

FOOD STAMPS (EFFECTIVE 10/1/2021 – 9/30/2022)

DESCRIPTION OF FOOD STAMPS (FORMALLY CALLED SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, OR SNAP)

A Food Stamp **household** is defined as a person or a group of people living together who buy and cook food together. The people living together do not have to be related. On the other hand, other than a few mandated relationships, if adults living together buy and prepare food separately, it may be to their advantage to apply for food stamps as two separate households.

U.S. citizens and eligible non-citizens may qualify for Food Stamps. To be eligible for Food Stamps, your household income must be under the gross income limit as per the link below. Households with a member who is elderly (60 or over) or disabled have a higher gross income limit. Additionally, households who pay out of pocket for dependent care for a minor or an adult dependent have the same higher gross income limit.

General information number (but hard to get through): **718-557-1399**

Visit <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/snap/#overview>

MAXIMUM FOOD STAMP (SNAP) BENEFIT AMOUNTS

Household size: 1

Maximum food stamps per month: \$250

Household size: 2

Maximum food stamps per month: \$459

Household size: 3

Maximum food stamps per month: \$658

Household size: 4

Maximum food stamps per month: \$835

Household size: 5

Maximum food stamps per month: \$992

Note: These are determined by a complex mathematical formula, which takes into consideration your rent, your electricity costs, your medical bills, and other things, so you won't know how much you will receive until you apply.

ELIGIBILITY FOR FOOD STAMPS (SNAP)

Visit this clear website, with charts showing eligibility for families with earned income, families without earned income, and families with an elderly or disabled member, as of October 2021.

<http://otda.ny.gov/programs/snap/#eligibility>

SNAP personal calculator: Plug in your household information to check eligibility and get an estimated amount.

https://bplc.cssny.org/benefit_tools/snap_calculator

WHERE TO GO TO APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS (SNAP)

- **SNAP CENTERS**

<https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hra/locations/snap-locations.page>

or call **718-722-8013** This number provides information for all boroughs.

You may apply for food stamps in any office you choose, and your application will be transferred to the office nearest your home.

- **SINCE HRA IS DISCOURAGING IN-PERSON VISITS**, go to the following website to learn how to apply online or by telephone: <https://otda.ny.gov/programs/apply/#snap>

- or go directly to <https://access.nyc.gov/> (if you live in New York City)

- **DOCUMENTS YOU NEED (you will fax or mail copies of them)**

- Proof of address & rent (a letter if you pay rent to some other person)
- ID for everyone in household, plus birth certificate or passport, plus Social Security card
- Electric & gas bills if you pay this, or HEAP letter. Call **212-331-3126** for HEAP letter. NYCHA tenants now get \$1 in HEAP, a helpful gimmick on the part of NYCHA, which raises their food stamps. Call the phone # above for a HEAP letter. **This is IMPORTANT — it raises the amount of your food stamps.**
- If one person is 60+ or disabled, document all medical expenses. **This is IMPORTANT — it raises the amount of your food stamps.**
- For children: Birth certificates, and something showing their address
- Income documentation, or letter stating that you have no income

DEFINITIONS & DETAILS ABOUT FOOD STAMPS (SNAP)

RULES ON ALLOWABLE ASSETS IN DETERMINING FOOD STAMP (SNAP) ELIGIBILITY

Most households applying for SNAP no longer have to pass a savings/resource test in order to get SNAP benefits. This means that the household's assets (stocks, savings and retirement accounts, etc.) are not considered when determining eligibility.

HOW TAX CREDITS AND REFUNDS AFFECT FOOD STAMPS (SNAP)

Earned Income Tax Credit refunds and other tax refunds are **not** counted as income in determining food stamp eligibility as long as they are “identifiable.” That means keep any check stubs.

GROSS INCOME is your income before taxes. This is the income used by the charts in the urls sited above.

EBT (ELECTRONIC BENEFITS CARD) is the plastic card that Food Stamp (SNAP) recipients use in the grocery store.

CHANGES IN SNAP PROGRAM BECAUSE OF COVID

1. Starting April 2021, all SNAP households now receive an extra \$95+ each month in a separate “Emergency Allotment” payment mid-month. This will continue until there is no longer a “declared federal public health emergency in NY State.” We don’t know when that will be.

<https://otda.ny.gov/SNAP-COVID-19/Frequently-Asked-Questions.asp>

2. Last school year, 2020-2021, there was an P-EBT food benefits debit card given to ALL parents of school age children. This was designed to cover free school lunch that all NYS children receive, but didn’t receive during the 2020-21 school year. Families who already received SNAP got the amount added to their regular EBT card. The same P-EBT card is under discussion for the more complicated online/in-person 2021-22 school year, but has not yet been decided upon.

3. As to applying for SNAP, eligibility remains the same. There is a loosening of the requirements for in-person interviews, suspension of work requirements, extended re-certification periods, and more allowance for college students to receive SNAP. These looser rules will be in place until “the federal public health emergency declaration” is lifted. We don’t know when that will be.

4. Last year’s Stimulus Checks do not count as income. Nor does the extra \$600 or \$300 added to people’s Unemployment Insurance each month. However, the base regular and the base Pandemic Unemployment Insurance payments DO count as income.