

## **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** ***Frequently Asked Questions***

### **What is SNAP?**

SNAP stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as food stamps). SNAP helps low-income people and families buy the food they need for good health. You apply for benefits by completing a State application form. Benefits are provided on an electronic card that is used like an ATM card and accepted at most grocery stores.

### **Are SNAP benefits considered welfare?**

No. SNAP is a nutrition assistance program. It helps low income people buy nutritious food. It is not welfare.

### **Where can I get an application?**

Your local Division of Family Resources (DFR) office can provide you an application or you may apply online by going to the [“Where Do I Apply”](#) web page and selecting the county you live in.

### **How long does it take to get benefits?**

Normally the DFR office has 30 days to make a decision on your case; however, if you meet certain criteria you may be determined to be eligible for expedited service which means you should have your benefits within seven days of applying. The determination about expedited service is made when you turn in your application based on the information provided at that time.

### **Can I get emergency SNAP benefits today?**

When an application is turned in it is reviewed for expedited (or emergency) service. This review is based on the information entered on the application. It is important for you to fill out the expedited questions on the application so you can be considered for this service.

If you qualify, you will be given an interview appointment for the same day or the following day and if you qualify for expedited benefits you will receive them by the 7<sup>th</sup> day after applying. Benefits are NEVER received the same day as the application.

To qualify for expedited benefits you must:

- Have less than \$150 in gross monthly income and liquid resources (cash/ checking/savings) of \$100 or less in the month of the application.
- Have monthly rent/mortgage and utilities that are more than your gross monthly income and liquid resources.

The only verification needed for the first month is identity. Other verification may be pending until up to the 30<sup>th</sup> day. You will not receive any more benefits until the pended verification is provided.

**What do I have to provide when I apply?**

You will be asked to provide the names, dates of birth, and Social Security Numbers for all persons living in your home. In addition you will need to verify the income received by each person in your household. Also, you will need to provide proof of any court ordered child support paid by a member of your household as well as any payments for shelter (rent or mortgage and utility costs). If there is a member who is disabled or over age 60 and has out of pocket medical expenses (that is not covered by Medicare, Medicaid or other insurance that you are responsible to pay) you will need to provide verification to get a deduction for these expenses. Any dependent child or adult care costs should also be provided. There may also be other verification requested depending on your household's specific situation.

**What happens at the interview appointment?**

The worker will ask questions about household composition, income, resources, and other pertinent information needed to determine eligibility. You will be given or mailed a form listing all needed information with a due date. The information should be received by the worker on or before that date. You will be mailed a notice regarding your eligibility after your case has been processed and your eligibility has been determined. The notice lists your appeal rights if you do not agree with the decision.

**Who must be included together for SNAP?**

Certain persons living together must be included and are considered in a mandatory relationship. This includes married persons, children under age 22 who live with their parent(s) and persons who eat together. Other persons may not receive benefits such as ineligible aliens, students who do not meet certain criteria, persons who have previously been convicted of a SNAP fraud and boarders.

**Can you get SNAP benefits if you get unemployment?**

Yes, people who get unemployment may still qualify for SNAP benefits.

**Can you get SNAP benefits if you get SSI, disability-related Medicaid or other disability or insurance benefits?**

Yes, and if you get the SNAP benefits it will not affect the other benefits.

**Can you get SNAP benefits if you have any resources?**

Yes, your household may have up to \$2250 in resources (for most households). Households that contain an elderly or disabled member may have up to \$3250. Some assets like your home and car do not count if the car(s) are used for household transportation. Other personal things like clothes, jewelry, furniture and household goods also do not count.

**Why can't I get SNAP benefits if I have a felony drug conviction?**

There is a federal law that states anyone with a drug conviction after 8/22/1996 is ineligible to receive SNAP benefits indefinitely. It is possible for state legislatures to override this federal law. To date, Indiana has not.

**Can a student get SNAP benefits?**

A student must meet one of several criteria in order to be eligible to receive benefits, They must be working at least 20 hours per week (and receiving pay for the work), be responsible for a child under six years old, be a single parent with a child under 12, participating in a higher education funded by Workforce Investment Act, receiving TANF benefits or participating in a work and training program.

**What income is countable for SNAP?**

Most common income is countable, including earnings, unemployment compensation benefits, Social Security, Social Security Insurance, pensions and contributions. There are some types of unearned income that are exempt by federal law.

**How much SNAP benefits will I receive?**

The dollar amount of benefits your household receives depends on the number of people in your household and your monthly net income. It is based on a table determined by the federal government since SNAP is governed by the federal government but administered by state government.

**What can I buy with my SNAP benefits?**

You can use your benefits like cash to buy food items at any store, supermarket or co-op approved by the USDA. Items that can be purchased with SNAP benefits include breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables, meats, fish and poultry, dairy products and seeds and plants which produce food for the household to eat.

**How do I spend my SNAP benefits?**

Once it is determined that you are eligible for SNAP benefits, an electronic request for a "Hoosier Works" card is automatically made and a card is mailed to your reported mailing address. You should normally receive it within 3-5 days. If you have previously received SNAP benefits under your name you will not be mailed a new Hoosier Works card; your benefits will be put on your old card. If you have lost your old card or it is damaged you will need to call Customer Service at 1-877-768-5098 to obtain a new card. Once this is done the old card will no longer work.

**Will SNAP benefits provide all of my household's food needs?**

No. SNAP benefits are not intended to purchase all of a household's meals for the month. Benefits are intended to supplement the household's other income to help purchase healthy meals during the month. Eligible households are issued benefits monthly based on the [Thrifty Food Plan](#), which is a model diet plan established by the National Academy of Sciences. Households that have no countable income receive the maximum allotment for the number of persons in the assistance group.

### **What if I have questions about my case or benefits?**

You may call our toll free number at 1-800-403-0864 to be connected with the Division of Family Resources.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), 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. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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