



SNAP Guide for Immigrants and Mixed-Status Families

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Immigrant and mixed-status households may be eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). SNAP is a federal nutrition program that provides monthly benefits on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card to eligible individuals to purchase food. This SNAP guide for noncitizens and mixed-status families will assist people with determining eligibility and provide helpful information on how to apply for SNAP benefits.

Which Noncitizens May Be Eligible to Receive SNAP?

Some noncitizens may qualify for SNAP benefits if they meet specific immigration and program requirements. Eligibility depends on immigration status and other factors such as income and household size. The following categories of noncitizens may be eligible to receive SNAP benefits and are considered “qualified” immigrants:

- lawful permanent residents (LPRs) or green card holders subject to a five-year waiting period, with some exceptions
- LPRs under 18 years old, not subject to the five-year waiting period
- Cuban or Haitian entrants
- Compact of Free Association (COFA) citizens

Can a Noncitizen Apply for Other Eligible Family Members?

Yes, a noncitizen can apply on behalf of other eligible family members as a “nonapplicant.” This means you are submitting the application only for your children or other eligible household members, but you are not applying for yourself. For example, you can be a noncitizen applying on behalf of your U.S. citizen children.

Nonapplicants are not required to share any information about immigration status if they are not applying for themselves. Only the family members that are applying for benefits need to share their immigration status. The Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS) is not authorized to ask for any information about your immigration status if you are not applying for yourself.

Will Receiving SNAP Affect My Immigration Status?

In July, the Department of Homeland Security released the public charge final rule that participation in public benefit programs may now be weighed against certain immigrants applying for lawful permanent residence. At this time, applying

for SNAP will not result in a public charge and will not be considered in any determinations of public charge. Applying for and/or receiving SNAP will not affect your ability to:

- remain in the U.S.,
- obtain a green card/lawful permanent resident status,
- keep a green card/legal permanent resident status, or
- become a U.S. citizen.

What Are the Income Limits for SNAP?

SNAP households must meet gross income and net income tests. If your gross monthly income is at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (FPL) and your net monthly income is at or below 100 percent of the FPL, you may be eligible for SNAP. If there is an older adult (over 60 years old) or a person with disabilities in your household and your household income is above 200 percent FPL, you might still be eligible if you have high expenses.

What Documents Do I Need to Apply for SNAP Benefits?

- proof of identity
- proof of Maryland residency
- proof of income
- proof of shelter, utility, or child/elder care expenses
- proof of medical expenses in the last three months if they are in excess of \$35 for disabled individuals or older adults

How Long Will It Take to Receive SNAP Benefits?

After applying for SNAP, a phone or in-person interview with DHS is required. It can take up to 30 days to receive a decision about SNAP benefits. However, expedited SNAP benefits are usually communicated within a week if you meet expedited income requirements.

How Can Noncitizens and Mixed-Status Families Who Reside in Maryland Apply for SNAP

- **In-person:** Go to a local Department of Social Services (DSS) office.
- **By phone:** Call Maryland Hunger Solutions’ SNAP Hotline at 866-821-5552.
- **Online:** Visit <https://benefits.maryland.gov/> to complete a SNAP application through the OneApp.