

SNAP – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

2025 - 2026 Eligibility

What is SNAP?

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), helps people with low income buy healthy food. This program is designed to supplement grocery budgets to increase buying power, raise nutritional levels, and safeguard the health and well-being of individuals and families in the State of Ohio. The program's goal is to ensure everyone, regardless of income, can afford nutritious meals.

Who is in a SNAP household?

- For SNAP, "household", also called "assistance group", includes the number of people who live with you and buy and fix meals together. Your assistance group also includes certain individuals, such as spouses and children under the age of 22 living in the same household, even when they do not buy and fix meals together.

Non-Citizens

- The Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 limits eligibility to SNAP benefits to U.S. Citizens and certain lawfully present non-citizens. Federal law narrows this eligibility to the following specific groups:
 - o U.S. Citizens
 - o Lawful Permanent Residents after the five-year waiting period
 - o Certain Cuban and Haitian nationals designated as "entrants"
 - o Citizens of countries with a Compact of Free Association with the U.S.

Are students eligible for SNAP?

Generally, students attending an institution of higher education more than half-time are only eligible for SNAP if they meet an exemption. The institution of higher education determines what is considered 'half-time' enrollment. Students who meet an exemption must also meet all other SNAP eligibility requirements. If you are enrolled less than half-time, the student restrictions on SNAP eligibility do not apply to you. If you are a student and you meet SNAP eligibility requirements, you may be eligible for SNAP if you meet one of the following exemptions:

- Work at least 20 hours a week in paid employment
- Participate in a state or federally-financed work-study program
- Are under age 18 or age 50 or older
- Are physically or mentally unfit to work
- Care for a child under the age of 6
- Care for a child aged 6 to 11 and lack the necessary childcare enabling you to attend school and work 20 hours a week or participate in work-study
- Are a single parent enrolled full-time in college and taking care of a child under 12
- Receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

I'm on a campus meal plan. Can I still get SNAP?

If you receive the majority of your meals through either a mandatory or optional meal plan, you are ineligible for SNAP. Individuals who receive more than 50 percent of three meals daily through a meal plan are considered ineligible for SNAP.

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What are the SNAP income limits?

To qualify for SNAP, households have to pass both a gross income, or initial eligibility, test as well as a net income eligibility test. Gross Monthly Income Limit is equal to total earned and unearned income before taxes per month. Net Monthly Income Limit is equal to total take home after deductions. Deductions can include rent/mortgage payments, childcare costs, medical expenses, the cost of fuel to heat and cook with, electricity cost, water fees, basic fees for one telephone, and more. Households with higher gross incomes will still need enough deductions to get below the net income limit (100% FPL) to qualify for a benefit.

Household Size	Monthly Income Limit	Net Monthly Income Limit
1	\$1,696	\$1,305
2	\$2,292	\$1,763
3	\$2,888	\$2,221
4	\$3,483	\$2,680
5	\$4,079	\$3,138
6	\$4,675	\$3,596
7	\$5,271	\$4,054
8	\$5,867	\$4,513
Each additional person	+\$596	+\$459

What are the SNAP work requirements?

If you meet one of these exemptions, SNAP Work Requirements do not apply to you.

Exemption Criteria	18-59	60-64
Pregnant	✓	✓
Assistance group includes a child under 14	✓	✓
Indian, Urban Indian, or California Indian	✓	✓
Physically or Mentally unfit for employment	✓	✓
Caring for an incapacitated person	✓	X
Applying for or receiving Unemployment Compensation	✓	X
Participation in drug/alcohol treatment program	✓	X
Enrolled in school/training half-time or more	✓	X
Working 30 hours/week (or equivalent pay)	✓	X

If you don't meet an exemption, then you are considered work required.

What resources can I have and still get SNAP benefits?

In Ohio, most households can have up to \$3,000 in countable resources (such as cash, checking, or savings accounts) and still be eligible for SNAP benefits. Households with at least one member age 60 or older, or someone with a disability, can have up to \$4,500 in countable resources. Certain assets are not counted toward your limit. These include your primary residence, vehicles, retirement/pension accounts, and assistance accounts.

How Do I Apply for SNAP

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There are various ways to apply for SNAP. Please choose the one that is best for you.

1. Online through the Self-Service Portal Website: benefits.ohio.gov
2. The Greater Cleveland Food Bank Client Help Specialists can assist with over-the-phone applications for SNAP. Calls are free and confidential. Call 216.738.2067 to receive support.

Verification Documentation

It is helpful to gather the documents listed below before you begin your application.

