

# SNAP for Immigrants in D.C.



**D.C. Hunger Solutions**

Ending hunger in the nation's capital

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Food and Nutrition Service, USDA  
1320 Braddock Place, Room 334 Alexandria, VA 22314; or  
fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or  
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# Introduction to D.C. Hunger Solutions

- ❑ Founded as an initiative of the Food Research and Action Center in 2002, D.C. Hunger Solutions seeks to create a hunger-free community and improve the nutrition, health, economic security, and well-being of low-income District residents by:
  - ❑ Improving public policies to end hunger, reduce poverty, promote nutrition, and increase the availability of healthy, affordable food in low-income areas;
  - ❑ Maximizing participation in all federal nutrition programs; and
  - ❑ Educating the public about both the stark reality of hunger's existence in the midst of plenty and the real opportunities for effective solutions.



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# Topics to Be Covered

- ❑ Hunger and SNAP in the District
- ❑ SNAP Refresher
- ❑ Immigrant and Mixed-Status Household Rules and FAQs
- ❑ Other Supports for Immigrant Households
- ❑ Q+A



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# Hunger and SNAP in D.C.

- Immigrant Food Insecurity in D.C.
- SNAP in the District



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# Immigrant Food Insecurity



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- ❑ D.C. is home to around 90,000 immigrants. Around half are non-citizens.
- ❑ Around 7,000 children in low-income families in the District have one or more parents born outside of the U.S.
- ❑ Federal nutrition and food programs are crucial to addressing food insecurity; however, many may forgo these programs due to immigration-related concerns and lack of knowledge about the programs and their eligibility.
  - ❑ Misinformation, concerns about public charge, language barriers, and discrimination are all factors in accessing programs.

# 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 Refresher

Households

Income

Deductions



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# What is SNAP?

- ❑ The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal nutrition program that provides monthly benefits on an EBT card to eligible individuals. It can be a useful tool to help households pay for groceries and maximize their budgets.
- ❑ 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.



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# 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 address.



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# SNAP Income Guidelines

## ❑ Two income guidelines:

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

❑ 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 10/01/2023 – 09/30/2024

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income for Categorical Eligibility (200% FPL)	Maximum Net Monthly Income (100% FPL)	Maximum SNAP Allotment
1	\$2,430	\$1,215	\$291
2	\$3,287	\$1,644	\$535
3	\$4,143	\$2,072	\$766
4	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$973
5	\$5,857	\$2,929	\$1,155
6	\$6,713	\$3,357	\$1,386
7	\$7,570	\$3,785	\$1,532
Each Additional Member	+\$857	+\$429	+\$219

# 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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# SNAP for Immigrants and Mixed-Status Households

- SNAP Rules for Immigrant Households
- SNAP FAQs for Immigrant Households



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# SNAP Rules for Immigrant Households

- ❑ In order to be eligible for SNAP benefits, you must be a U.S. citizen or have a certain lawfully-present non-citizen status.
- ❑ Some non-citizens with certain immigration statuses may be eligible for SNAP after a waiting period.
- ❑ Non-citizens who are eligible based on immigration status must also meet the other SNAP eligibility requirements, such as income limits.

# SNAP Rules for Immigrants – Common Eligible Statuses

- All U.S. citizens
- Non-citizens who have Lawful Permanent Resident (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
- Non-citizens who have had LPR status for 5 years or have gained credit for 40 quarters of work

**\*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
- ❑ Individuals currently applying for asylee, refugee, or victim of trafficking status
- ❑ “DREAMers”/DACA recipients

# Benefit Calculation for Immigrant Households in D.C.



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- ❑ Two state options for calculating mixed-status household income:
  - ❑ Count a pro-rated share of income and deductions of the ineligible household member, **OR**
  - ❑ Count none of the income and deductions of the ineligible household member
- ❑ D.C. counts a pro-rated share. What does this mean?
  - ❑ To calculate a benefit, D.C. will use a fraction of the income and deductions that reflects the number of eligible people in the household.

# Benefit Calculation for Immigrant Households in D.C.



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- ❑ Imagine a household of four people. In this household, there are three eligible members, and one non-eligible non-citizen.
- ❑ In this scenario, the person with the non-eligible status earns \$1000/mo in income and pays \$400/mo in shelter expenses.

# Benefit Calculation for Immigrant Households in D.C.



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- ❑ To calculate the household's benefit, the household's income would be calculated as  $\$1000/4$  household members =  $\$250$ , multiplied by 3 eligible members =  $\$750$  in household income.
- ❑ Similarly, the household's shelter expenses would be calculated as  $\$400/4 = \$100$ , multiplied by 3 eligible members =  $\$300$  in household shelter expenses.

# SNAP FAQs – Language Access

- ❑ Do I need to speak English to receive benefits?
  - ❑ No. You can receive benefits regardless of the language you speak, and you have the right to receive interpretation services. Additionally, written translation of vital documents into commonly-spoken non-English languages must be provided by DHS.
  - ❑ D.C. agencies with major public contact must follow the requirements of the Language Access Act of 2004.

# SNAP FAQs – Public Charge

- ❑ 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.
  - ❑ Public charge is considered for certain non-citizens when applying for visas, admission, or adjustment of status. The only considerations are for public cash assistance for income maintenance and institutionalization for long-term care at government expense.

# SNAP FAQs – Mixed-Status Households

- ❑ 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.
  - ❑ You will still need to provide proof of identity and D.C. residency, as well as proof of income and shelter expenses if applicable.

# SNAP FAQs – Mixed-Status Households

Apply for benefits · Application In-Progress

https://districtdirect.dc.gov/ua/apply/-6842654552458526720

Application In-Progress Save & Exit

[Go to section](#)

[Back](#)

## Apply for benefits

Do you want Food assistance? Required

--Please Select--

--Please Select--

Yes

No

Next

# Other Supports for Immigrant Households

- ❑ Federal Programs
- ❑ Local Programs
- ❑ Local Advocacy Opportunities



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# Federal Programs

- ❑ The following federal nutrition programs are available to all people, regardless of immigration status, and are not considered public charges.
  - ❑ WIC
  - ❑ School Meals
  - ❑ Summer Meals
  - ❑ CACFP

# Local Programs

- ❑ Emergency Food/Food Banks
  - ❑ <https://www.capitalareafoodbank.org/>
- ❑ Local Community-Based Organizations
- ❑ Churches
- ❑ Mutual Aid Groups
- ❑ Unauthorized immigrants in D.C. may be eligible for the Immigrant Children's Program and D.C. Health Care Alliance for health insurance.

# Local Advocacy Opportunities

- ❑ Consider state-funded nutrition programs
  - ❑ Six states currently operate state-funded programs that provide nutrition assistance to immigrants who are not eligible for SNAP.
    - ❑ Based on age; visa, refugee, or asylum application; disability status
    - ❑ CA, CT, IL, ME, MN, WA
- ❑ Develop partnerships with the immigrant community and those who serve the community
  - ❑ Healthcare providers, direct service providers, legal service providers, food banks, churches, schools, etc.
  - ❑ Work with/become a trusted messenger for immigrant communities to address concerns and share information.

# Questions?



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