

Introduction to SNAP in D.C.



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Training Goals

- ❑ Overview of Hunger in the District
- ❑ SNAP Basics
- ❑ Application Process
- ❑ Civil Rights Training
- ❑ Q+A



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Anti-Oppression Meeting Guidelines

- ❑ Listen actively and respect others when they are speaking.
- ❑ Acknowledge the historical and systemic context in which hunger, poverty, and other forms of oppression take place. Do not blame a group or culture for their situation – recognize the root cause of the situation and work to address it.
- ❑ Assume best intentions but recognize impact and take responsibility for your words and actions.
- ❑ Discussion and debate are great – just do it respectfully.
- ❑ Make space / Take space.



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Hunger in D.C.

- ❑ Poverty and Food Insecurity
- ❑ Disparities by Ward
- ❑ SNAP in the District

Poverty and Food Insecurity in D.C.

- ❑ 16.5% of D.C. residents live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau)
- ❑ 22.8% of D.C. children live in poverty (DC Fiscal Policy Institute)
- ❑ 36% of District households struggle with food insecurity (Capital Area Food Bank)



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Income and Hunger Disparities by Ward

- ❑ Over 46% of SNAP recipients in the District live in Wards 7 and 8.
- ❑ While the median income for the District is \$104,110, the median incomes in Wards 7 and 8 are \$49,509 and \$47,421, respectively.
- ❑ Disparities in Wards are a product of historical and systemic racism and disinvestment – Black residents make up 86.63% of Ward 7 and 86.51% of Ward 8, compared to 39.10% of the District as a whole.



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SNAP in the District

- ❑ Over 138,000 District residents participate in SNAP each month.
- ❑ D.C. has a 97% participation rate.
 - ❑ However, many eligible older adults, low-wage workers, and immigrants are not enrolled.
- ❑ The average allotment in D.C. is \$188 per month per person.
- ❑ For every \$1 spent on SNAP, \$1.79 of economic activity is generated. SNAP is a **stimulus program**.



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SNAP Basics

- ❑ Households
- ❑ Income
- ❑ Deductions
- ❑ General FAQs
- ❑ Specific Populations FAQs

What is a SNAP Household?

- ❑ A group of people who live together, buy food as a group, and prepare meals as a group. They do not have to be related.
- ❑ There are many scenarios in which more than one SNAP household can share the same residence.
- ❑ A SNAP household does not necessarily need a permanent mailing address.



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What is a SNAP Household? (cont.)

- ❑ The following people **must** be considered a household, even if they purchase food separately:
 - ❑ Spouses who live together
 - ❑ Parents and children under 22, even if the child is married or has a child of their own, who live together



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SNAP Income Guidelines

❑ Two income guidelines:

❑ Gross income: amount of income a household receives before taxes

❑ Must be below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines

❑ Households with older adults (60+) and people with disabilities not subject to gross income limits

❑ Net income: amount of income a household has after taxes

❑ Must be below 100% of the federal poverty guidelines



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SNAP Income Guidelines – effective

10/01/2022 – 09/30/2023

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income for Categorical Eligibility (200% FPL)	Maximum Net Monthly Income (100% FPL)	Maximum SNAP Allotment
1	\$2,265	\$1,133	\$281
2	\$3,052	\$1,526	\$516
3	\$3,838	\$1,920	\$740
4	\$4,625	\$2,313	\$939
5	\$5,412	\$2,706	\$1,116
6	\$6,198	\$3,100	\$1,339
7	\$6,985	\$3,493	\$1,480
Each Additional Member	+\$787	+\$394	+\$211

SNAP Assets Guidelines

- ❑ Assets are typically not considered for SNAP in the District; however, applicants will be asked to complete this section on the application.
- ❑ Assets include cash, money in the bank, investments, and property.



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Deductions

- ❑ A household's benefit level is determined by net income.
- ❑ Net monthly income = gross income minus applicable deductions
- ❑ The more expenses you have, the more likely you are to be eligible and the higher your benefit level could be.



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General SNAP FAQs

- ❑ What can I use SNAP benefits for?
 - ❑ SNAP can be used at most stores that sell food. It can be used to purchase non-prepared foods, as well as plants and seeds to grow your own food.
- ❑ Do I need to work to receive SNAP benefits?
 - ❑ No, there are no work requirements to receive SNAP benefits in the District.



