



SNAP helps buy groceries



Students and SNAP

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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What is SNAP?

SNAP or Food Stamps, is a program available to help meet the basic needs of Pennsylvanians by providing monthly benefits on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card to buy healthy, nutritious food.

Why should I apply for SNAP?

Many college students are eligible for financial aid to assist with paying for college. Consider SNAP your food aid to help you focus on school and stay healthy. SNAP benefits help increase food budgets, allowing you to afford nutritious options including fruits, vegetables, organic foods, and more.

How much assistance could I receive?

The amount of benefits a household receives is dependent on household size, countable income, and monthly expenses such as rent and utilities.

Will receiving benefits affect my financial aid package?

SNAP benefits are provided in addition to financial aid. They do not negatively impact eligibility or total amount awarded.

Will I continue to receive benefits during school breaks and summer?

Yes, SNAP benefits are available year-round. Once you are approved for benefits, you can work with your eligibility worker to maintain your benefits throughout the year.

Do I have to report SNAP benefits on my or my family's taxes?

No.

Will applying for SNAP take away benefits from those who need it more than I do?

No.

Will my immigration status affect my SNAP eligibility?

Some noncitizens may be eligible for SNAP. Even if you are not eligible for SNAP, other members of your family may be eligible. Getting SNAP won't count as a public charge if you are working toward citizenship. If you are undocumented and facing food insecurity, check with your campus food pantry and food banks. An immigration status is not required to use their services.

SNAP 101



DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

General Eligibility Requirements

1. A household must meet the below income guidelines and meet both gross and net monthly income limits.
2. Applicant must be a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident or qualified refugee, or meet other non-citizen qualifications.

Check to see if you meet the income guidelines to receive SNAP

Use the number of people in the household to determine which row to use on the chart

Income Guidelines | October 1, 2021 – September 30, 2022

Household Size	Gross Monthly Income (before taxes)	SNAP Allotment Range
1	\$1,718	\$16-250
2	\$2,323	\$16-459
3	\$2,928	\$16-658
4	\$3,534	\$16-835
5	\$4,139	\$16-992
* Add this amount for each additional member	+\$605	+\$188

Who counts as a member of my household?

- A household is a person or group of people who buy and prepare food together.
- You may live with people who don't count as a household member, such as a roommate, who purchases and prepares their own food.
- If you are under the age of 22 and live with biological, adoptive, or stepparent(s) you must apply together, even if you purchase and prepare your own food.
- If you are married, you and your spouse must apply as one household.

What will be counted to determine my income?

- Earned income: wages, self-employment (for example, driving for Lyft, delivering for Postmates, or owning your own business)
- Unearned income: Social security (SSA, SSDI, SSI, SSP), military or veteran's benefits, State Disability Insurance (SDI), spousal or child support, some stipends for former or current Foster Youth, unemployment insurance benefits

Income that is NOT used to determine eligibility

- **Financial Aid Funding:**
 - Federal/state college work study
 - Grants: Pell, PA State Grant Program, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), some private grants, etc.
 - Loans: Stafford/Perkins, deferred payment, etc.
- **Other money sources:**
 - Bills paid directly by parents (where the student never handles the money)
 - Personal loans that need to be paid back
 - Irregular or infrequent income – birthday money, occasional cash gifts



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Student Eligibility Criteria

Are you a student? Pennsylvania DHS considers you a student if you are between the age 18-49 and are attending a higher education institution, like a college, university, trade school, or technical school, more than half time. You can ask your school what qualifies as “half-time.”

Please note: If you are a student more than “half-time”, there are multiple SNAP exemptions that will help you meet eligibility. If you do not meet one of these exemptions provided, you are still encouraged to apply and work with a SNAP outreach coordinator to determine your SNAP eligibility.

To qualify for SNAP as a student, you must:

Include the supporting documentation of one of the listed exemptions when submitting your application.

1. Meet the general PA SNAP eligibility criteria
2. Meet the Student Eligibility determination for PA DHS:

Students may be eligible for SNAP if they are:

- working 20 hours a week or more;
- receiving federal or state work study;
- caring for a child under age 6;
- caring for a child under age 12 if the student is a single parent in college full time;
- “unfit for work” (that is, have a medical barrier to employment); (6) under age 18 or over age 50; or
- enrolled less than half time.
- enrolled in either
 - ✓ career or technical education program under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006; or
 - ✓ programs associated with high priority occupations. Almost all community college students should be eligible (assuming they apply for SNAP and otherwise qualify). Each Pennsylvania regional Workforce Development Area has created its own list of High Priority Occupations. These are available at:

<http://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Products/HPOs/Pages/default.aspx>.

Students should submit a copy of the Community College Verification form, completed by a college official, with their application or within 30 days of applying. Any college official with knowledge of the student’s enrollment and course of study can sign the form.

This isn’t an exhaustive list, but it covers the most common exceptions. For a list of all student exceptions, please see Chapter 514.2 of the PA DHS SNAP Manual online at:

<http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/index.htm>.

3. **For students enrolled at least half-time**, if you meet the following criteria and meet the PA SNAP eligibility criteria, you may be eligible for SNAP

- a. Expected Family Contribution (EFC) of \$0 *
- b. Been awarded or is eligible to work-study during the current academic year *

* These are temporary waivers due to the COVID-19 pandemic and applications will be accepted until 30 days after the public health emergency is lifted.



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Applying for SNAP

WHERE DO I APPLY?

If you have any questions or would like assistance applying for SNAP, there are many resources available to help you with the application process:

- Second Harvest Food Bank SNAP Outreach: 484-287-2405 or 484-821-2406
- Apply at your County Assistance Office
- If you feel comfortable applying for SNAP on your own, go to this website to complete an online application: www.compass.state.pa.us

WHAT DO I NEED TO APPLY?

The documentation listed below helps verify your identity and calculate income. Please make sure your name is clearly visible on all documents submitted with your application.

- Identification
 - ✓ Government issued ID: Driver License, PA ID, US Passport; or Birth Certificate AND Student ID Card
 - ✓ For non-citizens - Permanent Resident Card
- Pay Stubs
 - ✓ Dated check stubs for the last 30 days OR statement of earnings from employer
 - ✓ Work study jobs DO NOT count as income
 - If your county worker asks about your job, let them know it is work study. Work study is part of your financial aid package (not income).
- Proof of Housing Expenses
 - ✓ Rent receipt
 - First page of your lease agreement OR Venmo transaction
 - ✓ Informal rent or lease letter can be submitted.
 - Must be dated with the amount paid and contact information for the person who wrote you the letter.
 - ✓ Utilities or Other Bills: gas, electricity, water, or telephone
 - Only if the bills have your name on them OR Venmo screenshots.
- Financial Aid Award Letter
 - ✓ Financial aid award letter showing PA State Grant and/or federal work study
 - Please reach out to your Financial Aid Office or Counseling Staff for a copy of your financial aid letter.
- Schedule of Classes
 - ✓ Schedule of classes showing the number of units you are taking
- ✓ Enrollment Verification



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