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## Steps To Help You Fill Your Grocery Bag

*Learn if You or Someone You Know Might Be Eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*

As of October 1, 2008, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the new name for the Federal Food Stamp Program. Your State may use a different name, but it is still the same program. The new name reflects changes that make it easier to qualify for nutrition benefits and an increase in benefit amount.



### 1 Use the Internet Prescreening Tool.

To find out if you could be eligible, check out the Internet prescreening tool at [www.snap-step1.usda.gov](http://www.snap-step1.usda.gov). Your local library usually has computers you can use.

### 2 Call or Go to Your Local SNAP Office.

If you think you might be eligible, call or go to your local SNAP office. Look in the blue pages of your phone book under "Social Services" or "Human Services" to find the number. If you need help finding your local SNAP office, call the national toll-free SNAP information line at **1-800-221-5689**.

### 3 Get an Application Form.

There are five ways to get an application form:

- Pick it up at a local SNAP office, or
- Call the local SNAP office. Ask the SNAP worker to mail it to you, or
- Ask the SNAP worker if there are other places where you can pick up the form, or
- Print the form from your State's Web page, or
- Apply online. (This is not yet available in all States.)

### 4 Fill Out the Application Form.

Fill out the SNAP application form as much as you can. If you need help, ask the SNAP worker. You can also ask a friend or people who work at places like legal services or food banks to help you fill out the form.

### 5 Return the Application Form to Your Local SNAP Office.

Get the application form to your local SNAP office as soon as possible by taking it to the local SNAP office, mailing or faxing it, or by submitting it online where States provide this option. If you pick up your application form at a SNAP office, put your name and street address on the form and sign it. Leave that part of the form (usually the first page) at the SNAP office. This starts the process and helps you get healthy food sooner, if you are eligible. Take the rest of the form with you to fill out later.

## 6 Make an Appointment for an Interview.

Make an appointment for an interview with a SNAP worker. If you are at a SNAP office, ask the SNAP worker to write down what you need to bring to the interview. If you are calling for an appointment, ask the SNAP worker what you need to bring.

Here are examples of some papers that you might need to bring:

- Driver's license or State identification card;
- Birth certificate;
- Pay stubs;
- Agency letter showing money received, like Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Veterans Affairs benefits (VA), child support, alimony, unemployment, retirement;
- Rental agreement or letter from your landlord, or mortgage statement that shows your address;
- Utility bills, like electric, gas, water;
- Cancelled checks for daycare or child support payments for your child(ren); and
- Medical bills that you pay (if you are 60 or older or disabled).

## 7 Get Papers or Other Information.

Get the papers or find the other information that the SNAP worker needs to finish your application. If you need help getting the papers, ask the SNAP worker, a relative, a friend, or a community representative to help you.

## 8 Go to the Interview.

Go to the interview with the SNAP worker. Bring your papers with you. Ask the SNAP worker to make copies. Keep your original papers. If you need help filling out the application form or getting the information needed to finish your form, ask the SNAP worker. You may bring a friend or community representative to help you understand how to complete the process. If you can't go to the SNAP office for the interview, ask for a telephone interview. You can also have a friend or relative go in your place.

## 9 If You Are Approved, Go Grocery Shopping.

If you are approved for SNAP benefits, you will receive an EBT card (similar to a bank card or ATM card), and your SNAP benefits will be transferred electronically to the EBT card. To find stores that welcome SNAP benefits, go to the SNAP Retailer Locator at [www.snapretailerlocator.com](http://www.snapretailerlocator.com) and click the "Select Location" link. Enter a street address, city and State, or zip code. Now you're ready to go grocery shopping! Add lots of fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods, and other good food to your shopping cart. Ask your local SNAP worker for information about nutrition education (SNAP-Ed) classes for you and your family. SNAP-Ed can help you learn more about stretching your food dollar; shopping; cooking easy, quick, tasty and healthy meals; and being more physically active for better health.

## 10 If You Are Not Approved, Ask Why.

Call or visit the SNAP office where you applied to ask why you were not approved. You may ask to speak with the SNAP worker's boss. If you think there is a mistake, ask for a "fair hearing." This means that a State person will meet with you and the local SNAP office to discuss your application. There is no cost for a fair hearing.

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### Need More Information on SNAP?

**Call: 1-800-221-5689**

**Visit: [www.fns.usda.gov/snap](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap)**

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