2026

SNAP Payment Error Rate

Measuring Payment Accuracy, Not Fraud

What are payment errors?

A payment error is when an inaccurate monthly benefit is calculated for a SNAP household.

- Payment errors include both overpayments and underpayments.
- All overpayments are recoverable by the state and do not signify that taxpayer money is missing or lost.

Why do errors happen?

- SNAP has extensive systems for determining eligibility and verifying information using a comprehensive set of state and federal statutes and rules.
- To prevent fraud and determine eligibility correctly, states must verify and record all required information on the application by searching federal and state databases, documents submitted by the household, and collateral contacts like doctors and employers.
- Eligibility, income, and expenses are all verified at application and at recertifications, which are typically every 6-12 months.

What is the Payment Error Rate?

The Payment Error Rate (PER) measures the frequency of inaccurate SNAP benefit amounts. To calculate payment error rates, the sum of the over and under payments is divided by the total amount of benefits authorized. Under new federal SNAP changes, states with PER above 6% will pay for a portion of the SNAP benefits in their state.

- The national payment error rate is a federal performance measure. It is calculated by finding the average of the states' payment error rates, weighted by state caseload sizes.
- Each state's payment error rate, as determined by USDA, reflects the accuracy of SNAP benefit allotments issued by the state.
- The release of PERs each June limits preparation time for many states to estimate any benefit costs in the next budget cycle.

Under changes made by Congress, a state's share of benefit costs will be based on its PER

- Zero cost to state if PER is **<6%**
- 5% of benefit costs for an error rate of **6-8%**
- 10% of benefit costs for an error rate of **8-10%**
- 15% of benefit costs for an error rate **≥10%**

Payment Error Rates are typically posted in late June for the previous federal fiscal year

FY 2028	States may choose FY25 or FY26 PER; Exemption allowed based on FY25 or FY26 PER
FY 2029	Based on PER from FY26; Exemption allowed based on FY26 PER
FY 2030	Based on PER from FY27; No exemptions

States with a PER of or roughly 13.33% or higher in FY25 or FY26 are allowed to delay the shift.