



D.C. Hunger Solutions

Ending hunger in the nation's capital

SNAP Food Assistance:

Workers who lost hours or job due to COVID-19

If you were laid off or lost income and need help putting food on the table, SNAP food assistance is here to help. SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps), gives individuals and families money to buy food at grocery stores, convenience stores, and certain farmers markets. You have the right to apply for SNAP any time you need help.

Who is eligible for SNAP?

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

- 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.
- If you are not a US Citizen, there are special immigrant status rules.
- In general, if your income is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), you may be eligible for SNAP. For example, for a household of 3 people, 200% of the poverty level is \$3,620/month.

I lost my job or work hours because of COVID-19. What should I know?

You can **apply for SNAP at any time**. You do not have to wait to file an application.

- The Department of Human Services (DHS) should not count income you are no longer getting because your job stopped. You should report if you are receiving unemployment insurance.
- 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.

If you have children or are pregnant, you might also be eligible for **other benefits**:

- Information on TANF for families: www.dhs.dc.gov or call 202-727-5355
- For information on WIC for women and children: www.dchealth.dc.gov or call 202-442-9397

How much can I get in SNAP each month to help buy food?

The maximum SNAP benefit is \$194/month for 1 person, \$355/month for 2 people, and more for larger households. The amount you get is based on your net countable income. As part of the federal response to COVID-19, some SNAP households will receive emergency SNAP allotments in addition to their regular monthly benefit during the declared emergency period.

How do I apply for SNAP?

Because of COVID-19, DHS currently has limited operations. To apply:

- For assistance filling out the online or paper application, or assistance submitting verification documents, call D.C. Hunger Solutions at **202-640-1088** and **leave a message**. We will respond to your message Monday-Friday. Scanned applications and verification documents can also be emailed to D.C. Hunger Solutions at info@dchunger.org.
- If you have access to a computer, you can fill out an application through the DC Benefits Portal at www.dcbenefits.dhs.dc.gov. The online portal requires an email address and is not mobile phone compatible. You can also submit verification documents through the portal.
- Download and print the SNAP application at www.dhs.dc.gov or visit any service center to pick up a paper application. Mail the application to any service center or visit any center to drop off your application.

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

For inquiries such as case status, approval, benefits amounts, and recertification dates, you should call the DHS Assistance Line at **202-727-5355**. 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.

What if I am sick or need someone to help me buy food?

DHS will issue only one SNAP EBT card per household with the name of the head of household printed on the card. Everyone in the household has the right to use the card for food shopping. Grocery stores should not ask to look at the card or refuse to let you use the card if you know the PIN. The PIN is the secure signature for the card.

Also, you can give your card to a trusted family member or friend to food shop for you. Federal rules say you do not need tell DHS if you are giving people permission to make food purchases for you on an ad-hoc basis. When applying, you are also able to designate an authorized representative who can act on your behalf.

What are my rights?

If you are denied SNAP benefits, or disagree with a decision DHS has made:

- Call the DHS Assistance Line (**202-727-5355**) or your case manager to ask more information about why they denied your case.
- Request a hearing if you disagree with the decision. You can call **202-698-3955** or **202-535-1182**. If you are receiving homeless services within the Continuum of Care (CoC), call **202-442-9094**.
- Contact your local Legal Services office for information about your rights and possible representation: D.C. Legal Aid at **202-628-1161** or Legal Counsel for the Elderly at **202-434-2120**.

Where can I find emergency food?

For help with food resources in your community, call the Capital Area Food Bank Hunger Lifeline at 202-644-9807 or visit cafb.auntbertha.com.