

Food Resources

The purpose of this guide is to help you understand benefits and programs related to food assistance.



Point your smart phone camera at this QR code to access the digital PDF.

This resource guide was developed for the project Increasing Access to Decision-Making Support For Older Adults within the [Approaching Retirement](#) Life Experience.

The guide was prepared under the direction of the [President's Management Council](#), with particular support from the Office of Management and Budget, the General Services Administration, and funds made available for Federal Government Priority Goals to implement select Life Experience projects in support of the President's Management Agenda. Priority 2 of the President's Management Agenda focuses on delivering excellent, equitable, and secure Federal services and [customer experience](#) by designing, building, and managing government service delivery for key [life experiences](#) that cut across federal agencies.

This guide consolidates resources and benefits information from seven federal agencies to support older adults in their ability to make informed decisions about health care, finances, housing, and nutrition.

The guide incorporates expertise and materials from the following federal agencies and departments:

- Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau
- U.S. Digital Service, Office of Management and Budget
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Internal Revenue Service, U.S. Department of the Treasury
- Social Security Administration

This guide addresses the following questions

Federal Benefits and Services

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This guide answers questions at a high level and points you to federal resources so you can take action or learn more.



I am having trouble paying for food, what help is there?

USDA stands for the U.S. Department of Agriculture

The Federal Government offers several programs to help you get nutritious food for your family and/or yourself.



Call 211 to find agencies and community organizations that can assist you with finding food in an emergency.



RESOURCES

See what programs you qualify for:

The USA Government benefits page has guidance on food assistance for older adults and people with disabilities, as well as for Native Americans via Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).

Visit: [usa.gov/food-help](https://www.usa.gov/food-help)

Call: 1-844-872-4681 to get info on federal benefits, services, and programs from a USAGov agent.

Contact USDA's Hunger Hotline:

The Hunger Hotline connects callers with emergency food providers in their community, government assistance programs, and various social services. Provide your state and zip code to the operator who will then provide a referral to convenient a food bank or food pantry.

Call: 1-866-3-HUNGRY (1-866-348-6479)

Call: 1-877-8-HAMBRE (1-877-842-6273) para Español.

Text: 1-914-342-7744 with a question that contains a keyword such as “food”, “senior meals”, “home delivered meals”, etc. to receive an automated response to resources located near an address and/or zip code.



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Where can I get food in my community?

Community organizations often provide free food.



Call 211 to find agencies and community organizations that can assist you with finding food in an emergency.



RESOURCES

Find your local food bank:

SNAP stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Feeding America can connect you to your local food bank and free grocery resources in your community. They also provide guidance on how to apply for national nutrition assistance like SNAP and WIC. Use their “Find a food bank” tool to find resources in your area.

Visit: feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank

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Text: 1-914-342-7744 with a question that contains a keyword such as “food,” “School Meals,” etc. to receive an automated response to resources located near an address and/or zip code.

What are SNAP benefits?

*USDA stands
for The U.S.
Department of
Agriculture*

SNAP stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provided by the USDA. If you qualify, SNAP issues you an electronic benefit card (also called and EBT card) to use to purchase healthy food.

Each month, the SNAP EBT card is loaded with benefits to use to buy food at grocery stores, farmers markets, or online at some stores. Some retailers offer special programs that help you earn additional food benefits if you buy certain types of healthy foods.

Your household must meet certain requirements to be eligible for SNAP. If your state agency determines that you are eligible to receive SNAP benefits, you will receive benefits back to the date you submitted your application.



RESOURCES

Learn about SNAP eligibility requirements:

The USDA's website provides answers to frequently asked questions about SNAP eligibility.

Visit: fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility

Learn about SNAP special rules for the elderly or people with disabilities:

Most SNAP eligibility rules apply to all households, but there are some special rules for households with people who are age 60 and above and people with disabilities. For example, these households only need to meet the net income test and may deduct allowable medical expenses from the gross income.

Visit: fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility/elderly-disabled-special-rules

How long do SNAP benefits last?

SNAP stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Benefit periods for SNAP can range from one month up to three years.

The duration of SNAP assistance, called your “certification period”, varies by household.

If you qualify for SNAP, you will receive an approval letter that explains your certification period, and your reporting requirements. Your household will be issued an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card and your monthly benefit amount will be automatically loaded onto your card each month during your certification period.



RESOURCES

Contact your local SNAP office:

Contact your local office to learn more about your certification period.

Visit: fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory

Get answers to your questions:

For FAQs about benefits periods and food plans.

Visit: fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program



If you want to keep receiving SNAP assistance after your certification period ends, you must recertify for benefits.

SNAP stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

How do I recertify my SNAP benefits?

State agencies are required to send a Notice of Expiration (NOE) when your SNAP benefits are ending.

Several weeks before the end of your SNAP certification period, you should receive a packet from your local SNAP office with instructions on how to recertify.

Complete and sign the recertification form via mail or online. You may be asked to provide verifying information and/or documents.

These might include:

- Your current income (including most recent pay stubs, if applicable)
- Any household changes (new members or people who have left)
- The amount you pay for shelter, dependent care, and medical expenses

Your local SNAP office will use all this information to determine if you're still eligible to receive SNAP assistance. Some states have implemented a streamlined recertification process for households with older adults. To avoid disruptions in your SNAP benefits, be sure to return your recertification form and documents on time.



RESOURCES

Contact your local SNAP office:

SNAP guidelines vary by state.

Visit: fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory

How do I apply for SNAP benefits?

SNAP stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Step 1. Find your local SNAP office.

You must apply for SNAP in the state where you currently live.

Step 2. Complete and submit your application.

Use your local SNAP office's online form to complete and submit your application. Websites will vary based on your state. You can also print an application from the state website or get a paper from your local office.

Step 3. Complete the application process.

You will need to submit documents to verify your financial circumstances and have an interview with a case worker. The interview can be over the telephone. There are special rules to make it easier for people over age 60 and people who are disabled to qualify.

You will need to provide:

- Your current income (including most recent pay stubs, if applicable)
- Household composition
- The amount you pay for shelter, dependent care, and medical expenses
- Proof of identify
- Proof of resources like bank statements

RESOURCES

Find your local SNAP office:

Use the SNAP State Directory of Resources to find your local SNAP office's website.

Visit: fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory

I can't get to the store to buy food. Can SNAP still help me?

*SNAP stands for
the Supplemental
Nutrition Assistance
Program*

If you cannot go to the store, you can have someone called an “authorized representative” purchase food on your behalf using your benefits. You can also buy food online with SNAP.



RESOURCES

Authorize a representative:

Talk to your local office if you would like to select an authorized representative.

Visit: fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory

Purchase food online:

Online purchasing using SNAP benefits is now available in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Delivery fees cannot be paid for with SNAP benefits.

Visit: fns.usda.gov/snap/online-purchasing-pilot

I think they made a mistake with my SNAP case. What should I do?

SNAP stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

If you think there has been a mistake with your benefits, you have the right to a hearing. During the hearing, a person not involved with your case will review the facts fairly and fix any mistakes.



RESOURCES

Contact your local SNAP office for assistance:

Contact your local SNAP office for questions about your case.

Visit: fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory

Request a “fair hearing” with your local SNAP office:

Your request must be made 90 days from the date of the decision on your case. You can make this request in person at your local office, by phone, or by mail.

Visit: fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory