



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Facts

What is SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, helps low-income people buy nutritious food. Although SNAP is a federal program, state agencies run the program through local offices. You may be eligible to receive SNAP benefits if you meet certain income and resource requirements.

Can you get SNAP?

To get SNAP benefits, your household must meet certain conditions and requirements. A household includes everyone who lives with you, buys, and prepares food together.

If you are homeless, you can still get SNAP benefits even if you do not have an address, a place to stay, or a place to cook meals. Generally, you are considered homeless if you do not have a fixed regular nighttime residence or your primary nighttime residence is a temporary accommodation in a:

- Supervised shelter;
- Halfway house;
- Residence of another person; or
- Place not designated for regular sleeping, such as a hallway, bus station, or lobby.

If you live in California

If you live in California and you receive SSI, you are not generally eligible for SNAP benefits. This is because California includes the SNAP benefit in its State Supplementary Payment (SSP). However, if your SSI benefits are in suspense status or you are waiting for a decision on your SSI claim, you may be eligible. If you wish to apply for benefits, contact your local SNAP office or SSA office for more information.

Income Requirements

Households must meet certain income limits to qualify for SNAP benefits. There are two income limits: gross and net. Most households must meet both the gross and net income limits.

“Gross income” is your total income before taxes or any other deductions. There are certain things you can deduct from your gross income such as housing costs, child-support payments, and child or dependent care

payments. You or other household members who are age 60 or older, or receiving certain disability payments can also deduct monthly out-of-pocket medical expenses over \$35 from the household income if the expenses are not paid for by someone else, Medicaid, Medicare, or another insurance company. The amount left over after deductions are taken out of your gross income is called your “net income.”

A household with an elderly person or a person receiving disability payments only has to meet the net income test. Households are considered income-eligible if everyone in the household receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The income limits vary by household size and may change each year.

Resource Requirements

Households must also meet the resource limit. Resources are things you own. In general, households may have \$2,250 in resources, such as money in a bank account. Households may have \$3,250 in resources if at least one person is age 60 or older, or is disabled. Certain things are not considered a resource. For example, your home and lot are not considered a resource. Also, in some states, you may own at least one car. The resources of people who receive SSI or TANF are not counted either.

Work Requirements

If you are an able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD), between the ages of 18 and 49, and able to work but currently unemployed, you may only be eligible for SNAP benefits for three-months within a three-year period. This is called the “time limit.” In order for an ABAWD to be eligible for SNAP beyond the time limit, you must either work or participate in a qualifying education or training activity for at least 80 hours per month. However, the time limit does not apply to people who are unable to work due to physical or mental health reasons, pregnant, care for a child or incapacitated family member, or are exempt from the general work requirements. This requirement is waived in some locations. In some situations, if you are not working, you may be required to participate in a special employment or training program with the state.

Other Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for SNAP benefits, households must also meet other conditions in addition to the income and resource requirements, such as everyone in your household having, or have applied for, a social security number.

You may also be eligible for SNAP benefits if you are a lawfully present non-citizen and meet the income and resource limits. Most eligible non-citizens must wait five years before getting SNAP benefits. However, certain non-citizens do not have to wait five years before getting benefits; these include some lawfully present children under age 18, people with disabilities, refugees, and asylees. You may also be eligible for benefits if you are lawfully present and have enough work history or a military connection.

If your children are lawfully present or U.S. citizens, your children may still qualify for SNAP benefits even if you are not eligible. You can apply for your children without providing information about your immigration status.

How can you apply for SNAP?

Applications for SNAP benefits are available at any Social Security office. If you and everyone in your household are applying for or already **getting SSI** payments, any Social Security office will help you fill out the SNAP application and send it to the SNAP office for you.

All other applicants, including those **applying** for or **getting only Social Security benefits**, must take or send their applications to the local SNAP office. To find your local SNAP office or to apply online, visit www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply.

You will be required to complete an interview after you complete your SNAP application. In most cases, you may be interviewed by telephone. In addition to the application and interview, you will also need to provide verification of certain information. Some ways you can verify the information on your SNAP application include:

- Identification such as a driver's license, state ID card, birth certificate, work or school ID card, health insurance card, voter registration card, or proof of alien status;
- Proof of income for each member of your household, such as pay stubs, a statement from an employer, current benefit verification letter for payments received from Social Security, veteran's benefits, unemployment insurance benefits, and documentation of child support or alimony;

- Proof of how much you spend for dependent care;
- Rent receipts or proof of your mortgage payments;
- Records of your utility costs; and
- Medical bills for those members of your household who are age 60 or older, and for those who receive disability benefits, such as Social Security disability or SSI.

After you apply, the SNAP office processing your application will decide if your household qualifies for benefits. You should find out if you are eligible within 30 days. Households eligible for expedited service get benefits within seven days. If you do not hear within 30 days after you apply for benefits, call or visit the SNAP office.

How much can you get?

If your household is eligible, the amount of SNAP benefits you get depends on your household size, monthly household income and expenses for such thing as mortgage or rent, utilities, and childcare or elder care needed to allow someone to work. However, you can find out how much you may be able to get through the online SNAP Pre-Screening Eligibility Tool at www.snap-step1.usda.gov/fns. For information about other nutrition assistance programs that may be available to you, read *Nutrition Assistance Programs* (Publication No. 05-10100) or visit www.fns.usda.gov.

Contacting Social Security

The most convenient way to contact us anytime, anywhere is to visit www.socialsecurity.gov. There, you can: apply for benefits; open a *my* Social Security account, which you can use to review your *Social Security Statement*, verify your earnings, print a benefit verification letter, change your direct deposit information, request a replacement Medicare card, and get a replacement 1099/1042S; obtain valuable information; find publications; get answers to frequently asked questions; and much more.

If you don't have access to the internet, we offer many automated services by telephone, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Call us toll-free at **1-800-772-1213** or at our TTY number, **1-800-325-0778**, if you're deaf or hard of hearing.

If you need to speak to a person, we can answer your calls from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday. We ask for your patience during busy periods since you may experience higher than usual rate of busy signals and longer hold times to speak to us. We look forward to serving you.



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and tomorrow

Social Security Administration
Publication No. 05-10101 | ICN 468655 | Unit of Issue — HD (one hundred)
February 2017 (Recycle prior editions)
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Facts
Produced and published at U.S. taxpayer expense