



D.C. Hunger Solutions

Ending Hunger in the Nation's Capital

SNAP Guide for Older Adults

Older adults may be eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

SNAP is a federal nutrition program that provides monthly benefits on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to eligible individuals to purchase food.

What Are the Income Limits for SNAP?

A SNAP household's income is counted together and compared to the income limits to determine eligibility. Income includes money earned from a job or self-employment and money received from sources like the Social Security Administration or retirement.

Households with a person age 60 or older, or a person with a disability, only need to meet the net monthly income limit. A SNAP participant's net income equals a household's total gross income minus allowable deductions.

If the SNAP household receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash benefits, TANF noncash benefits, or Supplemental Security Income, the SNAP household is considered categorically eligible for SNAP. Categorical eligibility for SNAP means the household has already been determined eligible for another means-tested program. Most District residents applying for SNAP are determined categorically eligible.

How Can Older Adults Maximize Their Benefits?

The best way to maximize benefits is through allowable deductions that help to determine benefit amounts. The allowable deductions in the District of Columbia are as follows:

- A standard deduction is applied to all SNAP households.
- An earned income deduction is applied to all earned income (e.g., money from a job or self-employment).



- A dependent care deduction is applied to SNAP households when the dependent care is needed to find or continue work, training, or education.
- A child support deduction is applied to households who make legally owed child support payments.
- An excess shelter cost deduction is applied to households who have shelter costs that are more than half of their income after all other deductions have been applied. This amount is capped at \$624 unless one person in the household is 60 years old or older, or has a disability.
- A standard utility allowance is applied to households who have utility costs.
- A medical expense deduction is applied to households with an older adult or a person with disabilities who has out-of-pocket medical expenses of more than \$35 per month.



SNAP Guide for Older Adults (CONTINUED)

What Documents Do Older Adults Need to Apply for SNAP Benefits?

- proof of **identity**
- proof of **D.C. residency**
- proof of **income**
- proof of **shelter, utility, or child care expenses**
- proof of **medical expenses** (if they are more than \$35 per month)

How Long Will It Take to Receive SNAP Benefits?

The administering state agency (District of Columbia Department of Human Services) has **30 days** to make a decision on your case. If you have less than \$150 in gross monthly income **and** less than \$100 in resources, or your housing costs exceed your combined income and resources, you may be eligible for Expedited SNAP and receive benefits within **seven days**.

What Is the Certification Period for Older Adults Receiving SNAP Benefits?

Households approved for SNAP are assigned a certification period. The certification period is the length of time you will receive benefits. In some cases, a certification period may end early if there is a change in circumstances that makes the household ineligible (e.g., receiving an increase in earned or unearned income).

For households comprised entirely of members ages 60 or older, with or without dependents; or household members who are disabled and without earned income, the benefits will last three years*. Once the 36 months are up, the household will need to recertify for benefits.

If a household is comprised entirely of members ages 60 or older, and/or consists of members who are disabled and have earned income, the benefits will last 12 months.

**Households with members ages 60 or older with or without dependents, or members who are disabled and have no earned income, are eligible to receive SNAP benefits through*

the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP), which simplifies the SNAP application process and extends the certification period.

Can Someone Else Represent a SNAP Participant?

SNAP households can designate an authorized representative. This person can conduct interviews for you (when applicable), make inquiries, report changes, or use your EBT card to buy groceries for you. We only recommend this for people who are homebound and have someone else buy their groceries.

Can a SNAP Participant Receive Benefits if They Live in an Assisted Living Facility?

Normally, you are not eligible for SNAP benefits if you reside in an institution that provides the majority of your meals. However, there are two exceptions:

1. older adults who are residents of federally subsidized housing for older adults
2. people with disabilities who live in certain nonprofit group living arrangements (small group homes with no more than 16 residents)

Where Can Older Adults Who Reside in the District of Columbia Apply for SNAP?

Applications for SNAP can be completed online through the [D.C. Benefits Portal](#) or through the [District Direct mobile app](#). You can also download an application from the [District of Columbia Department of Human Services website](#), as well as going to the nearest [ESA Service Center](#) to pick up an application. Once you have gathered the [necessary documents](#), you can submit your application online, drop your application off at any open ESA Service Center, or email your application to info@dchunger.org.

D.C. Hunger Solutions can provide assistance with applications, recertifications, and existing benefits over the phone at 202-640-1088 or via email at info@dchunger.org.