



END HUNGER CONNECTICUT!

SNAP FAQs

<p>Hungry?</p> <p>Call the End Hunger CT! SNAP Info Line 866.974.SNAP (7627)</p>	
<p> END HUNGER CONNECTICUT! Making Room at the Table</p> <p>ctsnap.org</p>	<p>Get Help with SNAP Applications and Redeterminations</p> <p>  Food Research & Action Center</p> <p><small>This institution is an equal opportunity provider</small></p> <p>Hungry no more.</p>
<p>¿Tiene hambre?</p> <p>Llame la línea de información de SNAP de End Hunger CT! 866.974.SNAP (7627)</p>	
<p> END HUNGER CONNECTICUT! Making Room at the Table</p> <p>ctsnap.org</p>	<p>Ayuda con las aplicaciones de SNAP Y Redeterminaciones</p> <p>  Food Research & Action Center</p> <p><small>Esta institución es un proveedor que ofrece igualdad de oportunidades</small></p> <p>No Mas Hambre.</p>

SNAP FAQs

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SNAP FAQs

- **What is SNAP?**

- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, is a nutrition program that helps income-eligible families purchase food. Benefits are distributed monthly on an Electronic Benefits Transaction (EBT) card.

- **What types of food can be purchased with SNAP benefits?**

- Any food item that you can bring home and use to prepare a meal can be bought with SNAP. This includes: fruits and vegetables, grains and rice, breads and cereals, meat, poultry, fish, dairy products, etc.
- You cannot buy alcohol, cigarettes or tobacco; non-food items such as pet foods, soaps, paper products, hygiene products, household supplies, vitamins and medicines; or foods made to be eaten in the store or that are hot when you buy them.
- You can purchase Ensure, baby food, and baby formula with SNAP.

- **Where can SNAP benefits be used?**

- SNAP can be used to buy food at participating grocery stores, farmers markets, and other places that sell food.

- **Are SNAP benefits counted as income?**

- No, SNAP benefits are not counted as income. Therefore they will not affect your taxes or other income-based payments.



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- **How do I know if I am eligible for SNAP?**

- SNAP eligibility is based on the number of people in a household and the household's combined gross monthly income (before taxes and deductions). You can call End Hunger CT's SNAP Call Center to be prescreened over the phone with one of our advocates to see if you are eligible (1-866-974-7627). It takes just a few minutes! You can also visit our online screener at ctsnap.org.

- **What is a "SNAP household"?**

- A SNAP household is defined as *"individuals who live together and buy and prepare their food together."*
- Certain relationships are legally required to file as a household. These include:
 - Married couples living together.
 - Parents living together with their children under the age of 22, even in cases of separation or divorce.
 - Children under age 22 who reside with 1 or both parents.

- **What is the monthly income limit for a household?**

- The monthly income limit for a household may vary each fiscal year. The amounts are updated on October 1st of each year. Please visit the DSS SNAP Webpage for the latest and most up-to-date guidance: <https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/SNAP/Supplemental-Nutrition-Assistance-Program---SNAP/Eligibility>.

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▪ What types of income must be listed?

- Earned income and unearned income
 - Earned income is defined as income received from a job or self-employment.
 - Unearned income is any other monthly income received, such as Social Security Benefits, Social Security Disability Benefits, Unemployment Benefits, distributions from IRAs or Annuities, Rental Income, Child Support, Alimony, and other types of income.

▪ Are assets counted? If so, what is the asset limit?

- As of June 2009, CT no longer has an asset test for households whose income is under 185% of the federal poverty level. However, seniors or disabled whose income is over 185% of the federal poverty level do have an asset limit. You can check the DSS SNAP Webpage for the latest details: <https://portal.ct.gov/DSS/SNAP/Supplemental-Nutrition-Assistance-Program---SNAP/Eligibility>.
- Not all assets are counted though; you can own a home and/or a motor vehicle and still be eligible for SNAP. Certain other types of assets, such as retirement accounts, are also not counted.
- ***If you aren't sure whether your assets would make you eligible for SNAP, call an advocate at our SNAP Call Center to find out!***

▪ I'm not a US citizen—can I apply for SNAP?

- Legal immigrants who have lived in the country for 5 years may qualify for Federal SNAP.
- Legal immigrants who haven't been in the U.S. for 5 years, but have lived in Connecticut for 6 months or more may qualify for State funded SNAP.
- The children of undocumented immigrants may qualify for SNAP. The benefit amount will be based on the parent's income.
- Call our Call Center to speak to an advocate to find out if you're eligible!

▪ I am a full time college student—am I eligible for SNAP?

- You may qualify if you:
 - Work at least 20 hours a week.
 - Take part in a state or federally funded work study.
 - Have a dependent under the age of 6 in your household.
 - Are a part-time college student and you are income eligible.
 - Call us at our toll-free SNAP line, 1-866-974-7627, to speak with an Associate to see if you are eligible, or for more information you can go to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/students>.

▪ I am currently homeless—can I apply for SNAP?

- Yes you can, as long as you meet the other conditions of the program such as income or asset tests. If needed, you can pick up any paperwork and your EBT card at your local DSS office.

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- **I'm moving to Connecticut soon. Can I apply for SNAP now?**
 - Not yet. You may apply for SNAP in CT once you have established residency in the state. This means that you are either physically living here or you have already signed a lease agreement. Additionally, if you are receiving SNAP in a different state, you first have to cancel your benefits and receive the termination letter, before you can apply for SNAP in CT.
- **I am age 60+ and/or disabled. Could out-of-pocket medical costs qualify me for more SNAP benefits?**
 - Possibly. You may submit out-of-pocket medical costs including insurance premiums, copays, prescriptions, and more, provided you can verify the expenses with copies of bills or payment receipts. DSS will calculate and make final determinations.
- **I'm pregnant; can I add my unborn child to my SNAP household?**
 - Not yet. You may add your child only once he/she is born. If you are pregnant and applying for the first time, you may apply with other members of your household.
- **I'm under the age of 22 and live with one or both of my parents. Can I apply on my own?**
 - You cannot apply alone, but you may be able to apply with your parents if you meet the income guidelines as a household. This is the case even if you pay for your own cell phone or other bills. According to federal SNAP rules, if you reside with your parent(s) and are under the age of 22, then you must apply with them and other members of the household. Everyone's income must be listed.
- **I only qualify for the minimum amount in SNAP benefits. Should I still apply?**
 - Yes! A little goes a long way and can supplement your grocery budget so you can spend your own money on other necessities. You may also let the benefits "rollover" to the next month if you do not need them during a certain month. As long as you use your benefits within 1 year they will not be taken away.
 - If your household situation ever changes due to a change in income, number of people in the household, or medical expenses (age 60+), your monthly benefit may increase. It is easier to make these changes once you are on the program rather than waiting to apply down the road.

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- **How can I utilize an EHC! SNAP Associate?**

- EHC! SNAP Associates are happy to make the SNAP application and renewal processes easier for our clients. From the initial application through renewals, we can help you every step of the way. We are here to assist you to the best of our capabilities with any SNAP issues, concerns, or questions that may arise. Our team is bilingual in English and Spanish, and can also assist in others languages with a translator on the line.

- **How can I apply for SNAP with End Hunger Connecticut! (EHC!)?**

- EHC! offers application assistance over the phone through our toll-free SNAP line. Call us at 1-866-974-7627 to speak with an advocate, or email us at SNAP@endhungerct.org. You will be screened first to determine if you are eligible, which only takes a few minutes. If you are eligible, we can do the application over the phone with you and submit it to DSS electronically. This way, you do not need to travel to a DSS office.

- **Can End Hunger Connecticut! help with SNAP renewals, including the Periodic Review Form (PRF), or Redetermination?**

- Yes! We can complete and submit all SNAP renewals on your behalf. Our tracking processes will ensure that your paperwork will be sent directly to DSS in a timely manner and your benefits will not be canceled erroneously. Please call our SNAP line for more information on how we can help with your SNAP renewal.

- **Do you offer “walk-in” appointments for SNAP application, Periodic Review Form (PRF), or Redetermination assistance?**

- No, we do not offer walk-in services at our office but are more than happy to assist you over the phone or email. Call us at 1-866-974- 7627 to speak with an advocate or email us at SNAP@endhungerct.org.

- **Does EHC! help with any other assistance programs?**

- EHC! only offers SNAP assistance. For more information on our work please visit endhungerct.org. For any other assistance or program inquiries you can call the CT Infoline at: 2-1-1.

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- **What kind of information will I need to provide for the SNAP application?**
 - In order to complete the application for SNAP we will need Social Security numbers and dates of birth for all household members, as well as detailed questions about living situation, members of household, all types of income, recent employment history, and more.
- **After submitting my application, what are the next steps?**
 - Once your application has been processed, DSS will call you for a phone interview. This can be any day within 30 business days after you submitted your application. The phone interview takes 5-10 minutes and it covers the application questions. It's an additional step DSS takes to verify information.
 - You will also need to submit copies of verification documents verifying the information that you entered in the application. These verification documents include everything listed below (see next question) and must be received by DSS within 30 days of your application date.
- **What verification documents are required to complete my application?**
 - Depending on your living situation, the documents needed will vary, but the list of necessary verification documents are:
 - Photo ID
 - Living Arrangement Form
 - Verification of your Income:
 - Last 4 paystubs, if paid weekly
 - Last 2 paystubs, if paid every-other week
 - Copy of a statement verifying the gross monthly amount (before taxes and deductions) for other types of income, including: Social Security, disability income, pensions, annuities, IRA, child support, alimony, and more.
 - Verification of your rent or mortgage, property taxes, and homeowners insurance
 - Copy of a recent utility bill
 - If you're over the age of 59 or disabled, copies of monthly medical expenses

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- **I just submitted my application—when will I hear from DSS?**
 - DSS has 30 business days to get back to you, so realistically it can be any day within those 30 days.
- **Can my application be pushed through faster than the usual 30 business days?**
 - If your application qualifies as an expedited application then it should be processed within 7 business days. Expedited applications are if applicants/households have less than \$150.00 total in cash or if their shelter cost is greater than their gross monthly income. Only a photo ID is required for first month's approval. However, all verifications must be provided within 30 days of the application to continue receiving benefits.
- **I just submitted my application online—can I speed up the process?**
 - You can call the Benefit Center directly to complete your phone interview. The number is 1-855-626-6632.
- **I can't get through the Benefit Center! Is there another way to check if DSS received my documents or SNAP Renewal?**
 - MyAccounts allow DSS clients to view benefits, track and see if DSS has received a document, see if a document has been reviewed, or submit basic household changes
 - At our call center (1-866-974-7627), EHC! SNAP advocates are happy to help you create and navigate your MyAccount.
- **How can I create a MyAccount?**
 - First, have your Client ID Number, birthday, and the last four digits of your social security number ready.
 - Go to www.connect.ct.gov. The third box on the right indicates "MyAccount". Click the link below it that says "Create an Account."
 - Follow the prompts to create a username, password, and 4 security questions.
 - Follow the prompts and re-enter your username and password.
 - Follow the prompts on the "Case Association" Page. Enter your client ID number (CID), year of birth, and last four digits of your Social Security number. This will then link you to your account information.
- **I have forgotten my password and username for MyAccount—how do I reset it?**
 - You can call 1-877-874-1612 to reset. Have your Client ID Number, birthday, and social security number ready.

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▪ What are my options for notifying DSS of any changes?

- Sign on to your My Account (see Page 8 for how to create a My Account if you don't currently have one). You can log on to your My Account at www.connect.ct.gov.
- Once you have logged in you will be directed to your benefit page. At the top of the page, click the link that says "Report Change." Follow the prompts to report your change.
- You can also mail the changes that you need to report to DSS at the address listed, along with the verification documents, or go to your local DSS office to report the changes as well.

