

SNAP Benefits (Food Stamps)

What are SNAP benefits (Food Stamps)?

SNAP benefits are benefits that you can use to buy food. Benefits are provided on an electronic benefit card (EBT), similar to a debit card. Eligibility and benefit levels are based on household size, income, expenses, and other factors. Anyone can apply for SNAP benefits.

How do I know if I qualify for SNAP benefits?

If your income (based on your family size) is below a certain amount, you *may* be eligible for SNAP benefits. The only way to know for sure if your household is eligible for SNAP benefits is to apply. In addition to income guidelines, a household applying for SNAP must meet certain eligibility guidelines. These include citizenship/immigration status, residency, income, and, in limited cases, assets/resources. The income limits are different depending on your household circumstances. The income limits, maximum benefit amounts, and other information are available here:

<https://otda.ny.gov/programs/snap/>.

How do I apply for SNAP benefits?

You can apply for SNAP benefits in several ways. You may either:

- Pick up an application at your local Department of Social Services. Please see a list of local Departments of Social Services on page 3.
- Request that an application be mailed to you by calling the appropriate Department of Social Services
- Apply online at <https://www.mybenefits.ny.gov/>
- Download the application at <http://otda.ny.gov/main/programs/applications/> and mail the completed application to the appropriate office.

Can I apply by phone?

No. You must submit a signed application, either on paper or through the [mybenefits.ny.gov](https://www.mybenefits.ny.gov) website.

What is the application process?

The DSS will first review your application to see if you are eligible for expedited benefits. The DSS will schedule an interview, usually by phone. You can request an in person interview if you do not have a phone or want to speak to the worker in person.

DSS will most likely need documentation from you. They must give you a written list of the documents and a due date. You have the right to ask the worker for help if you cannot get the documents yourself. This is called the Duty to Assist.

How long does DSS have to make a decision on my SNAP application?

The SNAP/food stamp office must make a decision on your application within 30 days of the date you submit it. They will usually issue SNAP benefits going back to the date of your application.

What should I do if DSS does not make a decision within 30 days?

You should first call your worker and ask whether they made a decision. If so they should send you a notice.

If they have not, you have the right to request a hearing.

What is expedited SNAP?

This is called Expedited SNAP benefits and you may be eligible if you meet at least one of the following conditions and have not received SNAP this month:

- Your household's liquid resources (cash, readily available savings) are less than \$100 and your household has received less than \$150 in gross income during the calendar month of your application, or;
- Your household's shelter costs for the month (rent or mortgage plus utility costs (\$703)) are greater than the combination of liquid resources and gross income you have for the calendar month in which you are applying, or;
- Your household is a migrant or seasonal farm worker household that has liquid resources of \$100 or less and meets SNAP requirements.

Is there a resource limit for SNAP benefits?

Not usually. Resources are only considered if your household contains a member who has been sanctioned or disqualified from receiving SNAP, or if your household contains an elderly or disabled member that has a gross income over 200% FPL.

Can I use my snap benefits online?

Yes, SNAP participants can now shop online at certain groceries in NY. For locations visit: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/snap-online-retailers/New%20York>.

What can I do if I disagree with a decision about SNAP?

You can request an administrative Fair Hearing if you disagree with a decision about your application or about your ongoing SNAP benefits. Instructions to request a hearing will be in your notice. You can also request a hearing if the local department of social services did not act on your application within 30 days. Information about requesting hearings is available at the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance hearing page available at <https://otda.ny.gov/hearings/request/>.

LOCATION SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS

ERIE COUNTY APPLICATIONS

- Apply at the Erie County Department of Social Services on the first floor of the Rath Building at 95 Franklin Street, Buffalo, New York. You can call this ECDSS at 716-858-8000 and request that an application be mailed to you. You could also request an application by writing to the Erie County Department of Social Services, Rath County Office Building, 95 Franklin Street, 8th Floor, Buffalo, NY 14202-3959.
- You can fax the completed application to ECDSS at 716-858-6834.
- You can apply at the kiosk on the third floor of the Rath Building, where you can file the application online.

NIAGARA COUNTY APPLICATIONS

- Apply at the Niagara County Department of Social Services at either their office in Niagara Falls (301 10th Street Niagara Falls NY 14301) or their Lockport office (20 East Avenue Lockport NY 14094.)
- You can also write to the relevant office or call them at 716-278-8400 and ask them to mail you an application.

WYOMING COUNTY APPLICATIONS

- Apply at the Wyoming County Department of Social Services office in person at 466 North Main Street Warsaw, NY 14569 or call them at 585-786-8900 and ask them to mail you an application.

GENESEE COUNTY APPLICATIONS

- Apply at the Genesee County Department of Social Services office in person at 5130 E. Main Street Batavia, NY 14020 or call them at 585-344-2580 and ask them to mail you an application.

ORLEANS COUNTY APPLICATIONS

- Apply at the Orleans County Department of Social Services office in person at their office at 14016 Route 31 West Albion, NY 14411-9365 or call them at 585-589-7000 x4 and ask them to mail you an application.