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Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs
Office of Management and Budget
Executive Office of the President

March 3, 2024

RE: Public Comment on ICR Reference No. 202402-0584-001

To whom it may concern,

My name is Alexander Hertel-Fernandez and I am an associate professor of international and public affairs at Columbia University. I am submitting a comment on U.S. Department of Agriculture ICR Reference No. 202402-0584-001. This comment draws on original research I have recently conducted, interviewing 1,492 individuals with experience applying for, or receiving, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits. I conducted the survey in January 2024.

I am presenting a portion of my research findings as part of this public comment to help inform USDA's design and review of SNAP forms, as well as ongoing USDA and OMB work to study and improve the SNAP application experience.

Consistent with the federal government's priority to reduce administrative burdens as part of OMB Memorandum M-22-10¹, my comment focuses on new findings about burdens in the SNAP application process—especially what M-22-10 describes as psychological burdens and learning costs—that I believe could help USDA and OMB better measure and address barriers to equitable SNAP access.

Appendix 1 provides a brief summary of the survey that I describe in this comment. The survey provides an important window into the experiences of a diverse set of individuals with firsthand experience applying for, and receiving, SNAP benefits that closely resembles the English-speaking population of SNAP beneficiaries in recent years on demographic characteristics, including race and ethnicity, age, education, employment status, and region.

¹ Office of Management and Budget Memorandum on Improving Access to Public Benefits Programs Through the Paperwork Reduction Act. M-22-10: April 13, 2022.

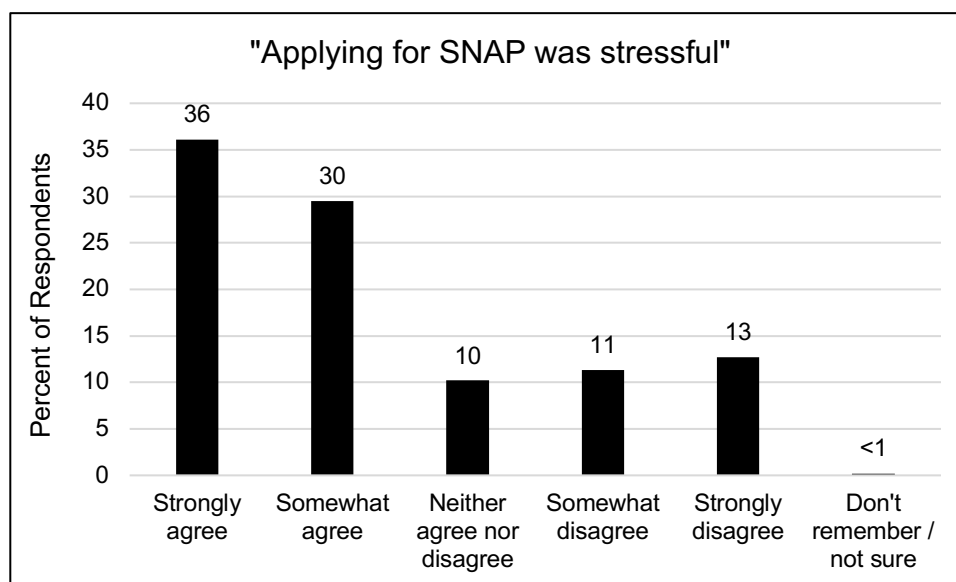
The rest of this comment proceeds as follows. I first describe my findings on psychological burden and learning costs in the SNAP application process. I then provide a summary of qualitative narrative responses that interviewees shared about their experiences with SNAP applications. The final section concludes by providing specific recommendations for USDA and OMB for better measuring and reducing administrative burdens in the SNAP application process.

Psychological Burdens in the SNAP Application Process and their Disparate Impacts

OMB's 2022 guidance to federal agencies on addressing administrative burdens references the need to better estimate and address different forms of burdens, including learning costs, compliance costs, and psychological costs. Psychological costs can include "the cognitive load, discomfort, stress, or anxiety a respondent may experience as a result of attempting to comply with a specific aspect of an information collection."² While agencies have long estimated the time costs associated with completing a form, thus far agencies have not tended to include estimates of psychological burden present in information collection requests.

To gauge one aspect of the psychological burden presented by the SNAP application process—stress—I asked survey respondents the following question: "How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: *"Applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or food stamps, was stressful."* Respondents could provide six responses, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree with an additional not sure option. Figure 1 below shows the overall distribution of these responses. Overall, two-thirds of respondents agreed that the application experience was stressful, including 36% of respondents strongly agreeing—the most common response.

Figure 1: Respondent Reports of Stress in SNAP Application Experience



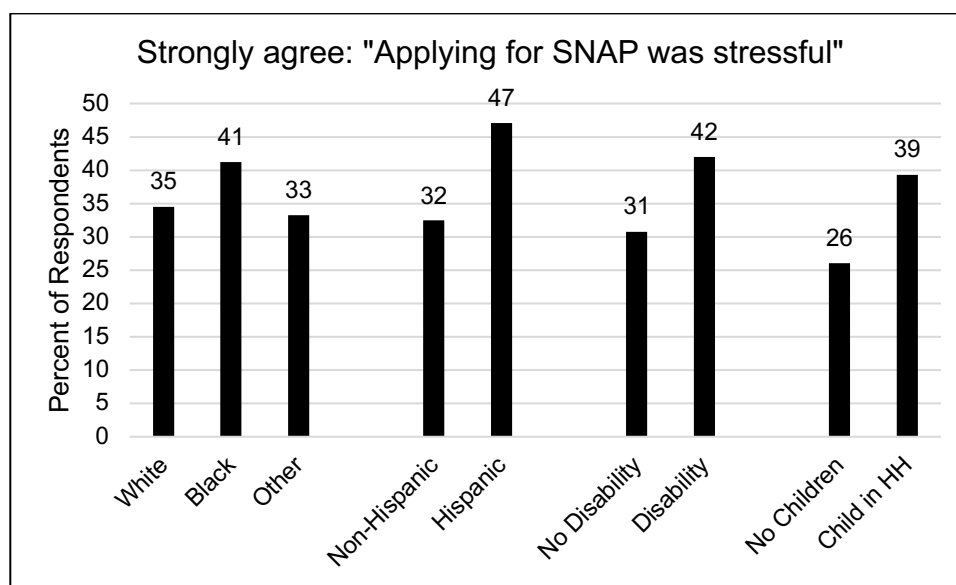
² M-22-10, page 2.

