

## Majority of Americans have received government aid

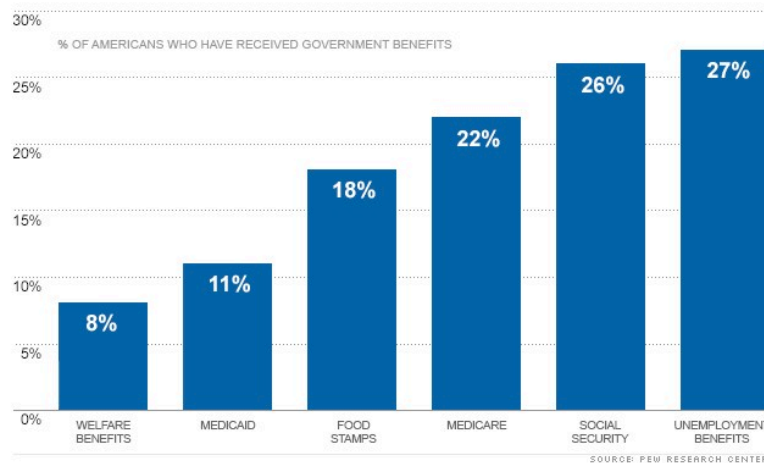


Figure 1. About 55% of Americans have received at least one of the following benefits: unemployment benefits, Social Security, Medicare, food stamps, Medicaid and welfare.

More than half of Americans have received benefits from government entitlement programs during their lifetimes, according to a Pew Research Center report released Tuesday.

The study found that 55% of Americans have been on at least one of the six largest government safety net programs: unemployment benefits, Social Security, Medicare, food stamps, Medicaid and welfare.

When factoring in veterans' benefits and federal college loans and grants as well, the number rises to 70% of Americans receiving government aid.

Unemployment benefits are the most popular assistance program. About 27% of Americans have received unemployment assistance at some point in their lifetimes.

Social Security is a close second, at 26% of Americans.

The study also looked at who is receiving benefits. About 60% of Democrats have benefited from a major entitlement program, while 52% of Republicans have.

Overall, Democrats were more likely to have received poverty or unemployment assistance, but when it comes to programs for the elderly, like Social Security and Medicare, both Democrats and Republicans are equally likely to have used those benefits.

Participation in government entitlement programs also varied across the income spectrum. Among adults earning \$30,000 a year or less, 70% said they had benefited from government aid at some point. And 39% of adults making at least \$100,000 a year have received some form of aid.

The Pew Research Center data comes from a survey of 2,500 adults, conducted by telephone about two weeks ago.