

WHAT IS SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly called Food Stamps, provides money for low-income families to buy groceries. Eligible families receive an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card that they can use to buy food. EBT cards are like a debit or credit card and are swiped by the cashier at check-out. Money is loaded onto the card each month.

AM I ELIGIBLE?

SNAP eligibility is determined by how much money you make. Find the income limits by household size [here](#). For example, a household of 4 must make less than \$710 per week, or \$2,839 per month. The SNAP application looks at both gross and net income. Gross income is how much money you make before you pay taxes and bills. Net income is calculated from your gross income by deducting things like your rent/mortgage, utility bills, telephone bill, and medical bills if you are a senior or disabled. There is also an asset limit to be eligible for SNAP. Households without an elderly or disabled member must have assets of \$2,250 or less, and households with an elderly or disabled member must have assets of \$3,500 or less.

HOW DO I APPLY?

To apply for SNAP you can fill out a paper application in person at your local SNAP office, or send it by mail, or you can apply online [here](#). Pick up a paper copy at your county SNAP office and mail it in later, or complete it there. Find your local SNAP office [here](#). **PANDEMIC Exception: Due to COVID-19, most SNAP offices are closed, so call for an appointment.** Get help filling out the SNAP application from an organization [here](#), or watch our SNAP application how-to video [here](#).

After you complete the SNAP application, a DHS caseworker will contact you by phone or mail to request certain documents to verify your application. These documents may include a copy of a birth certificate, proof of residence, proof of income (check stubs), bank statements, utility bills, and rent/mortgage agreements. After you submit these documents, you will complete an interview to finalize the application process. If you are eligible, a SNAP EBT card will be mailed to you.

WHAT IS A SNAP "HOUSEHOLD"?

SNAP considers a household to be a group of people who live in a home and pay for food together. You do not have to be related to be considered a part of the same household. Individuals who live with roommates and want to apply for SNAP can apply as a household of one, if they pay for their food separately. Certain seniors and individuals with disabilities may count as a household of one if they pay for their food separately, but live with a caretaker-relative who prepares their food.

IS THERE A TIME LIMIT FOR BENEFITS?

Seniors, individuals with a disability, and parents with children are not limited by how long they can receive SNAP, if they meet the other eligibility requirements. Adults ages 18-49 who do not have children and who are able to work (also known as able-bodied adults without dependents-- ABAWD) may be limited to three months of SNAP if they do not meet certain exemptions or are not actively working or participating in a work program. **PANDEMIC Exception: During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the SNAP three month time limit has been suspended for all applicants and participants.**

WHAT ABOUT MEDICAL COSTS?

If you are a senior (60+) or are disabled, you can deduct any medical costs over \$35 per month and medical bills from your income that you list on your SNAP application. This can help your SNAP eligibility or help increase the amount of money you get each month. The medical deduction can include insurance payments, doctor visit copayments, prescription and over-the-counter medication costs, and unpaid medical bills. See our [Medical Deduction Flyer](#) for the full list of deductible costs. **PANDEMIC Exception: If you qualify for SNAP without applying your medical deduction to your application, then you should save your medical deduction until after the COVID-19 automatic maximum benefit ends.**

CAN IMMIGRANTS APPLY?

Yes. Immigrants with lawful permanent resident (LPR) status may be eligible for SNAP, if they have been in the U.S. for over 5 years. Children of undocumented immigrants may receive SNAP benefits if they are citizens or LPRs (have a social security number). Children and individuals with a disability who have LPR status do not need to live in the U.S. for 5 years before receiving SNAP benefits. Applying for and receiving SNAP does not hurt a legal immigrant's chance of becoming a U.S. citizen.

WHEN WILL I GET BENEFITS?

For most applicants, the entire SNAP application process takes about 30 days. Certain people may qualify for expedited SNAP and can receive their SNAP card in 7 days. After you submit the paper or online application, a DHS caseworker will contact you within 10 days to request documents and schedule an interview (see "How do I Apply"). After you complete the interview and are determined eligible, your SNAP card will backdate to the date of your initial application. If you are eligible for SNAP, DHS has 30 days from the time you submit your application to decide if you are eligible for SNAP.

You might be able to get your SNAP card fast. This is called expedited SNAP. To qualify for expedited SNAP, you must have less than \$150 in the bank or cash, your monthly rent and housing costs must be higher than your monthly income, or you must be a migrant or seasonal worker with less than \$100. If you qualify for expedited benefits, you will receive your SNAP card within 7 days.

CAN COLLEGE STUDENTS APPLY?

Yes. If you are a college student, you may be eligible for SNAP under certain conditions. See our [SNAP for College Students Flyer](#) for more information. College students may be eligible for SNAP if they meet one of the following criteria: they participate in a federal work-study program, work 80+ hours per month, care for a child under age 6, are enrolled full-time while caring for a child under 12 as a single parent or have a documented physical or mental disability. In certain circumstances, work requirements can be waived. **PANDEMIC Exception: During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the SNAP work requirement has been suspended for college students.**

WHAT IF I'M HOMELESS?

You do not need a permanent address to get SNAP benefits. The SNAP application requires proof of identity, but if you do not have a photo ID then someone can give a written statement to verify your identity. A SNAP card can be sent to an address where you get mail (to a friend or family member). If you do not have a mailing address, DHS can send your SNAP card to an organization that accepts mail on your behalf (such as a shelter or food pantry), or you can pick it up from your local SNAP office.