▪ What changes should I report to DSS?

- *Any change in income*
 - You start employment
 - You end employment
 - You change employers
 - You start to receive unemployment compensation
 - Your unemployment compensation ends
 - You start to receive Social Security
 - You start to receive child support payments
 - Any other changes in income over \$100.00 per month
- *Changes in living arrangements*
 - Someone moves into your household
 - Someone moves out of your household
 - You move
 - You get married
 - You get divorced
 - You become pregnant
 - You give birth
 - You enter a drug treatment program, rehab facility or hospital for over 30 days
- *Other changes*
 - You receive an inheritance
 - You receive a lawsuit settlement
 - You enroll in school, change schools, quit or graduate

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- **I received a letter from DSS stating either a denial or changes in my benefits, which I disagree with. What can I do?**
 - You can submit a Hearing Request for DSS to review your case. You may request a SNAP hearing within **90** days of the date of the notice of action. The Hearing Request Form can be found with any letter sent to you by DSS.
 - For assistance with Hearing Requests, contact EHC's SNAP Advocates! 866-974-7627. They will help you through the process.
 - Hearing requests can be done in writing, telephone, or fax.
 - By writing: A Hearing Request Form can be filled out and mailed in to DSS. The form is included in all paperwork mailed by DSS.
 - By Fax: Fax your Hearing Request Form to 860-424-5729.
 - By phone: The number to call is 860-424-5760 to request a SNAP hearing. If you are leaving a voice mail, provide the following information: your name (must be spelled out), client ID number, address, telephone number and area code, and a brief explanation why you are asking for a hearing (i.e. denial, discontinuance, reduction).
- **It's the beginning of the month and I haven't received my SNAP yet—why?**
 - This could unfortunately be for any number of reasons. You may have needed to complete a PRF (Periodic Review Form) or a Redetermination form. If DSS did not receive these forms on time, then they would stop your benefits. If DSS was notified or made aware of changes to your household's information and you did not provide the needed verification documents on time, this could also be why. In order to try to determine the cause of your stopped benefits you can go online to your My Account, which can state why a client's benefits were cut off, or you can call the Benefit Center (1-855-626-6632) to wait to speak to a DSS worker.

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- **How do I activate my new EBT card?**

- First, call 1-888-328-2666, which is provided on the back of your EBT card. Once connected you will be asked to enter your card number. Enter the *entire* 18-digit number on the front of your card. Once it is entered you will be asked to select a 4-digit pin. Once you have selected your pin number, your card is activated and ready to use!

- **I tried activating my EBT card, but once enter in my 18-digit card number; it comes back with an error or unknown number message. What does this mean?**

- DSS can send out your EBT card before you have actually been approved for your SNAP benefits. This means that there is something that is holding up your benefits from being approved. It can be for any number of reasons, including: you may still need to complete your phone interview with DSS or they may be missing a required verification document. You will have to call the benefit center (1-855-626-6632) in order to find what is needed to be approved.
- For questions regarding your My Account see our information above.

- **How do I check the balance of my EBT Card?**

- There is a number and website provided on the back of your card that tells you where you can check your balance. You can call 1-888-328-2666 and once you enter your 18-digit card number your balance will be provided to you. You can also check your card balance online at www.ebtaccount.jpmorgan.com.



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- **What is the number for DSS Benefit Center?**
 - 855-626-6632.
- **What are the hours of the DSS Benefit Center?**
 - The DSS Benefits Center takes phone calls between 7:30am and 3:30pm. The best time to call is early in the morning, around 7:30am.
- **What is the mailing address for DSS?**
 - DSS Connect Scanning Center, PO Box 1320, Manchester, CT 06045.*
 - ***NOTE:** Address for Hearing Requests is:
 - Department of Social Services Office of Legal Counsel, Regulations and Administrative Hearings
 - 55 Farmington Avenue
 - Hartford, CT 06105