



SNAP Facts For Individuals and Families Experiencing Homelessness



Low-income individuals and families experiencing homelessness may be eligible for nutrition assistance through SNAP, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program).

The Department of Human Services (DHS) classifies homeless individuals as “an individual who lacks a fixed and regular nighttime residence.” This includes individuals or families staying in a shelter, motel or temporarily staying in someone else’s home for fewer than ninety days.

Getting SNAP benefits does not require a permanent address.

SNAP does not require a recipient to have a residence. A mailing address is necessary because DHS will send SNAP forms and information through the mail. If the mail is not responded to, the case may be closed. SNAP applicants may ask a family member or friend for permission to use their mailing address. Some community agencies will also allow clients to use their mailing address. If there is no available mailing address, federal regulations require the DHS worker to enter the address of the DHS office.

There are many ways to prove identity.

All SNAP applicants will be asked to prove identity. Identity may be proven with a driver’s license, birth certificate, or other type of ID. If an applicant does not have any identification, someone else who knows the applicant can go to DHS to identify him or her. DHS calls this form of identification “collateral contact.”

Most applicants do not need to show a Social Security card to get SNAP.

Generally, applicants do not need to show a Social Security card but will need to provide a Social Security number. DHS confirms Social Security numbers with the Social Security Administration. If the Social Security number provided does not match the applicant’s name, then a Social Security card will be necessary.

There are always alternative documents that will meet the verification needs of DHS.

Applicants for SNAP may be asked for proof of income, expenses or residency. Clients who do not have access to requested documents should ask the DHS worker for alternatives or assistance getting what was requested.

Benefits may be available the same day the applicant applies.

DHS may be able to determine eligibility in one day if the applicant goes to the office in the morning, completes an application and interview and has necessary documentation at that time. This is called “same day service.” If the office is too busy for same day service or if the client is not able to wait to be seen by the next available worker, applicants with less than \$150 in monthly gross income and not more than \$100 in resources will have eligibility determined within 7 days. DHS has 30 days to make an eligibility determination for all other applicants.

Some DHS offices have certain safety procedures that everyone must follow.

Some DHS offices have security rules that anyone entering the building is required to follow. At offices with a metal detector, all people entering the building must go through the metal detector. A security guard may also inspect any bags brought into the building.

Individuals and families experiencing homelessness may use the Restaurant Meals Program.

People experiencing homelessness often do not have kitchen access to prepare meals. Those SNAP recipients may use their EBT card at select Subway restaurants. Call the URI SNAP Outreach Hotline at 1-866-306-0270 for more information about this program.

There are special procedures for replacing EBT cards for individuals without a permanent address.

Generally, if a SNAP recipient needs to replace an EBT card due to loss or damage, the replacement card must be mailed. A SNAP recipient experiencing homelessness is able to go to a DHS office and receive a replacement card there.

URI SNAP Outreach Project: 1-866-306-0270

www.eatbettertoday.com