

SNAP Food Assistance for Workers who lost hours or job due to COVID-19

If you were laid off or lost income because of Covid-19, you may qualify for SNAP food assistance. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps) gives individuals and families money to buy food at grocery stores and convenience stores via an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card.

Who is eligible for SNAP?

Most households with low or no income are eligible for SNAP. Here are some basic rules:

In general, if your income is below 185% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), you may be eligible for SNAP. For example, for a household of three people, 185% of the poverty level is \$3,289/month.

There is no asset limit

If you live with your spouse or your children under age 22, they need to be part of the same SNAP household.

If you live with other people, you do not need to apply with them unless you buy and prepare most of your food together.

Work requirements in the SNAP program have been suspended during the Covid-19 emergency

If you are not a US Citizen, there are special immigrant status rules, see below

How do I apply?

Apply for SNAP at the Department of Social Services:

www.connect.ct.gov and www.ct.gov/dss/apply; or 1-855-6-CONNECT. Full information on ways to contact DSS online, by phone and by mail is at www.ct.gov/dss/fieldoffices. The DSS field offices are closed to the public but you can drop off application information there. **Keep a copy of your application and other papers that you give DSS.**

The rules allow DSS 30 days to make a decision. You may be eligible for expedited SNAP benefits within 7 days of the date of your application if your income is less than your shelter costs or if you *have very low or no income or assets*.

How much can I get in SNAP each month?

Household size	Maximum SNAP benefit
1	\$194
2	\$355
3	\$509
4	\$646
5	\$768

Ordinarily, DSS calculates a share of income that a family has available for food, based on income and other expenses, and deducts that amount from the maximum benefit to determine the monthly benefit. Very low income households get the full SNAP benefit. FOR THE MONTHS OF MARCH AND APRIL, ALL SNAP RECIPIENTS WILL GET THE MAXIMUM BENEFIT. THOSE SLATED TO GET AN AMOUNT LOWER THAN THAT WILL RECEIVE TWO SUPPLEMENTS ON THE 9TH AND 20TH OF APRIL TO TOTAL THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT

How do I learn the status of my case after I apply?

The fastest way to learn about your SNAP case is the DSS MyAccount.

<https://www.connect.ct.gov/access/jsp/access/Home.jsp> You can also call 1-855-6-CONNECT

Due to high call volume you may need to call back or wait on hold for a long time - call from a landline or cellphone that has sufficient minutes. SafeLink phones do not count minutes calling DSS.

What if I am sick, quarantined or self-isolating or need someone to help me buy food?

DSS will issue only one SNAP EBT card per household with the name of the head of household printed on the card. You set the PIN number. Household members have the right to use the card. Also, a trusted family member or friend (with the PIN) can shop for you.

What if I am not a citizen?

People who are undocumented are not eligible for SNAP. People who have qualified legal status are eligible if they have been here for five years. There is no five-year residency requirement for children, pregnant women or certain refugees.

Will receiving SNAP benefits affect my ability to get a green card?

Immigration rules consider receipt of SNAP benefits as a negative factor when you apply for a green card. This is called “public charge.” When assessing public charge, immigration officials look at a number of factors, including your age, health, education, skills, employment history, receipt of benefits in the past etc. United States Citizenship and Immigration (USCIS) has stated, if you need public benefits because of COVID-19, you can provide a statement explaining why you needed these benefits at the time of application for your green card. The USCIS website says if the green card applicant:

“lives and works in a jurisdiction where disease prevention methods such as social distancing or quarantine are in place, or where the alien’s employer, school, or university voluntarily shuts down operations to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the alien may submit a statement with his or her application for adjustment of status to explain how such methods or policies have affected the alien as relevant to the factors USCIS must consider in a public charge inadmissibility determination.”

If you can make a good showing that, you needed the SNAP, because of Covid-19 USCIS probably won’t count it against you.

Where can I find emergency food?

Mobile food sites:

http://site.foodshare.org/site/PageServer?pagename=2017_food_mobile

Or call 2-1-1