

SNAP Fact Sheet

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program is the first line of defense against hunger. On average, it helps more than 28 million (fiscal year 2008 data) low-income people buy nutritious food each month and make healthy food choices within a limited budget. Eating healthier foods helps low-income people and their families stay well and have the energy they need for today's active lifestyles.

To apply for SNAP benefits, a person must go through the local SNAP office. If it is not possible to get to the office, a person may apply by telephone or make an appointment for another time or place. Any knowledgeable adult in the family can initiate an application, or the household may designate an "authorized representative" to apply for them.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must have **INCOMES** under certain levels, based on household size. A household is defined as people who live together and eat meals together.

Applicants may have **RESOURCES**, but they must be less than a certain level:

- \$2,000 for most households
- \$3,000 for a household with an elderly person (age 60 or older) or disabled person
- Most States exempt one or more vehicles from household resources
- A household's home does not count as a resource

An immigrant is eligible to apply for SNAP benefits if he/she:

- Has been in the United States as a legal resident for five years
- Is a legal immigrant child (not born in the United States)
- Has earned, or can be credited with, 40 quarters of work
- Is a refugee or asylee
- Has a military connection
- Is a member of certain Indian tribes

NOTE: A child born in the United States or a legal immigrant child is eligible for SNAP benefits, even if other household members are not eligible because of their immigration status.

Please check with your local SNAP office for more information about these eligibility requirements.

The amount of the SNAP benefit for each household takes into account the household's income, current living expenses, and resources.



Outreach Tools

SNAP outreach is critical to reaching those low-income people who are not aware that they may be eligible for, or do not know how to apply for, program benefits. The Food and Nutrition Service has several efforts under way to help with local outreach:

Tools Available

- A prescreening eligibility tool, written at the 6th grade level in both English and Spanish, is available for anyone with Internet access. The tool helps people learn if they are eligible and how much they might receive in monthly benefits. www.snap-step1.usda.gov/fns/
- A toll-free information line (1-800-221-5689) is available in Spanish and English.
- Free educational posters and flyers in Spanish and English can be ordered at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/default.htm>.
- Five basics documents in 36 languages can be found online at www.fns.usda.gov/snap/outreach/translations.htm.
- A national SNAP Outreach Coalition brings together national and local organizations interested in SNAP outreach and helps to empower these groups to do more and better outreach.
- The SNAP Outreach Coalition listserv was developed to be a communication mechanism for those interested in outreach at the local, State, and national levels, and to share ideas among groups. To join, send an e-mail to fsoc@fns.usda.gov.
- Certified households receive their benefits through a debit card called an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. EBT cardholder accounts are credited monthly, and SNAP recipients spend their benefits by using the card to buy eligible food in authorized retail food stores. Only food and certain food preparation items can be purchased with SNAP benefits.