

## Where can I get help?

Any time you have questions about the application process or your SNAP benefits, call the **URI SNAP Outreach Project Hotline at 1-866-306-0270**.

You may also call the **DHS Information Line at: 1-855-697-4347** to find out information about your case. You can use the automated service at any time to check on the status of your application or recertification and/or to speak with a DHS worker Monday-Friday from 8:30am-3:30pm.

-----

You have completed or received a SNAP application with the help of \_\_\_\_\_,

an outreach worker with the **URI SNAP Outreach Project**.

You met on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_

**Date**

**Site Name**

If you provided your contact information, someone from the URI SNAP Outreach Project will contact you in approximately 2 weeks to check on the progress of your application.

The SNAP Outreach Project is a collaboration among the URI Feinstein Center for a Hunger Free America, RI Department of Human Services, US Department of Agriculture. The University of Rhode Island is an equal opportunity employer committed to the principles of affirmative action. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. What Happens Next/ October 2019



THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND



## You've completed an application for SNAP benefits.



## What happens next?



**URI SNAP Outreach Project**

**1-866-306-0270**

[www.eatbettertoday.com](http://www.eatbettertoday.com)

*The URI SNAP Outreach Project helps low-income individuals and families throughout Rhode Island access Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.*

## **Purpose of pamphlet:**

This pamphlet has been created to help you understand 'what happens next' now that you have submitted your application to DHS and to provide you with answers to some of the most frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the SNAP application and eligibility determination process.



## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

- When will DHS make a decision? (p. 3)
- What is the interview process? (p. 4-5)
- What documents will I need to provide? (p. 6-8)
- What happens after I send in my documents? (p. 9)
- What else do I need to know about SNAP? (p.10)
- Where are the RI DHS offices located? (p. 11)
- Where can I get help? (p.12)

A final SNAP eligibility determination can only be made by the RI Department of Human Services (DHS), the State Agency that administers SNAP in Rhode Island.

However, the URI SNAP Outreach Project is available to answer any questions you may have and to help guide you through the process. You may call the URI SNAP Outreach Project's toll-free hotline 24 hours a day at **1-866-306-0270**.

**SNAP benefits helps stretch your food budget so that you can buy more food for yourself and your family .**

## **Where are the SNAP offices?**

Below is a list of all of the RI DHS office locations, fax numbers and hours of operation.

You can choose to bring your application or documents to the DHS office location most convenient for you or mail them to:

**RI Department of Human Services,  
P.O. Box 8709, Cranston, RI 02920**

### **DHS Office Locations:**

**Newport:** 31 John Clarke Rd, Middletown, RI 02842

**Fax:** 851-2105 (Open 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday)

**Pawtucket:** 249 Roosevelt Ave, Pawtucket, RI 02860

**Fax:** 721-6659 (Open 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday)

**Providence:** 206 Elmwood Ave, Providence, RI 02907

**Fax:** 415-8349 (Open 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Mon, Thurs, Fri; Open 8:30-6:30 Tues and Wed)

**South County:** 4808 Tower Hill Rd, South Kingstown, RI 02880

**Fax:** 782-4316 (Open 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday)

**Warwick:** 195 Buttonwoods Ave, Warwick, RI 02886

**Fax:** 736-1443 (Open 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Monday through Friday)

**Woonsocket:** 800 Clinton St, 2nd Floor, Suite 201, Woonsocket, RI

02895, **Fax:** 768-3131 (Open 8:30 am to 4:00 pm, Mon, Thurs, Fri; Open 8:30-6:30 Tues and Wed)

**Please contact the URI SNAP Outreach Project if you have questions about any of the information in this booklet:  
1-866-306-0270.**

## What else do I need to know ?

- **Always open your mail from DHS right away and send them whatever information they ask for within the requested timeframe.** Not doing so could result in case closure and a loss of SNAP benefits.
- **Keep your notices from DHS.** Proving you receive SNAP may help you obtain benefits from other programs such as school meals, housing, telephone services, reduced utility bills, etc.
- **Update your address and phone number with DHS.** If your phone number or address changes, inform DHS immediately so they have a way to reach you.
- **Contact DHS within 10 days if there are changes in any of the following : income, # in household, increase or decrease in monthly expenses.** Report the change by sending in a change report form to DHS along with documentation of the change. You can get a change report form by calling the URI SNAP Outreach Project at 1-866-306-0270 or the DHS Information Line: 1-855-697-4347.
- **As long as your household remains eligible, you may continue receiving SNAP benefits.** To make sure your household is still eligible, you need to send DHS the following forms at the required time (6 months, 12 months or 24 months).
  - **Six-month interim report.** You may receive this form as early as 4 months after you start getting benefits.
  - **Recertification form.** Most people need to recertify every year to continue receiving benefits; seniors and individuals with disabilities need to recertify every two years. The recertification process requires an application and interview just like the initial application. DHS will send your recertification form prior to the due date. Complete it and send it back to DHS with the requested documentation as soon as possible. If you have questions about the recertification process, call the DHS Information line at 1-855-697-4347.

## When will DHS decide if I am eligible for SNAP?

**There are three possible timelines for eligibility determination: 30 days, 7 days or 1 day.**

For most applicants, DHS is allowed up to 30 days from the date they receive your application to make an eligibility decision. If you respond promptly to DHS requests for documents or information, the eligibility determination process will move along at a faster pace.

- **General timeline:** For most applicants, DHS has 30 days to complete an interview and determine eligibility.
- **Expedited timeline:** If a household has less than \$100 in cash and savings and less than \$150 in monthly earnings, or if a household's monthly housing expenses are greater than its monthly income, DHS is required to determine your eligibility within 7 days.
- **Same day service:** If you go into a DHS office, have all of the necessary documents with you and are able to wait to speak with a DHS worker and have your interview that day, it is possible that your eligibility can be determined in 1 day.

**To find out when your application was received, which is when your timeline begins, call the DHS Information Line at: 1-855-697-4347.**



Follow the prompts on the DHS Information Line to learn more about the status of your application.

## What is the interview process?

All applicants are required to have an interview with a DHS worker before their eligibility for SNAP benefits is determined. DHS calls this interview an “*intake*.” During the interview, the DHS worker will review your answers to questions on the application and may ask additional questions to clarify your answers. You may also be asked to submit additional documents during the interview.

### ***Where does the interview take place?***

You can choose to have the intake interview in person at a DHS office or it can be conducted by phone. DHS office locations are listed on page 11 of this pamphlet. If you request a telephone interview, the DHS worker will call you at the phone number you listed on your application at a pre-arranged time.



### ***When does the interview occur?***

If you go to a DHS office and request same day service, your interview may occur that day. If you apply online or if you mail, fax or drop off your application at a DHS office, a DHS worker will call you when they receive your application to complete the interview by phone. If you can't complete the interview when they call or if you don't get a call right away, DHS will send you a letter with the date and time of your interview and whether it will be conducted by phone or in person. You may also call the DHS Call Center (1-855-697-4347) at your convenience and ask to have an interview right then and there.

## What happens after all these steps?

After DHS receives your application, completes your interview, and reviews your documents, they will send you a letter telling you that you have either been approved or denied for SNAP .

### ***What happens if my letter says I am denied?***

- If your letter states that you are denied, you will not get SNAP benefits. You will get a letter explaining why you were denied. If you don't understand the letter you can call the URI SNAP Outreach Project at 1-866-306-0270 for help.
- If you are denied, you have a right to appeal the decision. Ask a DHS worker to explain the appeal process.

### ***What happens if my letter says I am approved?***

- If you are approved, SNAP benefits will be deposited on your EBT card on the first day of each month. You can use these benefits to buy food at *authorized* grocery stores, convenience stores and farmers' markets.
- If you went to a DHS office for your interview, you should have received an EBT card at that time.
- If you didn't get an EBT card at your in-person interview or if you completed your interview by phone, an EBT card will be mailed to you. If you have not received your card within 10 days of your approval, contact DHS right away.
- The EBT card looks and works just like a debit card. You will need to set up a PIN to use it. Keep your card in a safe place and do not throw it away.
- If you lose your EBT card, call the EBT customer service line: 1-888-979-9939.