Notes: 2024 SNAP Application Experiences Survey. Survey weights applied. Question text: “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or food stamps, was stressful.”

Not all respondents reported the same levels of stress, however, and I identified important differences across demographic groups, illustrated in Figure 2. In particular, Black and especially Hispanic individuals were more likely to strongly agree that the experience was stressful, as were individuals reporting a disability and parents of children.

The largest stress gap was between parents and non-parents (a 51% gap), followed by the gap between Hispanics and non-Hispanics (a 45% gap) and the gap by disability status (a 37% gap). When accounting for these demographic characteristics together in an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression, the strongest predictors of stress included disability status and Hispanic ethnicity.³ The finding for Hispanic individuals reinforces other recent survey work by the Urban Institute documenting higher barriers to SNAP enrollment for Hispanic individuals.⁴

Figure 2: Differences in Strongly Agreeing with Stress in SNAP Application Experience, by Demographic Group



Notes: 2024 SNAP Application Experiences Survey. Survey weights applied. Question text: “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: Applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or food stamps, was stressful.”

The survey also asked about the specific barriers that individuals encountered in the application process, including the following: had trouble finding application materials; had trouble submitting application materials; had trouble understanding program rules and requirements; had trouble compiling necessary documents and records; had trouble contacting program staff in

³ Regression included survey weights.

⁴ Marla McDaniel et al. 2023. “Customer Service Experiences and Enrollment Difficulties Vary Widely across Safety Net Programs.” Urban Institute, page 10.

person; had trouble contacting program staff over the phone; had trouble visiting program offices; had trouble completing the forms; had trouble proving eligibility; had trouble getting benefits in a timely manner; had trouble documenting income; had trouble documenting assets; had trouble documenting medical expenses; had trouble documenting disability; had trouble documenting work hours; and had trouble documenting utility expenses.

Using this set of barriers, I examined using OLS regression analysis which barriers were most predictive of a more stressful application experience.⁵ I found that the strongest predictor of more stressful experiences was reporting challenges communicating with program staff in person, and this was relatively consistent across different demographic groups.

The final dimension of stress that I explored involved the application assistance that individuals reported relying upon. I asked individuals about their application assistance in the following way: *“Did you get any help applying for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or food stamps benefits from anyone? Please check all that apply.”* Options included a friend or family member, a coworker, an employer, a church or faith group, a union or worker group, a legal assistance or aid group, a food bank, a health care provider or clinic, government agency staff, a community group, or someone else.

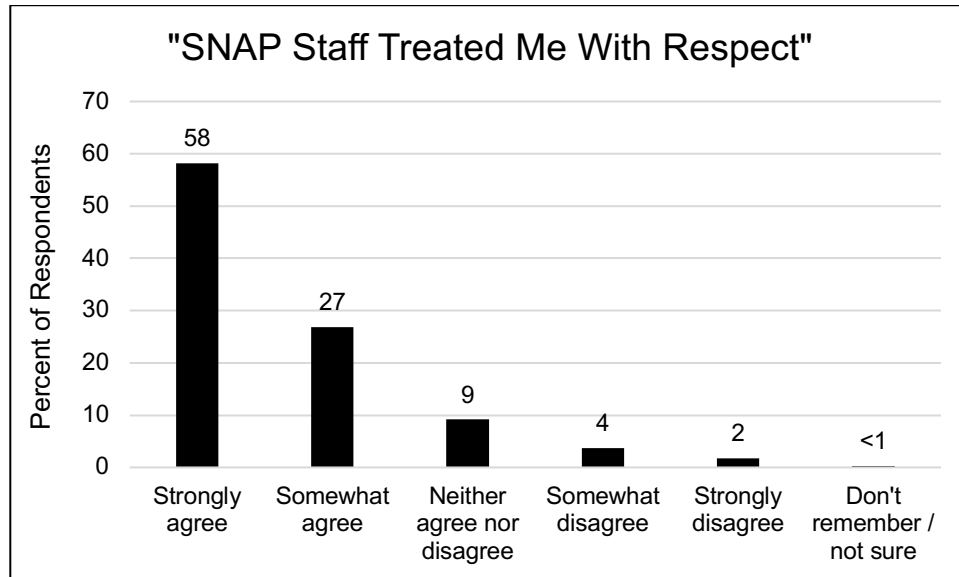
I estimated an OLS regression predicting levels of stress reported by individuals and whether they reported relying on those application assistance sources. I find three application assistance sources that had a statistically significant relationship with stress. Individuals who reported relying on help from family and friends, as well as food banks, tended to report higher levels of application stress. By comparison, individuals who reported relying on legal aid groups reported lower levels of application stress. We cannot know from this data whether the application assistance itself is driving changes to stress levels or whether individuals with higher or lower levels of stress seek out particular forms of application assistance. However, this analysis does help us pinpoint where individuals might be experiencing greater psychological burden in the application process and to target application assistance and support accordingly.

In addition to stress, I considered *stigma*, or what others have described as “a social construct that can result in social rejection, devaluation, and discrimination based on a given attribute, identity, or behavior.”⁶ I focus on the stigma that SNAP applicants might experience in their interactions with program staff, using the following item: “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or food stamps, staff treated me with respect when I was applying for benefits.”” As Figure 3 shows, the vast majority of applicants reported high levels of respect (and therefore low stigma) in their interactions with program staff. Over half (58%) of applicants strongly agreed with the statement and another 27% somewhat agreed, totaling 85% of all applicants. Only 2% of applicants strongly disagreed and only 4% somewhat disagreed.

⁵ These questions were asked of individuals’ most recent application experience.

⁶ Cited in Jessica Lasky-Fink and Elizabeth Linos. 2023. “Improving Delivery of the Social Safety Net: The Role of Stigma.” *Journal of Public Administration and Theory*.

