

## Texas SNAP Food Benefits Fact Sheet

The Texas SNAP Food Benefits program, previously known as Food Stamps, helps individuals and households pay for nutritious food. Payments are credited to the household's electronic card, the same card that is used for cash assistance payments. You can use SNAP benefits to buy food at most grocery stores and supermarkets. You cannot use SNAP benefits to buy non-food items, alcoholic beverages, and pet food.

### Household

A SNAP household consists of people who live together and buy and prepare food together. Some people who live together in the home, such as a spouse or child, are required members of a SNAP household whether or not they buy and prepare food together. One residence (house, apartment, etc.) may include more than one SNAP household if the people do not buy and prepare food together. Household members must live in the state where they are applying for benefits.

In Texas, a person who lives with the applicant and who is known publicly as the applicant's husband or wife must be included in the SNAP household, regardless of whether the two are actually married. The Benefit Bank does not ask about this type of relationship. However, the applicant's SNAP benefit amount may decrease if an eligibility worker determines that this type of relationship exists.

### Interview

After completing a SNAP application, households must have a face-to-face interview with an eligibility worker before receiving benefits, and at least once every 12 months after receiving benefits. If household situations make a face-to-face interview difficult, it may be possible to receive approval for a telephone interview.

### Emergency SNAP Food Benefits

If a household meets certain eligibility requirements, the household will be able to receive SNAP benefits within 24 hours. This faster process is also called expedited SNAP. To be approved for emergency SNAP, **at least one** of the following must be true for the household:

- All members are migrant or seasonal farm workers, their liquid resources do not exceed \$100, and they are deemed to be destitute;
- Liquid resources total \$100 or less and countable monthly gross income is less than \$150; or
- Combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than monthly shelter expenses.

No verification of citizenship, immigration status, income, resources, or expenses is necessary to receive emergency SNAP benefits, but the household is still required to provide this information in order to continue receiving SNAP food benefits. Once all household information has been verified by an eligibility worker, the amount of the benefit may change.

### Eligibility Categories

The Benefit Bank asks questions to help determine a household's eligibility for SNAP Food Benefits. This includes collecting information about household income, resources, and expenses. Additional categories may impact eligibility for individuals. In cases of individual ineligibility, the rest of the household can still receive benefits if they are eligible, but a payment will not be included for the ineligible person. These categories include:

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### **Immigration Status**

Most legal immigrants can get SNAP benefits if they are otherwise eligible. The general rule is that legal immigrants can get benefits after they have been in the United States for five years, and some immigrants can get benefits right away. Individuals applying for SNAP benefits must give the SNAP office Social Security Numbers for everyone in the household who will receive SNAP benefits. Again, even if you cannot get SNAP benefits because you do not have a Social Security Number, the other people in your household can still receive benefits if they are eligible.

### **College Enrollment**

An individual who is enrolled at least half time in a college may be ineligible to receive benefits. However, there are many exceptions to this rule, including exceptions for individuals who are employed, participating in work-study, or responsible for the care of a young child.

### **Other Considerations**

Additional factors that The Benefit Bank does *not* screen for may impact the eligibility of an individual. These include:

- **Work Status**

Individuals between the ages of 18 and 49 are generally required to work or be enrolled in an Employment and Training Program to receive SNAP benefits. You may be exempt from work requirements if any of the following apply:

- You are disabled;
- You are receiving cash assistance (TANF);
- You take care of a disabled person or dependent child under age 6 in your household;
- You are receiving unemployment compensation;
- You participate in an alcohol or drug addiction treatment and rehabilitation program; or
- You are a student enrolled at least half-time (as defined by the school).

- **Intentional Program Violation**

Persons who have committed fraud under SNAP in any state may be ineligible for SNAP benefits in Texas for a specified period of time or for life.

- **“Fleeing Felon”**

Individuals who are avoiding prosecution or custody for a crime are not eligible for SNAP benefits.