



Policy *SNAP*-shot Authorized Representative



The Department of Human Services (DHS) uses the term “authorized representative” to describe the person designated by the head of the household to act on behalf of the household in applying for program benefits.

Why use an authorized representative?

Every SNAP applicant must have an interview with a DHS staff member to determine eligibility. Applicants who are unable to complete the interview may choose a trusted person as an Authorized Representative to complete the interview for them. Authorized representatives can complete the interview either in person (at a DHS office) or over the telephone.

Some of the many examples of when an authorized representative may be helpful include:

- applicants who have a work schedule that makes it difficult to complete the interview,
- applicants who are unable to find care for their children during the interview,
- applicants with disabilities,
- applicants with hearing limitations,
- applicants with an anxiety condition that would make understanding and answering questions difficult, and
- applicants who have limited telephone or transportation access.

What does an authorized representative do?

An authorized representative has permission to talk to DHS during the interview process, which includes answering questions for and signing forms for the applicant. Questions the authorized representative might answer are: what is the family’s income, what forms of income does the family have (Social Security, jobs, investments, etc.), what are the monthly expenses, etc. The questions asked by the DHS staff member will help establish if the family is eligible for SNAP and what the amount of benefit the family should receive. Whenever possible, it is important that the applicant prepare or review the application with their chosen authorized representative.

The authorized representative does not have power over other finances or life decisions.

An authorized representative may also be a person allowed to use a client’s EBT card and shop for them.

Who can be an authorized representative?

An authorized representative should be someone the applicant trusts, like a family member or close friend. Trusted workers within a group living facility or private, non-profit organization may also serve as authorized representatives. All authorized representatives must be over 18.

Who cannot be an authorized representative?

The following people and agencies cannot be authorized representatives: DHS employees involved in SNAP, SNAP authorized retailers, individuals disqualified from SNAP for fraud (unless there is no one else available and DHS gives special approval), and establishments which provide meals to the homeless.

When does an applicant choose an authorized representative?

The applicant can include the name of their authorized representative on their initial paperwork. If the applicant submits their paperwork, then realizes they will need an authorized representative, they must inform DHS of the change in writing. An applicant can send a note to their case worker or complete a DHS form called EBT-12. The form can be found at the local DHS office or one can be mailed to the applicant by calling the URI SNAP Outreach Project at 1-866-306-0270.

How does an applicant change their authorized representative?

If an applicant chooses an authorized representative then finds they need to change their choice, the applicant must inform DHS of the change in writing. An applicant can send a note to their case worker or complete a DHS form called EBT-12. The form can be found at the local DHS office or one can be mailed to the applicant by calling the URI SNAP Outreach Project at 1-866-306-0270.

How is getting help with an application different than an authorized representative?

Some applicants feel more comfortable when someone helps them fill out the application. If someone is helping an applicant complete the application, they do not need to be designated as an authorized representative. In addition, some applicants feel more comfortable bringing a friend or family member with them during the interview. As long as the applicant is still present at the interview, the friend or family member with them does not need to be designated as an authorized representative. Also, if you need a translator or interpreter during the interview, they are not considered an authorized representative.

If you have questions about this policy and how it may impact your SNAP case, call the

URI SNAP Outreach Project

1-866-306-0270

www.eatbettertoday.com