Figure 3: Respondent Reports of Respect in SNAP Application Experience

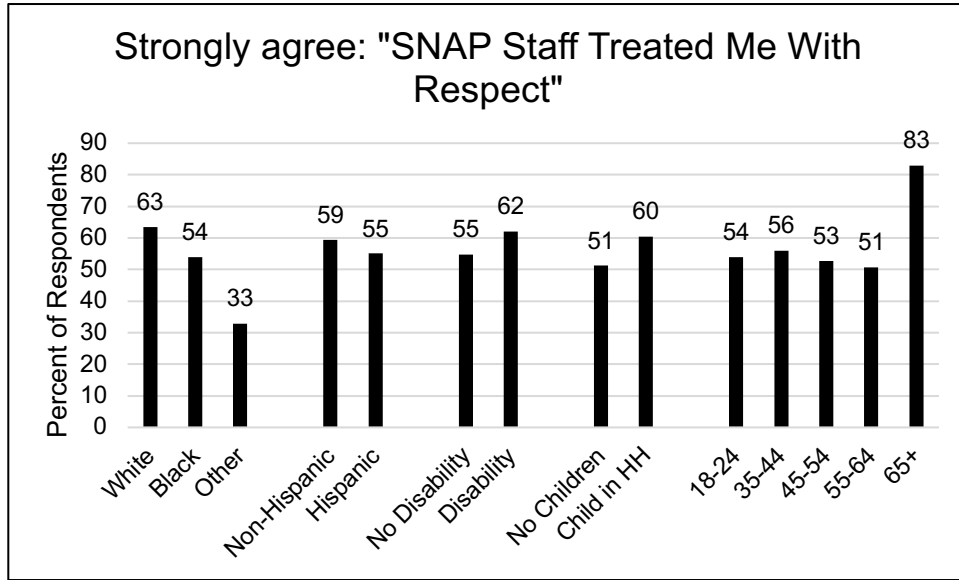


Notes: 2024 SNAP Application Experiences Survey. Survey weights applied. Question text: “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or food stamps, staff treated me with respect when I was applying for benefits.”

Nevertheless, as with the stress item, there were important differences across SNAP applicants in the respect they reporting receiving from program staff, shown in Figure 4. The largest differences were along race and age. Compared to white applicants, non-white applicants—and especially Asian Americans and American Indians—were far less likely to say that they had been treated with respect by program staff. 63% of white applicants strongly agreed, compared to 54% of Black applicants, and 36% of Asian American or Pacific Islander applicants (and 33% pooling together with American Indian / Native American or other races). Hispanic applicants were slightly less likely to say that they had been treated with respect than non-Hispanic applicants, but the differences were not large compared to those by race.

In contrast to the stress results reported earlier, individuals reporting disabilities were more likely to say that they had been treated with respect than individuals who did not report disabilities. Similarly, parents reported higher levels of stress in the application process, but also higher levels of respect from program staff. Last, I found that older Americans were the group most likely to say that they had been treated with respect in the application process.

Figure 4: Differences in Strongly Agreeing with Respect in SNAP Application Experience, by Demographic Group



Notes: 2024 SNAP Application Experiences Survey. Survey weights applied. Question text: “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or food stamps, staff treated me with respect when I was applying for benefits.”

Learning Costs in the SNAP Application Process and their Disparate Impacts

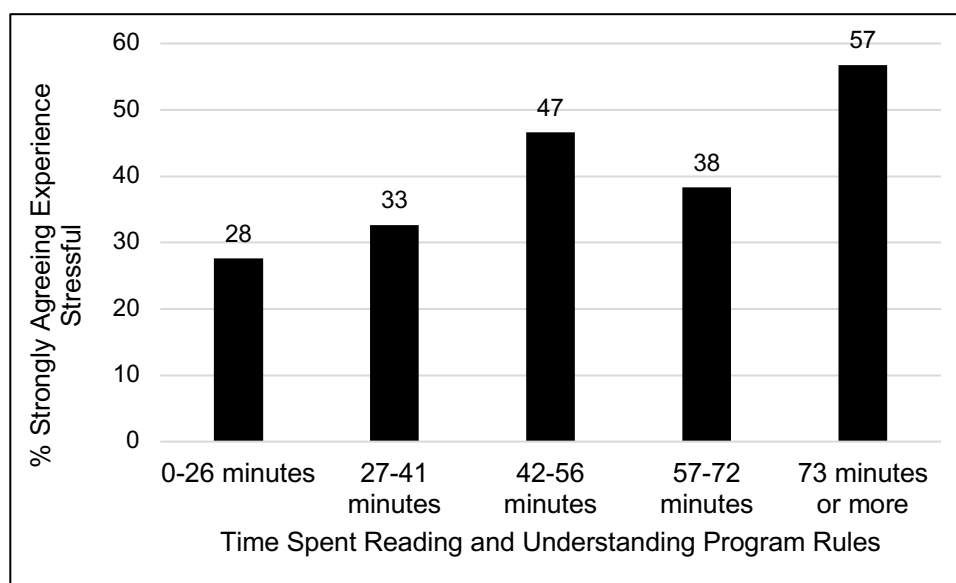
OMB’s 2022 guidance to federal agencies on addressing administrative burdens calls on agencies to better estimate individuals’ “beginning-to-end experience” with paperwork, including the time spent learning about program rules in addition to the time spent completing forms. Agencies have not typically included such expansive definitions of time costs in information collection requests to date, and so one objective of the survey was to understand one form of these time costs for SNAP applicants. The survey included a question with the following prompt: *“We’re interested in how long it took you to complete and submit your application for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, or food stamps. Use the slider below to indicate about how long it took for you to do the following things, even if it is just your best guess.”* One of the items was “reading about the program and understanding rules”—which captures part of the concept of learning costs. For this item, I restricted analysis to the 572 respondents who reported having applied for SNAP in the past year to ensure that respondents were estimating time costs as accurately as possible.

On average, respondents reported that they spent 46 minutes reading about the program and understanding its rules. But this time estimate differed across demographic groups. Black respondents and respondents with children both reported spending more time on learning costs, with Black respondents reporting an average of 53 minutes (a 23% difference as compared to

white respondents) and parents reporting an average of 49 minutes (a 26% difference as compared to non-parents).⁷

Looking at the intersection between time spent on learning costs and stress, I find that there is no relationship in the aggregate. Individuals who reported more time spent learning program rules were not more likely to report stressful experiences, on average. But this relationship was significantly different for Black individuals and individuals with disabilities. For both of these populations, greater time spent on learning costs was related to higher levels of stress, as I show in Figure 5 for Black respondents. Among Black applicants who spent less than 27 minutes reading and learning program rules, only 28% strongly agreed the SNAP application experience was stressful. By comparison, nearly sixty percent of Black applicants who reported spending 73 minutes or more on the application strongly agreed that the experience was stressful. This suggests one important way that the effects of SNAP learning costs may be different for different demographic groups.