Submitting verification can also speed up the time it takes to get approved for benefits.

You'll need to provide documents in order to get approved for benefits. This will include:

- **A valid ID:** driver's license, photo ID card, passport, military ID, adoption records, or birth certificate. Depending upon the specifics of your household, you may also have to provide proof of identity for any children or infants in your care. Remember that expired licenses and IDs don't qualify.
- **A valid Social Security Number:** your social security card
- **Proof of residency:** current rental agreement or lease, letter from your landlord verifying residency and monthly rent, current mortgage statement, utility bill with your address on it, a copy of your current housing contract
- **Proof of earned and unearned income:** paystubs for the last 30 days, an unemployment letter, court order (or letter) that confirms child support, income tax return (if you're self-employed), social security benefits, pension benefits.
Remember, sources of monthly income must include everyone in the household who makes money, not just the person filling out the SNAP application
- **Proof of Resources:** Bank statements that include balances for all checking and savings accounts, stock or bond certificates, proof of ownership of any recreational or vacation properties, proof of ownership of boats that aren't used for work or regular transportation, proof of ownership of vacation homes or mobile homes (only if they aren't your primary residence)
- **Proof of Citizenship or immigration status:** A birth certificate, military records, a U.S. passport, naturalization certificate, U.S. permanent resident card or Green card
- **Proof of student status:** proof of enrollment and student status – be sure your name is on this, documentation of any exemptions (like proof of your work-study participation or childcare responsibilities)
- **Other documents:** phone and utility costs, medical expenses for anyone in your household over 60 or disabled, childcare or adult care costs, any child support paid by a person in your household

What happens once I apply for SNAP?

After you apply for SNAP, your county Job and Family Services (JFS) office will review your application. The entire process typically takes up to 30 days. Within 14 days of applying, you will receive a letter scheduling your mandatory eligibility interview. This usually takes place over the phone and can last up to 90 minutes. Virtual hold is available so you can request a callback without waiting on the line. During or immediately after your interview, your case worker may ask for documents needed to prove the information on your application. You must provide these quickly to avoid delays. If approved, your benefits are calculated back to the day you submitted your application. If you have not previously had

one, you will be mailed an Ohio Direction Card (an EBT card). This usually takes 5 to 10 days to arrive after approval. We highly recommend tracking your application on the Ohio Benefits Self-Service portal daily throughout the application window. This will allow you to check your application progress, upload documents, track your case, and see any messages you have received in a timely manner. You can also contact Cuyahoga County Department of Job and Family Services directly by calling their customer service center at 216.987.7000.

How do I receive SNAP benefits?

You'll get the Ohio Direction Card once you're approved for benefits. Ohio sends benefits from the 2nd to 20th of every month, based on the last digit of your case number. You will receive these SNAP benefits on an Electronic Benefits Transfer card, which works like a debit card. Benefits are automatically loaded into your account each month.

You can use your EBT card to buy groceries at authorized food stores and retailers. You can then use it to buy groceries, snacks, and seeds or plants that will produce food. You can't use food stamps to buy alcohol, tobacco products, vitamins, live animals, prepared foods, or any non-food household items. You can also get discounted or free admission to museums, theme parks, zoos, aquariums, and more with your EBT card.

You can see how much is left on your card at the bottom of your receipt when you check out or by calling 1.866.386.3071. The Oh SNAP app (free to download on the App Store or Google Play) provides information on SNAP Basics, Applying for SNAP, Keeping SNAP Benefits, Using your EBT Card, more food resources, and SNAP Smart Tips. You can also go to <https://www.joinproviders.com/> or download the free Providers mobile app to see nearby stores and farmers markets that take EBT and check your balance online.

Your maximum SNAP benefit in Ohio depends on your household size.

Household Size	Maximum Monthly Benefit
1	\$291
2	\$535
3	\$766
4	\$973
Each additional person	+\$219

How do I renew my food stamps?

You'll have to renew your food stamps before your certification period (the amount of time you'll get food stamps) ends. For most Ohio households, that period is 6-12 months. You'll get a letter in the mail when it's time to reapply (or put a note in your calendar to remind you). Most households only must report the following two changes twice a year (at the halfway point and when you recertify): when someone moves in or out of your household; financial changes like income, rent, savings, or child support. Most households need to report the following four changes no more than 10 days after they happen: when your household income goes over the monthly income limit. This could be because someone starts making more money or someone with income moves in; when an adult without a disability or a child who was working or training 30 hours/week starts working or training

less; the receipt of substantial lottery or gambling winnings.