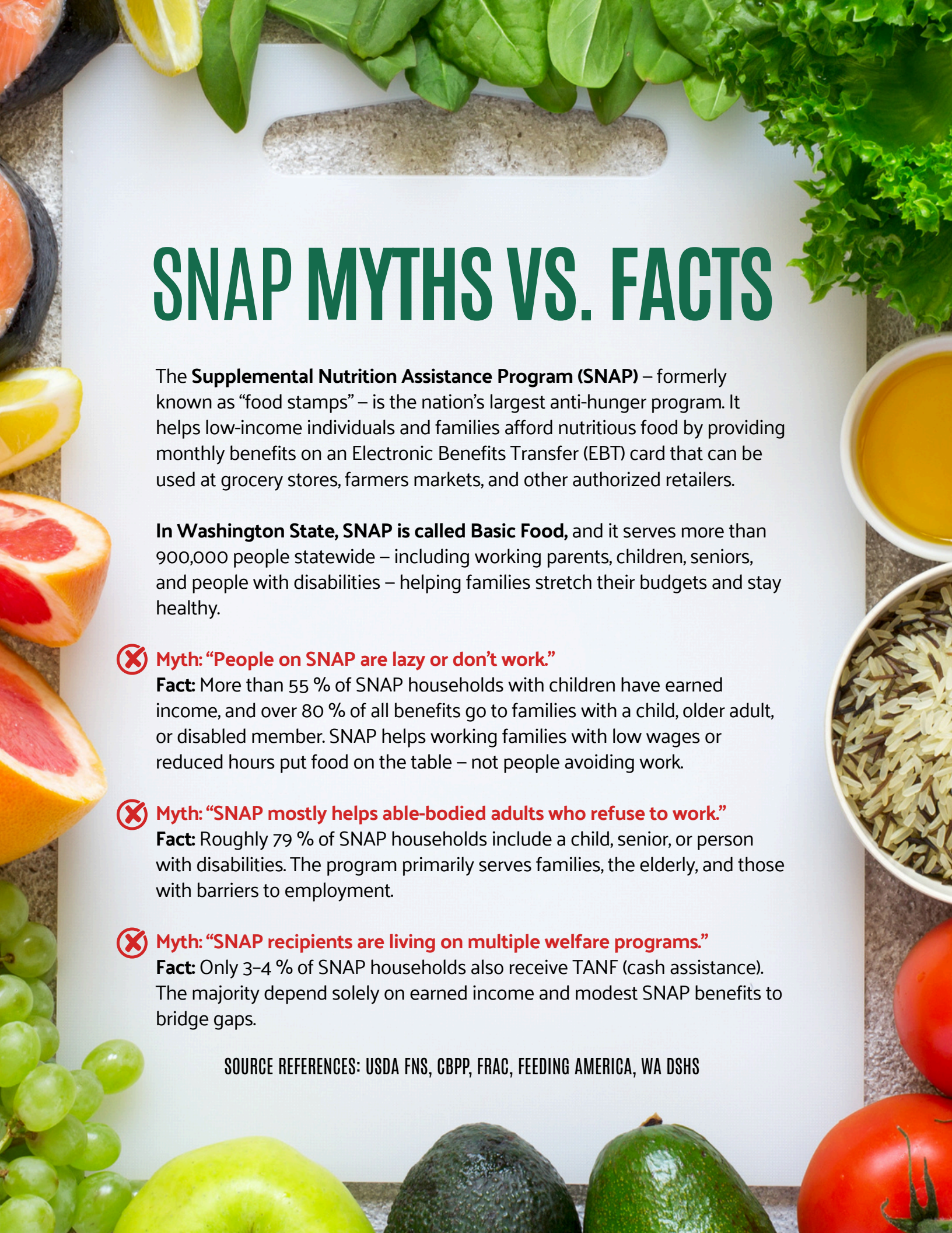




SNAP MYTHS VS. FACTS

The **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** – formerly known as “food stamps” – is the nation’s largest anti-hunger program. It helps low-income individuals and families afford nutritious food by providing monthly benefits on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card that can be used at grocery stores, farmers markets, and other authorized retailers.

In Washington State, SNAP is called Basic Food, and it serves more than 900,000 people statewide – including working parents, children, seniors, and people with disabilities – helping families stretch their budgets and stay healthy.

 Myth: “People on SNAP are lazy or don’t work.”

Fact: More than 55 % of SNAP households with children have earned income, and over 80 % of all benefits go to families with a child, older adult, or disabled member. SNAP helps working families with low wages or reduced hours put food on the table – not people avoiding work.

 Myth: “SNAP mostly helps able-bodied adults who refuse to work.”

Fact: Roughly 79 % of SNAP households include a child, senior, or person with disabilities. The program primarily serves families, the elderly, and those with barriers to employment.

 Myth: “SNAP recipients are living on multiple welfare programs.”

Fact: Only 3–4 % of SNAP households also receive TANF (cash assistance). The majority depend solely on earned income and modest SNAP benefits to bridge gaps.

SOURCE REFERENCES: USDA FNS, CBPP, FRAC, FEEDING AMERICA, WA DSHS

❌ Myth: “SNAP benefits are generous—people don’t need to work.”

Fact: The average monthly benefit is about \$6 per person per day. Most households have incomes well below poverty, and SNAP simply supplements food budgets – it does not replace income.

❌ Myth: “SNAP mainly helps single adults without kids.”

Fact: Nearly 62 % of recipients are in families with children; another 37 % live with an older adult or person with disabilities. Families with children are the largest SNAP group nationwide.

❌ Myth: “People don’t need SNAP—they can just go to food banks.”

Fact: Food banks are vital partners but cannot replace SNAP:

- SNAP provides 9 meals for every 1 meal distributed by food banks. (Feeding America)
- SNAP benefits can be used for fresh, culturally appropriate foods that pantries may not supply.
- SNAP dollars are spent locally, generating \$1.50–\$1.80 in economic activity for every \$1 in benefits.

“Charitable food assistance is essential, but it cannot fill the gap left by cuts or lapses in SNAP.” – Feeding America

Key Takeaways

- SNAP is America’s first line of defense against hunger, complementing—not competing with—food banks.
- It stabilizes working families, children, and seniors during crises like the federal shutdown.
- In Pierce County, for every meal a food pantry can provide, SNAP provides five to nine more – proving both systems are needed.

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Online: [AccessPierce.org](https://www.accesspierce.org)



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food, housing, and financial
stability resources.

SOURCE REFERENCES: USDA FNS, CBPP, FRAC, FEEDING AMERICA, WA DSHS