Figure 5: Learning Costs and Stress, Black SNAP Applicants



Notes: 2024 SNAP Application Experiences Survey. Survey weights applied. The figure shows the relationship between how long in minutes individuals reported spending reading and understanding program rules and the percentage of individuals reporting that they strongly agreed that the application experience was stressful, subsetting to Black respondents. The five categories of time correspond to quintiles (each representing 20% of the overall sample).

Narrative Responses on the SNAP Application Experience from Interviewees

The survey gave respondents the opportunity to provide narrative feedback on their application experience, with the explanation that their responses would be shared with the federal government. 531 respondents provided narrative feedback in response to this prompt.

⁷ This difference continued to persist even when I accounted for other demographic characteristics in an OLS regression.

Recognizing that the federal government has made hearing from individuals with lived experiences a priority, including in regulatory and paperwork processes⁸, I summarize the following excerpts of narratives that individuals provided about their application experiences. I provide complete comments in Appendix 2.

Responses generally fell into three broad categories: addressing the design of SNAP application materials; requirements for documentation and additional records or materials; and interactions with program staff. For each category, I offer several representative responses verbatim from the survey. These narratives include specific recommendations—for instance, making applications mobile-friendly or reducing wait times for phone interviews—as well as more general recommendations, such as overall form simplification, especially to ease applications for older individuals. These narratives also often included general reactions to the application experience.

Application and program material design:

- “The benefits website needs to be mobile friendly, provide more clearer information and layout”
- “I actually needed someone to help me fill the form, I wish it could be in different languages as well.”
- “I think making the forms more simpler would make applying faster and more easier.”
- “The SNAP application took a while to fill out. Some of the qualifications were vague as my husband is now 60 and it was unclear whether he could qualify due to me only receiving 65% of my pay as so much is taken out for (mandatory) retirement as I'm on a state plan and Health Insurance. It took a while to read up on it and was still hard to understand.”
- “The forms are repetitive and somewhat confusing. I was lucky that i was able to do it over the phone, since i don't have a car, and the person was able to help me understand what they were asking. I have confusion issues and the questions are not asked in a simple way, but are sort of like lawyer questions that you have to read over and over to make sure you get it.”
- “Forms should be simplified for the sake of older adults.
- “The application forms are very intimidating to look at but boil down to simple when you read through the questions. If I hadn't really needed the benefit, I would have given up. And it's not a literacy issue. It's confusing to see which questions apply to me and which ones don't.”

Documentation requirements and additional materials or records:

- “I had a hard time proving my eligibility, government should make it less tedious, and reduce the needed documents and verification.”

⁸ Office of Management and Budget Memorandum on Broadening Public Participation and Community Engagement in the Regulatory Process: July 19, 2023. See also Executive Order Further Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through The Federal Government (E.O. 14091, February 16, 2023).

- “It took me approximately 15 minutes to complete the application. I would say it took me 6 or 7 minutes to compile the necessary records and read and understand program rules. The obstacle that I faced to applying for SNAP benefits was having to get a letter stating that I was unable to work because of my age and having no dependents. I am 50 years old and very ill and in the process of applying for disability.”
- “The documents asked is too much”
- “The government should make documentation easy, I went through hell having to prove my eligibility.”
- “The website was frustrating at first but I got very used to it with time, the requirements for application should be clearly stated at the beginning or on the website home page”
- “The ... state application process needs to be streamlined and clarified. Additionally the are just about 1 step short of requiring a DNA sample in their online documentation requirements, which is a tad extreme, but thankfully the local workers are much better at the process.”
- “It would be easier if you wouldn't have to provide documents instead they can look it up by social security number or case number”

Communicating or working with program staff:

- “It took over 4 hours on hold until I was able to speak to an agent”
- “I think some of the staff aren't so knowledgeable because it took them a considerably large amount of time to sort out my things for be and get me properly documented.”
- “Overall my experience with applying for snap benefits was Good the only bad barrier that I had with applying was no way to reach or contact customer help. Or someone to help with questions about the applications or problems that I had.”
- “It wasn't easy reaching the snap agency on phone as I had to wait a while before being answered”
- “Long application process which I understand but the snap workers were really condescending.”
- “Very hard trying to contact someone for phone interview or about your case period when it comes down to getting in contact with the phone number”
- “The staffs should be available to answer questions throughout the day.”
- “The staffs are very helpful and nice even though I went through hard times.”
- “I didn't have any challenges while filling the application, the staffs were kind enough to help me out.”
- “The reapply is getting more difficult to do. The system is down or the phone connection is terrible and gets dropped.”
- “They need to do better at getting ahold of the workers your supposed to talk to”

I also examined the most frequent words and clusters of words reported by respondents in their narratives, which I summarize in Table 1.⁹ Note that I examine word stems, which are the base forms of words (for example, the stem of running, runner, and ran is run). Table 1 indicates that

⁹ Note that I remove numbers, punctuation, and stop words and transform text into lower case and word stems. I also remove words referring to SNAP applications generally (i.e., SNAP, nutrition assistance, application, program, benefit, process, and food).

individuals tended to focus their comments on how long it took them to understand necessary documents, fill out forms, and interact with program staff. Individuals also reported confusion and barriers associated with learning about eligible food items.

Together, this text analysis helps to illuminate additional sources of administrative burden, such as the costs associated with trying to use SNAP benefits¹⁰, as well as underscoring the sources of administrative burden associated with completing forms, assembling necessary documentation, and communicating with government staff (and receiving timely response).

Table 1: Most Common Words and Phrases Reported by Respondents About SNAP Application Experience

Most common word stems	Most common two-word phrases of word stems
form	understand rule
document	took minut
took	fill form
time	local office
staff	ask info
understand	buy elig
easi	card use
fill	elig individu
need	elig item
assist	ensur access
elig	expens household
rule	famili online
long	household size
difficult	income expans
minutes	inform income

Notes: 2024 SNAP Application Experiences Survey. Most common word stems and two-word phrases of word stems listed above. Note that I remove numbers, punctuation, and stop words and transform text into lower case and word stems. I also remove words referring to SNAP applications generally (i.e., SNAP, nutrition assistance, application, program, benefit, process, and food).

Recommendations for USDA and OMB

Below, I summarize several recommendations from this research for USDA and OMB in considering revisions to SNAP application materials, as well as the broader burden reaction initiative that OMB is leading across the federal government.

- **Encourage states to adopt further simplifications to application materials, including simplifying or eliminating burdensome documentation requirements and improving application design (including website design).** Survey respondents consistently noted the

¹⁰ See especially Carolyn Y. Barnes. 2020. ““It Takes a While to Get Used to”: The Costs of Redeeming Public Benefits.” *Journal of Public Administrative Research and Theory* 31(2): 295-310.

need for further simplification of application materials and pointed to documentation requirements in particular as generating a significant source of administrative burden. USDA and OMB should work with state SNAP agencies to promote more streamlined application materials, including introducing mobile-friendly applications, encouraging greater use of categorical or adjunctive eligibility to reduce documentation requirements, eliminating unnecessary documentation records, and ensuring the availability of translated materials and culturally- and linguistically-sensitive application assistance.

- **Help states expand applicant communication options and reduce wait times.** Survey respondents also consistently noted the challenges they have faced communicating with SNAP program offices, both over the phone and in person. One of the strongest predictors of psychological stress in the application process involved challenges with in-person communications. Additionally, in the narrative response applicants consistently mentioned long phone waits as an important barrier. USDA and OMB should work with state SNAP agencies to ensure that applicants have more options for communicating with program staff and that applicants receive information as promptly as possible.
- **Ensure that communities that experience higher levels of administrative burden have access to appropriate application assistance and interventions.** The survey revealed important differences across demographic groups in administrative burdens, including for psychological burdens related to stress. I identified that Black and Hispanic applicants, applicants with disabilities, and applicants with children were all substantially more likely to report higher levels of stress in the application process than were other applicants, even net of other demographic characteristics. This suggests that USDA, working together with state SNAP agencies, should target application assistance to these communities. In addition, the survey results indicated that individuals applying to SNAP at food banks tended to be experiencing higher levels of stress than other applicants, and so USDA should ensure that food banks are equipped to support applicants requesting their assistance.
- **Develop and incorporate better measures of psychological burden and beginning-to-end time costs.** This survey has suggested several ways that USDA and OMB could be assessing psychological burden, and especially stress and stigma. The federal government should support additional research on psychological burdens that could help inform further application simplification and service delivery improvements, testing this survey's measures and other approaches. In addition, USDA and OMB should consider steps to more accurately estimate the full beginning-to-end time costs of applying and recertifying for SNAP benefits, including using survey-based measures like those described in this comment as well as other approaches (such as user testing or participant observation). USDA and OMB should pay particular attention to the ways that burdens may vary across different populations, as the example of time costs and stress illustrated for Black SNAP applicants and SNAP applicants with disabilities. New measures of burden and time costs should be designed in ways sensitive to these differential impacts.
- **Engage and incorporate the lived experiences of SNAP applicants.** Ongoing federal initiatives related to burden reduction and customer experience emphasize the need for more direct engagement with individuals with lived experience with the programs the government

administers. This survey has illustrated one way that USDA and OMB can draw from such experiences in a systematic manner, by conducting interviews with a large sample of public benefit applicants. USDA and OMB should explore more approaches to engage SNAP applicants to inform program improvements and build greater trust with communities of applicants and beneficiaries. But such outreach needs to be mindful of the burden engagement can pose to underserved communities, and needs to be conducted in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. USDA and OMB should consider strategies such as surveys, interviews, and partnerships with community-based organizations and networks of organizational affiliates that could provide sustainable platforms for such two-way, durable engagement.

Appendix 1: 2024 SNAP Application Experiences Survey Methodology

From January 1st through January 4th, 2024, I fielded an online survey of adult, English-speaking Americans reporting experience applying for or receiving SNAP benefits. I did so by recruiting survey respondents on Meta (i.e., Instagram, Facebook, Messenger, Reels, and affiliated Facebook advertisements on other sites), asking for individuals who had experience with SNAP. Meta-based recruitment has been used successfully in prior research, including to micro-target beneficiaries of social programs for academic research surveys.¹¹ I used Meta Pixel to target conversions for survey completion, so that the Meta algorithm would learn to target my advertisements to Meta users who were most likely to be eligible to complete the survey.

The survey was approximately 10 minutes in length, and asked respondents about their application experiences with SNAP, including barriers and challenges they experienced and how the application experience made them feel. The survey was fielded in English. 1,429 respondents completed the survey. I compensated individuals \$5 in online gift cards for their participation in the study. The Columbia University Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved this survey under Protocol IRB-AAAV0218.

I recruited survey respondents who matched demographic quotas for individuals who had received SNAP in the past 13 years using targets from the Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement on age, education, race, ethnicity, and employment status. Although the final sample closely matched these targets by design, I developed and applied raked survey weights to further ensure that the sample matched CPS targets on age, education, race, ethnicity, employment status, and geographic region.

While not a probability sample, this sample represents a diverse cross-section of individuals with SNAP application experiences who closely match the demographic characteristics of recent SNAP recipients. The table below shows how my sample (weighted and unweighted) compares to the demographic targets in CPS data (using data from 2010-2023 pooled together).

Characteristic	CPS Targets (%)	Survey, Unweighted (%)	Survey, Weighted (%)
<i>Age</i>			
18-44	56.4	71.11	56.4
45-64	29.8	21.98	29.8
65+	13.8	6.9	13.8
<i>Education</i>			
Less than HS	27.3	29.16	27.3
HS	38.6	33.11	38.6
Some college or vocational	25.6	28.95	25.6
BA or more	8.5	8.78	8.5

¹¹ See e.g. Daniel Schneider and Kristen Harknett. 2019. "Consequences of Routine Work-Schedule Instability for Worker Health and Well-Being." *American Sociological Review* 84:82-114.

