



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

What is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) can help you get the food you need for sound nutrition and well-balanced meals. The program issues electronic benefits that can help stretch your food budget.

The program, formerly known as food stamps, is not intended to meet all of your food budget needs. Benefits can be spent like cash in most food stores or some farmers markets. They can be used to buy food or plants and seeds to grow food to eat. They cannot be used to buy non-food items (such as paper products or household and personal hygiene supplies), alcoholic drinks, tobacco products, vitamins, medication, pet foods, foods eaten in the store or hot ready-to-eat “deli” food.

This information does not cover all program rules. Your county human services agency or Tribal Nation must have all the facts about your situation before a final decision can be made on your request for benefits.

Who can get help?

You may get benefits if you meet the following guidelines:

- Your monthly income is within the income limits; most types of income are counted, though there are many deductions from income that are allowed under the program; your worker can give you more information on income limits and deductions
- You provide a Social Security number for each person in your home applying for benefits; your worker can help you with this process
- You are a citizen of the United States or an eligible non-citizen
- You do not take part in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) in the same month.

How much can I get?

The amount of benefits you can get is based on income, expenses and number of people in your household.

How do I apply?

You can apply by mail, phone (Food Helpline at 1-888-711-1151), in person or online. Ask your county human services agency or Tribal Nation for an application or apply online at mnbenefits.mn.gov. If you need assistance with the application visit MNfoodhelper.org to a SNAP Outreach partner.

If you are age 60 and older and are applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program only, use the “Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Application for Seniors” (DHS-5223F).

There are several steps that you must follow to apply.

- Fill out the application as accurately and completely as you can.
- Submit the completed application with verifications to the agency. Your worker will set up an interview to discuss your application. This can be done by phone or in person. Verify information requested by your worker.

You may authorize an adult who knows your situation to apply on your behalf. This is called an Authorized Representative.

Be sure to apply for benefits as soon as you need help. Submit an application as soon as you can to your county human services agency or Tribal Nation because your benefits may be issued based on the date you submit the application. Your human services agency will accept the application on the same day you turn it in, even if they cannot interview you on that day.

The agency or Tribal Nation cannot decide if you will get benefits until you submit the entire application and required verifications.

If you qualify for benefits, you will get them no later than 30 days from the date you submitted your application. If there is a delay in processing your application, you will be notified within 30 days.

What information is needed?

Proofs of the following items are often needed to decide if you will get benefits:

- Identification for the applicant and the authorized representative, if there is one
- A Social Security number for all household members applying for benefits; if you or a member of your household has not applied for a Social Security number, you must apply at the same time you apply for benefits
- The money each household member gets or earns each month
- Immigration status for all household members applying for benefits that are not US citizens
- Housing costs such as rent, mortgage, or property tax insurance.

Providing proof of these costs can reduce your countable income:

- Proof of court ordered child support
- Medical bills of household members who are 60 years or older or have disabilities if these bills are not paid by insurance or Medical Assistance.

What is expedited service?

If you need help right away, you may qualify to receive SNAP within five working days of when you apply, if you are eligible and give us proof of who you are and meet one of the following:

- Have \$100 or less in liquid assets (cash or bank accounts) and less than \$150 per month in gross income; or
- Have liquid assets and monthly gross income that are less than your monthly rent or mortgage and utilities; or
- Be a migrant farm worker household and have \$100 or less in liquid assets (cash or bank accounts) and meet SNAP rules.

SNAP Work Rules

Certain people may have to follow work rules in order to get SNAP. You may not need to follow these rules if you are:

- Younger than 16 or age 60 or older
- Caring for a child under 6
- Caring for a person who needs help caring for themselves
- Already earn \$218 or more each week by working 30 hours per week or more
- Not able to work because of a physical or mental health reason

- Meeting the work rules of another program, such as MFIP or unemployment benefits
- In a drug or alcohol addition treatment program
- Attending a school, college, or training program at least half-time and meet other eligibility rules.

Employment and Training

SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) is available to help you get a new job or train for a career. You can get this service for free by contacting your worker or finding a provider at <https://mn.gov/dhs/snap-e-and-t/>. Depending on your needs, you may take part in:

- Job search assistance, such as employer connections and resume help
- Vocational training in many fields like computer support, nursing, or auto mechanics
- Literacy or other adult basic education
- English language training
- Job placement services.

While you are working with SNAP E&T, your provider can support you with transportation assistance, access to a computer, interview or work clothing, and other emergency assistance that may be needed to help you complete the program and get a good job.

What other programs are available?

