



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

As of Oct. 1, 2008, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program. The new name reflects the changes we've made to meet the needs of our clients, including a focus on nutrition and an increase in benefit amounts. SNAP is the federal name for the program. State programs may have different names.

Description

- For more than 40 years, SNAP has served as the foundation of America's national nutrition safety net. It is the first line of defense against hunger and offers a powerful tool for improving nutrition among low-income people.
- It is available to nearly anyone with low income. Eligibility is based on financial factors such as income and expenses available to the household, as well as immigrant status.
- Only legal immigrants are eligible for program benefits, most of whom must wait 5 years in legal status before qualifying for benefits.
- The Program requires able-bodied adults between 16 and 60 (with some exceptions) to register for work, to take part in employment/training programs referred by the SNAP office, and to accept or continue suitable employment.
- Benefits come to the household via electronic debit cards, known as Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards which can be used in more than 216,000 approved retail stores nationwide to purchase food.

Background

- The modern program was established by the federal government in 1964, significantly altered in 1977, and is the largest federal nutrition program for low-income households.
- It is administered by the Food and Nutrition Service at the federal level and is operated by State and local welfare offices in the 50 States, the District of Columbia, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Participants

- An average of 40.3 million people participated in FY 2010 each month.
- The national participation rate is 66 percent of all eligible people (2008). Nearly 50 percent of participants are children. Less than one third are age 60 or above.
- Participants received an average monthly benefit of \$133.79 in FY 2010.

Budget

- \$68.3 billion in Federal spending in FY 2010 (benefits and administration).

Contact Information

For complete information, visit www.fns.usda.gov/snap or call or visit your local office. Look in the blue pages of your phone book under "Social Services" or "Human Services" to find the number. If you need help finding your local office, call 1-800-221-5689.