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General SNAP FAQs

❑ How do I get a new EBT card if mine is lost or stolen?

❑ To report a lost or stolen card and/or to request a new card, you can visit an EBT Card Distribution Center or call (888) 304-9167.

❑ Do SNAP benefits expire?

❑ Generally, most SNAP benefits expire after nine months of not using your EBT card. Your monthly benefits will transfer over to the next month if you do not use them all.



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General SNAP FAQs

- ❑ Do I need to repay my SNAP benefits when I find a job?
 - ❑ Generally, no. The only time you would ever need to repay SNAP benefits is if you are given too much due to an error in your application.
- ❑ Am I taking benefits from other people if I apply?
 - ❑ No. SNAP is an entitlement program, meaning anyone who qualifies can receive assistance, and you will never be taking benefits away from anyone else. Everyone deserves to eat healthy, high-quality food, and SNAP is the first line of defense against hunger in the United States.



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SNAP Rules for Older Adults (60+) and People with Disabilities

- ❑ Older adults (60+) and people with disabilities are exempt from the 200% gross income limit, meaning if their expenses are high, they may still be eligible for SNAP.
 - ❑ They still must meet the net income test.
- ❑ Uncapped excess shelter deduction: deduction of excess shelter costs that are more than half of the household's income after all deductions have been applied
- ❑ Medical Expense Deduction: can claim the cost of out-of-pocket medical expenses exceeding \$35/month



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SNAP FAQs - Older Adults (60+) and People with Disabilities

- ☐ Can someone else represent me for my SNAP case?
 - ☐ Yes, you can designate an authorized representative to conduct interviews, make changes, and use your card to buy groceries for your household.
- ☐ Can I receive benefits if I lived in an assisted living facility?
 - ☐ Typically, no. However, if you are a resident of a federally-subsidized unit for older adults or if you are a person with a disability living in certain nonprofit group living arrangements, you may be eligible.



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SNAP Rules for College and Trade School Students

- ❑ People enrolled at least half-time in an accredited college or university are considered “students” for the purpose of SNAP eligibility.
- ❑ In order for a student to be eligible, you cannot be participating in a meal plan that provides more than half of your meals. You must also meet one of the exemptions on the next page.



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SNAP Rules for College and Trade School Students

- ❑ To be eligible for SNAP as a college student, you must meet at least **ONE** of the following criteria:
 - ❑ Working at least 20 hours a week (this includes many on-the-job training, internships, and apprenticeships)
 - ❑ Participating in a state or federally-financed work study program for the semester
 - ❑ Physically or mentally unable to work
 - ❑ Under age 17 or over age 50
 - ❑ A full-time student who is a single parent or grandparent (natural or adoptive) responsible for a child under 12
 - ❑ Responsible for the physical care of a dependent household member under age 6, or under the age of 12 when adequate childcare is not available to allow for work
 - ❑ Receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) or SSI (Supplemental Security Income)
 - ❑ Assigned to an institution of higher education through a program under the Job Training Partnership Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA), or SNAP Employment & Training.

SNAP FAQs - College and Trade School Students

- ❑ Can I receive benefits if I live with a roommate?
 - ❑ If you regularly buy and prepare food with roommates, you should apply together. Otherwise, you can and should apply separately.
- ❑ What if I am enrolled in school less than half-time?
 - ❑ If you attend an accredited college or university less than half-time, you are not considered a student according to SNAP guidelines and you only need to qualify under regular program rules.
- ❑ Are my student loans counted as income?
 - ❑ Educational loans funded through the Department of Education and some parts of other student grants, loans, scholarships, and fellowships are not counted as income for the purposes for determining SNAP eligibility. Private loans and scholarships may be counted as income.

SNAP Rules for Immigrants – Common Eligible Statuses

- ☐ All U.S. citizens
- ☐ Non-citizens who have had LPR status for 5 years or have gained credit for 40 quarters of work.
- ☐ Non-citizens who have LPR status and are under 18 years old.
- ☐ Qualified immigrants who receive disability-related assistance or benefits
- ☐ Qualified immigrants with asylee, refugee, or victim of trafficking status

***This list is not exhaustive – please screen people for each eligible status or refer people to D.C. Hunger Solutions**

SNAP Rules for Immigrants – Common Ineligible Statuses

- ❑ Non-citizen college students and H-1B Visa workers
- ❑ Unauthorized immigrants
- ❑ Individuals with Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- ❑ Most individuals with a U Visa
- ❑ “DREAMers”/DACA recipients

SNAP FAQs - Immigrants

- ❑ Will applying for or receiving SNAP benefits affect my immigration status?
 - ❑ **NO!** Applying for and receiving SNAP benefits for yourself or a member of your household **will not** result in any “public charge” or affect your ability to remain in the United States, obtain or keep LPR status, or become a U.S. citizen.
- ❑ Can I apply for an eligible family member even if I am not eligible based on my immigration status?
 - ❑ Yes, you can obtain benefits on behalf of a qualifying household member (for example, a child who is a U.S. citizen. DHS cannot ask for any information about your immigration status if you are not applying for yourself.

SNAP FAQs – Returning Citizens

- ❑ Can I access SNAP benefits if I have a criminal record?
 - ❑ Yes, the only relevant criminal history that would affect your ability to receive SNAP benefits is if you have been convicted of buying, selling, or trading SNAP benefits in the past. In this case, you may be able to apply after a probation period.
- ❑ What if I do not have all of the verification documents I need?
 - ❑ You can seek assistance from a government agency like the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or another organization that serves returning citizens and/or people experiencing homelessness. They may be able to help you locate or obtain documents, verify your identity and residence, and offer mailing services.

SNAP FAQs – People Experiencing Homelessness

- ☐ Do I need a permanent home address to receive benefits?
 - ☐ No, you do not necessarily need a permanent address. If you are living in a shelter, you can have your information and EBT card sent to the shelter, and you can provide a letter from a shelter employee stating you are living in a shelter when you apply.
- ☐ What if I do not have all of the verification documents I need?
 - ☐ You can seek assistance from a government agency like the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) or another organization that serves people experiencing homelessness. They may be able to help you locate or obtain documents, verify your identity and residence, and offer mailing services.
- ☐ Can I receive benefits if I get free meals from a shelter?
 - ☐ Yes, you can still receive benefits in this case.

Application and Recertification Process

- ❑ Prescreening
- ❑ Ways to Apply
- ❑ Required Documents
- ❑ Interviews
- ❑ Processing Timelines
- ❑ Certification Periods, Mid-Certifications, and Recertifications

Prescreening

- ❑ Before completing an application, you should prescreen households for eligibility. To do this, you can use D.C. Hunger Solutions' SNAP calculator at dchunger.org/calculator.
- ❑ Questions about household size, income, expenses, and potential deductions will show a preliminary estimate of eligibility and benefit size.
- ❑ Note: the calculator is just a preliminary assessment of eligibility. Only DHS can determine eligibility and benefit levels.

Ways to Apply

- ❑ After determining potential eligibility, you can apply in a few ways.
 - ❑ Online on the District Direct website (<https://districtdirect.dc.gov/>) or on the District Direct mobile app.
 - ❑ D.C. Hunger Solutions can help households fill out the application over the phone.
- ❑ In-person or via fax or mail after completing a paper application.
 - ❑ D.C. Hunger Solutions can submit an application on behalf of a household.
 - ❑ Applications can be mailed or dropped off at any open ESA Service Center.
 - ❑ Try to keep a copy of your application in case it is lost by a Service Center.

District Direct

[Home](#)[Create Account](#)[Log in](#)[English](#)[Español](#)[አማርኛ](#)

Welcome to District of Columbia Benefits Portal

Apply for SNAP, TANF/Cash Assistance and Medical Benefits or learn more about all our offered benefits

[Apply Now](#)[Learn More About Benefits](#)

Paper Applications

- ❑ Available in English, Spanish, and Amharic
- ❑ Can be used to apply for SNAP, TANF, and Medical Assistance
- ❑ Can be obtained online at <http://dhs.dc.gov/node/117542> or at an ESA Service Center



GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
ECONOMIC SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

COMBINED APPLICATION FOR DC*

FOOD STAMPS (SNAP BENEFITS)

CASH ASSISTANCE (TANF for FAMILIES with CHILDREN or
INTERIM DISABILITY ASSISTANCE for the DISABLED)

MEDICAID (for the ELDERLY or DISABLED)

HEALTHCARE ALLIANCE/ IMMIGRANT CHILD PROGRAM

*APPLICANTS FOR MEDICAID FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN (INCLUDING TANF APPLICANTS) OR A NON-DISABLED/NON-ELDERLY ADULT MUST FILE A DC HEALTH LINK APPLICATION (See Next Page)

If you live in DC, you can use this form to apply for benefits. If you need help with this form, just ask your worker or another ESA employee. You can also call (202) 727-5355. Free interpreters are available.