You may also be eligible for other assistance programs that help to pay the costs of food, shelter, medical and other needs. These programs include:

- General Assistance (GA)
- Diversionary Work Program (DWP)
- Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP)
- Minnesota Supplemental Aid (MSA)
- MNsure (health care)

There are also social services such as counseling, homemaking, family planning, services for unmarried parents, adoption services and programs for senior citizens.

Contact your county human services agency or Tribal Nation to find out about these programs.

What is considered illegal use of SNAP benefits?

It is illegal to exchange or sell your benefits for cash!

If you use your benefits to buy anything other than eligible food items, you are breaking the law.

If you use your benefits illegally, you may be disqualified from the SNAP program, fined and/or imprisoned.



What are my rights to privacy?

Most of the time, the facts that human services agencies ask for are considered “private.” This means you can see the facts about yourself, but they are not available to the public. Some other government agencies may also be allowed to see them. You have the right to question what you think is wrong in your file. For more facts about data privacy, ask your county worker or write to:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Attn: Privacy Official
P.O. Box 64998
St. Paul, MN
55164-0998

What am I responsible for?

- For any change you are required to report, you must tell your county worker by the 10th of the following month.
- If you live with others and they receive benefits from the Minnesota Family Investment Program, you must tell your county worker within 10 days of any changes.
- You must cooperate with state quality control workers if they choose your case for review. If you don't, your benefits may end until you cooperate.

How do I appeal?

If you don't agree with the action the county or Tribal Nation takes on your application, tell your county worker or Tribal human services. Ask the worker to explain the reasons for the action.

You may see the policy manuals, rules and laws that give the reasons for the action. If you still do not agree, you may appeal. Your county worker or Tribal human services will help you ask for an appeal hearing or you may submit an appeal online at <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-0033-ENG>. You can also submit an appeal to the Appeals Division at:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Appeals Division
P.O. Box 64941
St. Paul, MN 55164-0941
Metro: 651-431-3600 (Voice)
Greater Minnesota: 800-657-3510
or use your preferred relay service
Fax: 651-431-7523

Bring any facts to the hearing that will help you explain why you do not agree. You may bring a friend, relative, or a lawyer or another person. If you want a lawyer, ask your county worker or Tribal human services for information about free legal services. You may be able to get legal advice or help with an appeal from your local legal aid office. To find your local legal aid office, ask your county worker for information about free legal services or go to www.LawHelpMN.org or call 888-354-5522. You may bring people to the hearing to give information about the facts. After you and the county or Tribal Nation have talked about your case, the human services judge will recommend a decision in the case to a chief human services judge. A chief human services judge will then issue a final decision. You will get the decision in the mail.

If you want to keep receiving your benefits until the hearing, you must appeal within 10 days of the date on the agency's notice of action letter or before the proposed action takes place in order to keep benefits in place. If you lose your appeal, you will have to pay back the benefits you received while your appeal was pending. You can ask the agency to end your benefits until the decision. If you end your benefits and then win your appeal, you will be paid back for benefits that you should have received. If you are still not satisfied after a decision is issued in your appeal, you have 30 days to request the Appeals Division reconsider the decision, or to appeal to the state district court.

If you have questions

For questions about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, contact the human services agency in your county. To find out where to apply, call the Help Line at 800-657-3698.

No English?

dhs.info@state.mn.us, call 651-431-4000



For accessible formats of this information, ask your county worker.
For assistance with additional equal access to human services,
contact your county's ADA coordinator. ADA4 (2-18)

Civil Rights Notice

Discrimination is against the law. The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) does not discriminate because of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sexual orientation, public assistance status, marital status, age, disability, sex or political beliefs.

Civil Rights Complaints

You have the right to file a discrimination complaint if you believe you were treated in a discriminatory way by a human services agency.

Contact **DHS** directly only if you have a discrimination complaint:

Minnesota Department of Human Services
Equal Opportunity and Access Division
P.O. Box 64997
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997
651-431-3040 (voice) or
use your preferred relay service

Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR)

In Minnesota, you have the right to file a complaint with the **MDHR** if you believe you have been discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sexual orientation, public assistance status, marital status, disability, sex or political beliefs.

Contact the **MDHR** directly to file a complaint:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights
540 Fairview Avenue North, Suite 201
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-539-1100 (voice)
800-657-3704 (toll free)
711 or 800-627-3529 (MN Relay)
651-296-9042 (fax)
Info.MDHR@state.mn.us (email)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Do Not Send Applications Here

In accordance with federal civil rights law and **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)** civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print,

audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (833) 620-1071, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to:

- (1) mail:
Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
1320 Braddock Place, Room 334
Alexandria, VA 22314; or
- (2) fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email:
FNCSIVILRIGHTSCOMPLAINTS@usda.gov

Do Not Send Applications Here.

Please return to your local county or tribal human services office.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

(agency)