<i>Race</i>				
	White	65.4	63.14	65.4
	Black	25.6	27.01	25.6
	Other	9	9.85	9
<i>Ethnicity</i>				
	Not Hispanic	75	72.99	75
	Hispanic	25	27.01	25
<i>Employment Status</i>				
	At work	39	40.95	39
	Unemployed	8.8	13	8.8
	Not in labor force	39.8	38.81	39.8
	Retired	12.4	7.24	12.4
<i>Census Division</i>				
	East North Central	15.4	10.05	15.4
	East South Central	7.2	4.36	7.2
	Middle Atlantic	12.8	18.3	12.8
	Mountain	6.7	10.79	6.7
	New England	3.9	4.16	3.9
	Pacific	15	18.9	15
	South Atlantic	20	19.84	20
	West North Central	5.4	4.42	5.4
	West South Central	13.6	9.18	13.6

Appendix 2:

Below, I append the full responses from the survey about SNAP application experiences, removing duplicate or non-responsive comments.

Applying for SNAP benefits is difficult and extremely time consuming. Wait times to speak to anyone can range from 30 mins to 3 hours. Getting the required documentation ready is challenging when being told to get items to be told later it wasn't enough or the right item. Going into offices is challenging because the wait times there are long as well. Even getting to the offices was a challenge because of transportation and disabilities. Once speaking with someone one could get a worker that is rude and condescending towards you for needing the assistance. The requirements are difficult and usually makes it so that after spending the hours doing the paperwork and interviews either get denied or receive a minimal amount.

Applying for the SNAP benefits was very good. The staff agencies helps in answering most of the questions And it me about 35mins to understand the rules

Because I am disabled I go onto the website to upload all of the nessas8documents for my snap applications. The format for that site is so not easy to use. Its takes an incredible amount of time to upload and confirm the documents are there. While doing the interview itself by phone , it takes forever to reach them and when you do , it's a coin flip as to whether you will be reaching someone ple8to work with or a completely rude person who seems to hate thier job and would rather not be speaking with you. This makes it very uncomfortable and difficult to inquire about the topics that you need clarity on.

Blacks feel like second class citizens

Compilation of documents took longer than required and the time to get the SNAP also took longer

Documentation should be made more easier

Documenting assets made the whole application stressful

Ensuring that the guidelines and instructions are well understood by applicants would make applying faster and easier.

Few important documents should be the only information needed to proceed with the whole process.

forms are too long for the amount of money you get. Single people with no children get no respect.

Had troubles understanding the program rules

Having to sign in on a computer just to turn in a paper when you are the only one in the building.

I am not technology savvy

I couldn't go to a SNAP office when facing difficulty

I didn't have any challenges while filling the application, the staffs were kind enough to help me out

I didn't think I'd qualify for SNAP

I feel like the government and those working for SNAP make it difficult for people to fill out the application in hopes of discouraging them from continuing on with the application.

I feel the application process should be made somewhat shorter and easier for applicants.

I had a hard time proving my eligibility, government should make it less tedious, and reduce the needed documents and verification.

I had difficulty with contacting my caseworker and had to send my documents several times. I was told each time that they didn't receive the documents. I requested a hearing with a judge and was informed by the judge that even though the caseworker denied receiving the documents the judge's office had received the docs at least three times.

I had trouble calculating my utility expenses.

I had trouble documenting my assets.

I had trouble finding application material.

I have been receiving food stamps for a long time now and I thank God that I do. My application was processed quickly many years ago, now they just send me a recertification form and I fill it in and put it in the mail

I think it should be easier to contact agency staffs over the phone

I think some of the staff aren't so knowledgeable because it took them a considerably large amount of time to sort out my things for me and get me properly documented.

I think the government should make documentation easy, as I have a lot of trouble compiling document and it wasted much time getting the required documents.

I was able to complete the form with ease but it took me sometime for me to access the stamps, so I want to be easier for us to access the food stamps

I was waiting for the decisions on the benefits and it was tiring

I wasn't very familiar with the required documentation, thus, makes it challenging.

Increase SNAP for disabled and make your offices accessible to disabled and staff sensitive

It is difficult to get someone on the phone to answer questions about SNAP.

It is not easy getting in touch with the agent over the phone

It take me 50 minute to understand the rules of the program and the staff respond when I have issues applying for the program is awesome I get my help very fast

It takes over 30 minutes to read through the rules and regulations and I wanted to make sure I wasn't missing something while completing the application. I feel that most people will just sign without reading because it's too much to read not everyone understands it.

It took 60 minutes to understand the rules of SNAP but the staffs were helpful

It took about 35 minutes to understand the rules and it's very difficult to fill out the form but the staffs are helpful.

It took approximately 2 hours to get all documents and form completed filled which to me I find annoying

It took me 100 minutes to compile necessary documents

it took me 30 minutes to read and fill the form

It took me 40 minutes to understand the rules but it's way too difficult

It took me 66 minutes to read about and understand SNAP rules.

It took me 70 minutes to read and understand SNAP rules

It took me a long time.,and to compile the necessary documents

It took me about 20 minutes to read about and understand SNAP rules.

It took me about 50 minutes to read and understand the rules, it's was so complex, thus, I had hard time filling the application form but the staffs were able to help.

It took me about 55 minutes to understand the rules but it was so difficult to fill the application form

It took me almost half an hour to go through, read and understand the SNAP rules

It took me approximately 15 minutes to complete the application. I would say it took me 6 or 7 minutes to compile the necessary records and read and understand program rules. The obstacle that I faced to applying for SNAP benefits was having to get a letter stating that I was unable to work because of my age and having no dependents. I am 50 years old and very ill and in the process of applying for disability.

It took me approximately 45mins to understand the rules and regulations of the SNAP

It took me less than an hour to complete the entire SNAP process

It took me like 45 minutes to compile the necessary records.

It took me long to get approved for the program

It took me over 50 minutes to read and arrange the necessary documents for my application.

It took me over 50 minutes to understand the rules and I also have trouble while filling out the application form

It took you 100 minutes to read about and understand SNAP rules.

It was a bit complicated filling the application form

It was complicated and not easy to get a reply

It was complicated filling the forms

It was easy for me to apply

It was great but had a lot of processing to make it done

It was pretty easy to apply

It was quite rigorous I had to wait for periods of time and I was almost giving up. But I think they're doing the best with what they have to work with.