## Documents, continued

### *What if I don't have a document I was asked for?*

- If you don't have the requested document, ask the DHS worker if there is something else you can use in its place.
- If you need help getting a document, ask the DHS worker to help you.
- Some things, such as rent or utility payments, can be verified with a note from a landlord or co-worker.
- Ask the DHS worker if the document is needed to determine your *eligibility* or your *benefit amount*.
  - ◆ Documents for eligibility must be provided in order to start receiving benefits.
  - ◆ If the requested document is needed to determine the amount of benefits you will receive, you may still be found eligible and begin to receive benefits. However, your benefit amount may change when you send in the additional documentation requested.
- If the DHS worker asks you for additional documents during your interview, you **MUST** send them in as soon as possible. If DHS does not receive them within 10 days of the request, you will get a denial notice in the mail.
- However, even after you get the denial letter, you may still be eligible if you send in your documents to DHS within 60 days of your initial application date.
- If you send in the documents to DHS more than 60 days after your initial application, you will have to submit a new application in order to get your SNAP benefits.

### *What if I need to reschedule my interview?*

If you need to reschedule your interview, call the DHS Call Center at 1-855-697-4347 between the hours of 8:30 am and 3:30 pm, Monday through Friday. You may also go into your local office before the scheduled date to reschedule your interview and/or to see if you if it could be done sooner.

### *What if I need help with the interview?*

If you unable to answer the interview questions or if you would prefer to have someone else do the interview for you, you can appoint a friend, family member or trusted individual as an 'authorized representative' to answer questions on your behalf. You can list the authorized representative's name on your application or, if you have already submitted your application, you can submit a separate form to DHS appointing an 'authorized representative'.



An authorized representative has permission to talk to DHS about your case, answer questions and sign forms for you. The authorized representative *does not* have power over your finances or access to your benefits.

If you need an **interpreter** at your interview, DHS must provide one for you. Call DHS before your interview to make sure the interpreter will be there at the scheduled time. You may also bring a person of your choosing to the interview to translate for you. Just tell the DHS worker that you would like someone to be with you and they have to honor your wishes.

## What documents do I need to provide?

Whenever someone applies for SNAP, the DHS workers must ask for documents to verify the responses on the application. Documents are only necessary for household members applying for benefits. Photocopies are recommended.

### Below is a list of items you may need to provide:

- 1) **Proof of identity** for each person listed on the application (one of the below):
  - Birth certificate
  - Driver's license or other photo ID
  - US passport
- 2) For non-citizens who are applying for benefits, **verification of alien status**
  - Visa/resident alien card
- 3) **Social security number:**

You do not need to provide a Social Security card, but if you have never had a card you will need to apply for one.
4. **Proof of Rhode Island residency**

Provide documentation that shows your home address such as a lease, bank statement, personal check, a bill or other mail with your address on it.
- 5) **Proof of earned and unearned income for each household member who has income.**
  - Paystubs for last month worked
  - Income tax return if self employed
  - Worker's compensation
  - TDI/Unemployment Insurance
  - Social Security letter
  - Child support/alimony received
  - Proof that income has ended (letter from former employer, termination or lay-off notice)

6.) **Proof of payment of court-ordered child support**--one of the following:

- Cancelled checks/money orders
- Copy of the court order

7.) **Proof of disability**—one of the following:

- Letter from Social Security
- A DHS disability form completed by your doctor

8.) If over the age of 59 or disabled, **proof of medical expenses** not covered by insurance (all that apply)

- Prescriptions
- Co-payments
- Health care premiums
- Medical equipment such as glasses, hearing aids, etc.

### *How should I get my documents to DHS?*

- You can send your documents to DHS along with your application.
- You can bring your documents with you for an in-office interview.
- You can mail, fax or drop off your documents at a DHS office if you have a telephone interview.

(See page 11 for a listing of all of the DHS office locations.)

***If you drop off your documents at a DHS office, be sure to ask for a receipt.***