Please bring this to your Service Center. To find out which Center is closest to you, call (202) 727-5355. You may also mail this form to DHS/ CRMU, 645 H St., NE, Washington, DC 20002.

❑ Si, hablo ESPAÑOL (SPANISH)

Si usted vive en DC, puede usar este formulario para solicitar beneficios. Si necesita ayuda con este formulario, pídale ayuda a su trabajador u otro empleado de ESA. También puede llamar al (202) 727-5355. Intérpretes gratis están disponibles.

Por favor, lleve este formulario al Centro de Servicio de su área. Para saber cuál Centro le queda más cerca, llame al (202) 727-5355. También puede enviar este formulario por correo a 645 H St., NE, Washington, DC 20002.

Questions? ¿Preguntas? ጥያቄዎች?
有問題嗎? Có thắc mắc gì không?



(202) 727-5355

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY ❑ Application ❑ Recertification

Case Name	Case #
Date Rec'd	Prog. Approved
Date Disp.	Prog. Denied

ESA Combined Application: Revised: May 2015

❑ 是，我說中文 (MANDARIN)

"如果您住在D.C.，您可以用這份表格來申請福利。如果您填寫這份表格時需要幫助，您可以向工作人員或其他IMA員工詢問。您還可以致電 (202) 727-5355 我們有免費翻譯服務。"

"請將這份表格送到您所在地區的服務中心。欲知離您最近的服務中心的地址，請致電 (202) 727-5355 您也可以將這份表格寄至 645 H St., NE Washington, DC 20002."

❑ አዎ አማርኛ እናገራለሁ (AMHARIC)

"በዚህ ውስጥ የሚገኙ ከሆኑ የአርዳታ ጥቅሞችን ለማግኘት በዚህ ቅጽ ሊጠቀሙ ይችላሉ። ይህንን ቅጽ ለመሙላት አርዳታ ክፍሉን ጉዳይዎን የያዙትን ሠራተኛ ወይም ሌላ የአድራሻ ሠራተኛን ይጠይቁ እንዲሁም በ (202) 727-5355 ለመደወል ይችላሉ። ንገ አስተርጓሚዎች ይገኛሉ።"

"እባክዎ ይህንን ቅጽ ወደ እነዚህም የአገልግሎት ማዕከል ይዘውት ይሂዱ። የትኛው ማዕከል በአርደዎ አቅራቢ እንደሚገኝ ለማወቅ ደግሞ በ (202) 727-5355 ይደውሉ። ይህንን ቅጽም በፖስታ ቢት በኩል ለ 645 H St., NE Washington, DC 20002" ለመላክም ይችላሉ።"

❑ Có, tôi nói VIỆT (VIETNAMESE)

"Nếu quý vị sống tại D.C., quý vị có thể dùng mẫu đơn này để xin quyền lợi. Nếu quý vị cần giúp đỡ điền đơn này, xin hỏi nhân viên xã hội của mình hoặc một nhân viên khác của IMA. Quý vị cũng có thể gọi số (202) 727-5355. Có thông dịch viên miễn phí."

"Xin đem mẫu này tới Trung Tâm Dịch Vụ khu vực của quý vị. Để tìm hiểu xem Trung Tâm nào gần quý vị nhất, gọi (202) 727-5355. Quý vị cũng có thể gửi mẫu đơn này tới 645 H St., NE, Washington, DC 20002."

Verification Documents

- ☐ Proof of Identity
- ☐ Proof of D.C. Residency
- ☐ Proof of Income
- ☐ Proof of Shelter Expenses
- ☐ Proof of Medical Expenses (for older adults and people with disabilities)
- ☐ Proof of Dependent Care Expenses
- ☐ Proof of Immigration Status (if not a U.S.-born citizen)

Interview Process

- ❑ Currently waived due to pandemic
- ❑ Most applicants must attend an interview
 - ❑ May be waived on a case-by-case basis
- ❑ We encourage clients to request a phone interview, but they can also be completed at an ESA office
- ❑ Some clients may request a home visit
- ❑ Applicants should bring any missing supporting documents