It wasn't easy filling the application forms

It wasn't easy getting in touch with the agent in charge

It wasn't easy reaching the snap agency on phone as I had to wait a while before being answered

It's too cumbersome in getting the SNAP documentation and proper adherence to its policies

It's too much, you need c, y and z and then you have to prove a,b,d

It took me a long process to get approved

Long application process which I understand but the snap workers were really condescending

Luckily a lady at the hospital helped me otherwise I would have given up. I constantly am not sure on how to answer questions. I'm college educated so if I have issues I can only imagine elderly and others. I always feel like I'm being treated like I'm an idiot when I call and finally get through. Every step forward I take is 10 steps back. The whole system is messed up.

Make the process easy to fast for one to get the benefits timely.

Make the process quicker and friendlier

Making application process shorter and simpler would aid faster application.

Making the application process shorter and less complicated would make applying easier.

Maybe less but important documents should be the only necessary information needed to facilitate the whole process.

My experience at first was quite uneventful, The government should make documentation easy, I went through hell having to prove my eligibility.

My one major complaint is the current method of informing SNAP about sudden or any kind of change in income is a little archaic and frustrating. I would ask for a more streamlined method in the future. The current phone application is utterly abysmal to

download and use. Also every so often some of the telephone staff can be a mite harsh and unempathetic to one's plight. I suspect it being due to trained detachment and possible overwork and heavy caseloads. I advocate for all the staff to be treated better and offered more empathy from their hire ups as well as random bonuses and acts of kindness, and not a BS pizza party. Something with actual heart. Kindness begets kindness and it cycles from employer to employee to consumer.

Obstacles I faced was being unable to qualify at first and it took me some time to have it rectified

Please try and make the instructions less and more comprehensive

SNAP Members should feel comfortable sharing their problems with the workers not feel that their opinions wouldn't matter

The application form is long and detailed, so it is difficult to understand.

The application form should be straightforward and simple

The application form was difficult but the staffs were helpful

The application is easy. I think the low amount quified for according to income isnt right. Food pantries are my main source of food now.

The application of SNAP is too stressful and makes the process tiring

The application process is very difficult and stressful

The application process wasn't so difficult but the waiting period and trying to contact personnel to ask questions was ridiculous...sometimes it took days after holding for more than 3 hours.

The benefits are too slow. And the SNAP form is complicated.

The benefits website needs to be mobile friendly, provide more clearer information and layout

The documenting part should be simplified

The experience was great as I received SNAP after proving my eligibility

The form was a bit complicated to fill

The forms are repetitive and somewhat confusing. I was lucky that i was able to do it over the phone, since i don't have a car, and the person was able to help me understand what they were asking. I have confusion issues and the questions are not asked in a simple way, but are sort of like lawyer questions that you have to read over and over to make sure you get it.

the government should make the application more easier

The issue in the aspect of documentation of records

The process is not too long but I feel it can be faster than the actual time it takes me.

The process of applying took me approximately 80 minutes. 30 minutes compiling the records needed, 20 reading the rules, and the rest in an interview.

The process was a bit long, but it worth it. Thanks to the staff who helped out

The program rules were long and complicated and I couldn't quite understand them making the application process long.

The reapply is getting more difficult to do. The system is down or the phone connection is terrible and gets dropped.

The rules and terms for application should be easy to understand and the required documents should be reduced.

The SNAP application took a while to fill out. Some of the qualifications were vague as my husband is now 60 and it was unclear whether he could qualify due to me only receiving 65% of my pay as so much is taken out for (mandatory) retirement as I'm on a state plan and Health Insurance. It took a while to read up on it and was still hard to understand.

The staffs should be available to answer questions throughout the day.

The website was frustrating at first but I got very used to it with time, the requirements for application should be clearly stated at the beginning or on the website home page

There was a long wait time to receive benefits after applying, which makes the process frustrating and challenging.

There's a little bit of hard times during the processes but the staffs are very helpful

There's difficulty in filling out the application form and i feel there should be need for more assistance from the staff.

They need to do better at getting ahold of the workers your supposed to talk to

They need to make more time for a person to turn in check stubs

took me 61 minutes to read about and understand SNAP rules.

took me 73 minutes to read about and understand SNAP rules.

Took me 84 minutes to understand everything about SNAP rules

Trying to contact the staff in person wasn't easy, getting all documents . It took me a long while to complete the application and understand the rules

Well the only thing here is that the whole process is kinda lengthy but not difficult to be honest

When I was on temporary disability for a surgery I got all of my benefits at once from EDD and i was told that that one lump sum messed up my food stamps and i got kicked off the program later i got a call that was a mistake (because that was obviously a lump sum for Three months not what I actually made every month) i was put back on for a month and got

kicked off again the following month now I'm on again but I'm only receiving the minimum allowed \$□□□

While I managed to find something that eventually qualified as work, the requirement to work is hard. I have long COVID, on top of diabetes and hypertension. The local DFACS office have told me that to be considered disabled, I had to get Social Security to declare me disabled. The process is lengthy to be declared disabled, or long term ill. So, I do online filing and studies through task sharing apps.

At least here in Arizona they have made the process pretty easy. Especially for seniors. We only need to reapply every 3 years.

Benefits should be made available as soon as possible

Everyone should get them the first of the month the last name issuing them process doesn't work for everyone.

Forms should be simplified for the sake of older adults.

Guidance and clarity including clear instructions and guidelines for applicants throughout the forms.

Had difficulty in uploading the required documents but the staffs were helpful.

Helps me stay healthy

I actually needed someone to help me fill the form, I wish it could be in different languages as well.

I believe the forms should be well explained by staff to the citizens applying to know what it entails.

I don't know how to ask for help

I found it quite difficult documenting my utility bills

I had issues submitting required documents as the rules weren't clear to me

I had problems submitting my compiled snap documents for eligibility, one way or the other , they keep turning me down

I had yo wait for the decision regarding my eligibility and it was stressful

I have had a good experience

i have positive experience, my opinion, they should consider well balanced diet.

I love the SNAP program

I think benefits should be issued on the first of every month not in the middle of the month. The end of the month is very hard for some of us that run out of food and having to wait till the middle of the month is not good when you have children to feed.

I think making the application process shorter and simpler would make applying faster and less stressful.

I think making the application process shorter and simpler would make it less stressful applying.

I think making the forms more simpler would make applying faster and more easier.

I think that they don't give e the right amount to people that really need them

I think the government should improve their documentation

I think they can be better by being readily available

I wasn't well educated so I had a hard time filling in

I will like to appreciate the SNAP for giving back to the community and helping us out

I would love to suggest that there could be more resources and support available to applicants, such as in-person assistance and online resources.

