



**L E G A L  
S E R V I C E S**

**I N C O R P O R A T E D**

## **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)**

### **WHAT IS SNAP?**

SNAP is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as food stamps. It is a program of special payments from the government that people with low income can use to buy food. In New York City, it is run by the Human Resources Administration (HRA).

### **HOW DO I APPLY FOR SNAP?**

You can apply online through [NYC.gov/ACCESSNYC](https://www.nyc.gov/ACCESSNYC). You can also go into a SNAP center to fill out and submit a paper application. You will need documents to prove the identity, age, marital status, residency, citizenship/immigration status, and income of everyone in the household. You will also need your lease or other proof of your rent or housing expenses, and utility bills if you have them.

### **CAN I GET SNAP WITHOUT APPLYING?**

It depends. People who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and live alone, are automatically enrolled in food stamps through a program called NYSNIP. If you pay for utilities, you can usually receive the maximum SNAP amount a household of one through this program. If you do not pay for utilities, NYSNIP will sometimes give you less than the SNAP program would. In this case, you can ask to opt out of NYSNIP and join the normal SNAP program.

### **CAN I QUALIFY FOR SNAP IF I AM AN IMMIGRANT?**

SNAP eligibility for immigrants is based on two things. The first is your immigration status. The second is a variety of factors including your age, any disabilities you have, when you came to the U.S., and if your immigration status has changed since you arrived.

As each case is different, please contact us if you have questions or need help applying for SNAP for you or for others.

### **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET SNAP BENEFITS?**

If you are eligible, you should receive benefits within 30 days after you apply. You can receive SNAP more quickly if you have less than \$100 in cash or resources available, your monthly rent and utility bills are more than your monthly income and resources, or you are otherwise in an emergency situation. If you are eligible for this expedited processing, you can receive SNAP within 5 days of applying.

## **HOW MUCH WILL I GET EACH MONTH?**

The amount you receive depends on the number of people in your household, your income, your rent, and whether you pay for utilities such as heat, gas, and electricity. If your income or rent changes, that could affect your SNAP benefits.

## **WHAT DO I HAVE TO REPORT TO HRA?**

You should tell HRA any time you move or if there is any change in your income, your rent, or the number of people in your household.

## **WHAT DO I DO IF I STOP RECEIVING SNAP BUT MY RENT OR INCOME HASN'T CHANGED?**

You can file for a fair hearing. You should file for a hearing as soon as you receive a notice telling you that your benefits will change, and include a copy of the notice with your fair hearing request. If you file for a hearing within **10 days** from the date of the notice, you can ask for aid to continue, which means that HRA will not change your benefits while you wait for the hearing date. You have **90 days** from the date of the notice to ask for a fair hearing. If you do not receive a notice, file for a fair hearing as soon as you notice the change in your benefits and say in the fair hearing request that you did not receive a notice.

To request a fair hearing, you can:

- Go to 14 Boerum Place, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Brooklyn, New York 11201
- Call 800-342-3334
- Visit <http://otda.ny.gov/hearings/request/#online>
- Fax a fair hearing request to 518-473-6735
- Write to the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Office of Administrative Hearings, P.O. Box 1930, Albany, NY 12201-1930

Be sure to have the notice on hand with you when you request a fair hearing and/or aid to continue. **Keep copies of everything you send.**

## **WHO CAN I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?**

You may call MFY Legal Services, Inc.'s Government Benefits Project at 212-417-3732 on Mondays from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

**DISCLAIMER: This fact sheet gives general information for NYC residents; it is NOT legal advice.**