Benefits Timelines

- ❑ Regular Service: ESA has 30 days from the date they receive the application to process it.
 - ❑ ESA must provide the household with either SNAP benefits or a notice about its decision within those 30 days.
- ❑ Expedited Service: ESA has 7 days from the date they receive the application to process it.
 - ❑ Eligibility:
 - ❑ Less than \$150 gross monthly income AND less than \$100 in liquid resources, OR
 - ❑ Shelter costs exceed resources

Certification Periods

- ❑ A certification process is how long a household will receive benefits before needing to complete a recertification form.
 - ❑ **12 months** for most households
 - ❑ **24 months** for households comprised entirely of people aged 60 or older or with disabilities AND with no earned income
 - ❑ **6 months** for households experiencing homelessness

Mid-Certifications

- ❑ A mid-certification is a process in which households must complete a form with simple questions about any changes in circumstances
 - ❑ Households can complete this form online or by mail
 - ❑ This will need to be completed every 4-5 months for most households
 - ❑ Households MUST complete and return this form, even if nothing has changed.
 - ❑ Households should attach proof of any changes
- ❑ An interim communication will be sent to households with 24-month certification periods reminding them to report any changes.

Recertifications

- ❑ A recertification is a process in which households must complete a form at the end of their certification period to continue receiving benefits.
 - ❑ Households will receive a notice from ESA 60 days prior to the end of their certification period
 - ❑ This form can be completed online, on the mobile app, or on paper

Civil Rights

- ❑ Relevant Laws
- ❑ Unlawful Discrimination
- ❑ Filing a Complaint

Overview

- ❑ Because D.C. Hunger Solutions is partially funded through SNAP Outreach funding, this civil rights training is required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- ❑ Everyone sub-contracted by DCHS who interacts with participants must undergo this training to meet this requirement.

Civil Rights Laws

- ❑ Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964: prohibits discrimination on basis of **race, color, and national origin**
- ❑ Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972: prohibits discrimination on basis of **sex**
- ❑ Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: prohibits discrimination by employers and organizations that receive federal assistance based on **disability**
- ❑ Age Discrimination Act of 1975: prohibits discrimination on basis of **age**
- ❑ Food Stamp Act of 1977: prohibits discrimination by the Food Stamp Program on basis of **religious creed and political beliefs**
- ❑ Americans with Disabilities Act: prohibits discrimination based on **disability**

Civil Rights Laws

- ❑ PRWORA of 1996, DOJ memo dated 01/28/1999 entitled “Policy Guidance Document,” and Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987: all work to further enforce and clarify scope of Civil Rights Act of 1964 to ensure non-discrimination in **all programs**
- ❑ USDA Departmental Regulation 4330-2: prohibits discrimination in programs and activities **funded by USDA**
- ❑ 7 CFR Part 16, Equal Opportunity for Religious Organizations: prohibits USDA from discriminating **against religiously-affiliated organizations** when providing assistance
- ❑ Executive Order 13166: protect against discrimination against **national origin** for people with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Unlawful Discrimination

- ☐ Race
- ☐ Color
- ☐ National Origin and Language
- ☐ Sex
- ☐ (Dis)ability
- ☐ Age
- ☐ Religious Creed
- ☐ Political Beliefs

Unlawful Discrimination

- ❑ “...the act of distinguishing one person or group of persons from others, either intentionally, by neglect, or by the effect of actions or lack of actions based on their protected bases [or classes]”
 - ❑ Examples include lack of accommodation, lack of information or communication, barriers to participation, differences in services or program benefits, and rude and discourteous treatment
 - ❑ This is not just “poor customer service” – it is **illegal**

Non-Discrimination Statement

- ❑ The non-discrimination statement must be included on all information materials and sources including websites, forms, public releases, announcements of scheduled distributions, and all other publications:
 - ❑ “USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.”

Filing a Complaint

- ❑ If a household feels that they have been discriminated against, they have a right to file a complaint with the local agency, state agency, or USDA.
- ❑ To file a program discrimination complaint, a household may obtain a complaint form by sending an email to OAC@usda.gov or write a letter to the Center for Civil Rights Enforcement.
- ❑ All discrimination complaints should be reported to D.C. Hunger Solutions staff as soon as they occur.
- ❑ Laws prohibit any retaliation against someone who chooses to file a complaint or participate in any proceedings related to a complaint.

Questions?



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www.dchunger.org

Instagram: @dchungersolutions

Facebook: @dchungersolutions

Twitter: @dchunger

Contact Information

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