



SNAP Food Assistance

For workers who lost hours or jobs due to COVID-19

If you were laid off or have lost income and need help putting food on the table you may be eligible for SNAP. SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps), gives individuals and families funds to buy food at grocery stores, convenience stores, and certain farmers markets. You have the right to apply for SNAP anytime you need help.

Who is eligible for SNAP?

Most households with low or no income are eligible for SNAP. Here are some core rules:

- People who purchase and prepare meals together are considered a SNAP Household or “assistance group”; there can be more than one assistance group living under the same roof.
- If you live with your spouse or your children under age 21 they are generally part of the same SNAP Household.
- If you live with other people, you do not need to apply with them unless you buy and prepare most of your food together.
- If you are not a US Citizen, there are special immigrant status rules.
- In general, if your income is at or below 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL), you are likely to be eligible for SNAP. Here is a quick glance at monthly income guidelines by household size:

Family Size	130% FPL	Family Size	130% FPL	Family Size	130% FPL	Family Size	130% FPL
1	\$1,382	3	\$2,353	5	\$3,324	7	\$4,294
2	\$1,868	4	\$2,838	6	\$3,809	8	\$4,780

I lost my job or work hours because of COVID-19. What should I know?

You can **apply for SNAP at any time**. You do not have to wait to file an application.

- The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) should not count income you are no longer receiving because your job stopped.
- You may be eligible for **expedited SNAP benefits**. With expedited SNAP your application is put in line to be processed within 7 days of the date of your application if you have very low or no income or assets. If you have no money left after paying for basic household expenses at the end of the month you may be eligible for expedited SNAP.

How much could I receive in SNAP benefits to help buy food each month?

- In Ohio in 2019 the average monthly SNAP benefit for a household member was \$132.
- The amount you receive is based on your net countable income. The amount of SNAP benefits is based on both income and basic household expenses like electric, gas, rent and phone.
- As part of the federal response to COVID-19, it is possible some SNAP households may receive emergency SNAP allotments in the future in addition to their regular monthly benefit.

How do I apply for SNAP?

Because of COVID-19, you are asked to apply for SNAP through the Ohio Benefits website or by phone.

- **To apply online go to the Ohio Benefits website:** <https://benefits.ohio.gov/>. If you can apply online this will likely be faster than calling the hotline and will leave the hotline available for seniors and others who cannot apply online. (When you set up your account, please be sure to write down your username and password and keep it in a safe place.)
- **To apply by phone, call the Ohio Benefits Hotline: 1-844-640-6446.** The hotline will be extremely busy at this time and the wait times may be long. You may try calling at a different time of the day if you cannot get through.

How do I learn the status of my case after I apply?

- You will receive a letter in the mail from ODJFS that will tell you if your SNAP benefits have been approved or denied. If your benefits are approved the letter will detail the next steps you need to complete. If your benefits are denied you have the right to a hearing to contest the decision and that information is also provided in the letter that you will receive.
- If you applied online through the Ohio Benefits website you can check the status of your case by logging into your account with the user name and password that you set up when you applied for SNAP.
- You can also call the Ohio Benefits Hotline at **1-844-640-6446** to check on the status of your application.

What if I am sick or need someone to help me buy food?

- You will receive a SNAP EBT (Ohio Direction) card for your SNAP household with your name (or the name of the person who applied for SNAP). Your SNAP benefits will be loaded onto the EBT card each month.
- A member of your SNAP household or a trusted caregiver or friend may use the card to purchase groceries for you. Grocery stores should not ask to look at the card or refuse to let you use the card.
- The EBT card required you to set up and use a PIN. When you receive the card in the mail you will call the number on the card to set up the PIN and the PIN will be used each time the card is used to purchase groceries.

Where can I find emergency food?

- Many counties use the 2-1-1 network to give you a referral to the nearest food pantry in your area. You can also ask 2-1-1 about help with other needs you may have. To locate the number to call for your county please visit <http://ohiofoodbanks.org/coronavirus/Emergency-Food-Phone-List-by-County.pdf>
- You can view a map of foodbanks by county at: <http://ohiofoodbanks.org/foodbanks/>. Each county on the map links to the foodbank website and each website has a find or get help page with helpful information.