I'm in Sacramento, it can take days to get ahold of snap over the phone, I had my ebt skimmed and it took 2 months to replace what was stolen from me, the staff just doesn't seem to care at all.,any cola raise I receive they cut the same amount of ebt so I never see an increase in income, it's sad that I need the small amount I get.

If it was not for food stamp I don't know what I would do

In order for caseworkers for snap to do their jobs effectively, please alleviate their caseload

It been a little bit stressful

It took me 90 minutes to prepare and compile my documents

It took me a lot of time to prepare the materials

It took me long before getting approved

It took over 4 hours on hold until I was able to speak to an agent

It was a bit hard to fill the application form and difficult to submit as well

It was a great experience with the staffs welcoming and warm

It was really disappointing and stressful, I thought it was supposed to be made easy for all but it was really hard and the customer service didn't help much

It wasn't difficult it just took some time

It would be easier if you wouldn't have to provide documents instead they can look it up by social security number or case number

It's next to impossible to get anyone on the phone and you need an appointment for in person

It's very complex and difficult to use and it took so long to fill the application form but the staffs helps.

Its a great program

Make application easier

Make eligibility more easier and not much documentation

Make the application process easier and accessible

Making the application process easier and shorter would make applying easy.

Making the application process shorter and less complicated would make applying faster and easier.

Making the forms simpler and easy to understand would make applying fast and easier.

Making the snap application forms simpler and shorter would make applying faster and easier.

My application process was hectic because I had delay with the application process and also I do get my benefits late.

My experience was a bit stressful and I feel workers could have been more helpful

My feed back is about recertifications. They send you a letter in the mail which you can fill out and mail back, drop off, or you can do it online. It asks if anything changes. To me if state nothing has changed then you should be set to receive your benefits. Instead they say you're missing a document and when the document is dropped off they claim not to have received it and close you case. Calling to get things straightened out is a mess. You're on hold for the duration of the time they are open and still don't receive help. Finally when you get someone on the phone sometimes after a couple days they say you have to re apply and they prorrate your benefits when if fact you submitted everything from the beginning.

My local office seems to know absolutely nothing in regards to service dogs and special needs trust funds. They have told me that all special needs trust funds have to be created via the ARC of Indiana. Not a factual statement

Overall my experience with applying for snap benefits was Good the only bad barrier that I had with applying was no way to reach or contact customer help. Or someone to help with questions about the applications or problems that I had.

Proving eligibility for SNAP is too difficult a task

SNAP application forms can be complex and may require the applicants to provide detailed personal information,snap help fail to provide healthy diet.

SNAP forms are take a long time to fill and application is hard

SNAP forms are too demanding

Snap need better ways of make application process easier especially for persons with disabilities and unemployed people

The application form is very difficult

The application forms are very intimidating to look at but boil down to simple when you read through the questions. If I hadn't really needed the benefit, I would have given up. And it's not a literacy issue. It's confusing to see which questions apply to me and which ones don't.

The application process was not that hard and the staffs were helpful.

The application was easy to fill out. It was the processing and wait time that took forever. Took them right at 28 days to process. They decreased our FS by 21, which is difficult when food prices are so damn high now. Geez can't eat healthy anymore at all

The documents asked is too much

The entire process of SNAP was stressful and really bad, which made the program bad with a bad image

The form is not well explained

The form was a bit too complicated to fill

The form was simple to fill because I have the necessary documents

The forms are usually filled out when I have to recert, that makes it easier just have to verify the information and electronically sign and its done, pretty easy

The forms don't give you many options, like if someone in your household doesn't want the benefits, you can't delete them from it unless they move out. You shouldn't have to participate just because you live with someone who needs it, especially if they don't work.

The forms had so many questions that made me nearly stopped applying

The forms should really be simplified and shortened. Some people when they see a lengthy application get anxious. Maybe more clear language would help too.

The forms were easy to read and fill and the whole process of filling it was easy

The government should make it easier to submit documents.

The income limits to be able to receive benefits needs to be higher and need to get people in the office who handles cases to return phone calls and be a little more nice to people and stop treating people like they are taking benefits out of their own pockets.

The information on the forms needs to be explained well by a staff.

The PA state application process needs to be streamlined and clarified. Additionally the are just about 1 step short of requiring a DNA sample in their online documentation requirements, which is a tad extreme, but thankfully the local workers are much better at the process.

The process for applying should be made more simple.

The process is too hard and takes too long to get assistance -- You make it hard for people to get the help they need

The process of the SNAP benefits is actually a very good one and it helps develop the and brings the community together

The process was a bit long

The program is wonderful but the time take to understand the rule about the program it bit long

The SNAP application forms are a frustrating and discouraging experience. The process is convoluted, with numerous confusing questions and requirements. It feels like an endless maze of bureaucracy designed to deter and frustrate applicants. The lack of clear instructions and guidance only adds to the frustration. It is disheartening to see such a crucial program for assistance be hindered by such a cumbersome application process.

The SNAP staffs were unwilling to answer my questions but I could understand them eventually.

The staffs are so helpful and kind

The time I took in compiling my information and filling my form correctly was lengthy.

They should improve on their IT, as I find it difficult signup online and getting them on the phone

They should make documentation easy and less stressful, as I find it difficult getting an utility documents.

To clearly communicate the documentation required to support the application and provide guidance on how to submit documents.

Vermont SNAP benefits are now making it harder to track stipend payments even with little income that I don't know of because most stipends are on temporary part-time work and they want to keep track of everything I do to the point that it's very hard to navigate and challenging to keep track of everything to keep SNAP benefits going for myself as a person of color with disability Vermont makes it even more harder to achieve SNAP benefits to his updated SNAP benefits policies

Very difficult to fill out the application forms

Very hard trying to contact someone for phone interview or about your case period when it comes down to getting in contact with the phone number

We're failing individuals who struggled with food insecurity. The process of documentation is extremely extensive and results in individuals investing their time more wisely by generating more income versus spending their efforts stressing over paperwork to MAYBE be eligible for assistance. It's goofy.

When I had a problem and needed to speak with someone I literally sat on hold over 8 hrs one day and like 5 or 6 hours the next day before speaking with anyone