

SNAP benefits deposited to your EBT card account. You will then use your EBT card to buy food at the grocery store with your SNAP benefits.

10. What are my rights when I am getting SNAP?

If DSS takes any action on your SNAP benefits (stopping them, giving you less, or saying they sent you too much in SNAP benefits), you can ask for a fair hearing. You have 90 days to ask from the time DSS took action. If DSS does not do something for you after you ask them to, you can also ask for a fair hearing then. You can keep your SNAP if you ask within 10 days for a fair hearing, but if you lose at the hearing, you will have to pay DSS back.

If DSS says you got too many SNAP benefits, you have the right to a hearing before they are reduced or no longer given to you. If you are asked to sign any papers to repay a SNAP overpayment, be sure to talk to a lawyer first.

This brochure is for information only. If you have problems with SNAP benefits, you may want to talk to a lawyer. You can contact your local legal services program by calling the Legal Aid Telephone Intake Service at 744-9430 in Columbia or toll free at (888) 346-5592 from other places in the state.

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Need Help Buying Food? IT'S A SNAP!

1. What is SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) is the new name for the Food Stamps Program. SNAP gives households electronic benefits that they can use like cash to buy food. The amount of benefits a South Carolina household can get is based on its income. For example, a household of three could get a maximum monthly SNAP amount of is \$526 (as of October 1, 2010).

2. Can I get SNAP?

You may be able to get SNAP if:

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- You buy and cook food for yourself and your family. You do not have to have your own address. You can share a living space with someone else or even be homeless;
 - Your gross household income is less than \$1,984 each month for a household of three through September 30, 2011 (this amount changes each year);
 - Your car is worth no more than \$4,650 (there are exceptions for most households receiving **Family Independence (FI)** or a FI-funded service); and
 - You have no more than \$2,000 saved up (\$3,000 for persons over 60).
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3. Where do I get SNAP?

You can go to your county Department of Social Services (DSS) office. If you are aged, blind or disabled, you can apply at your local Social Security Office. You can also get an application on the Internet or through a food bank.

4. What do I take when I go to apply for SNAP?

You should bring proof of identity for yourself and other household members, including birth certificates if you have them. You should also try to bring the following:

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- Social Security cards for all household members. Anyone who does not have one will have to get one.
 - Paycheck stubs from any job you have.
 - Utility bills, rent receipts or proof of house payments.
 - Medical bills if you are elderly or disabled.
 - Proof of any childcare expenses.
 - Any bank books, insurance policies and deeds to property.
 - Business records if you own a farm or business.
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DSS may ask you for the names of friends and relatives to contact to check your information. DSS might also ask you for other documents or information. DSS is supposed to help you get any information you need to complete your application.

5. What if I need food right away?

If you have less than \$100 and less than \$150 in monthly income, you should be able to get SNAP within seven business days. Otherwise, DSS must let you know within 30 days of when you first asked for help (not 30 days from when you first had an appointment).

6. What are my rights if I ask for SNAP?

If you apply for SNAP and DSS turns you down, you have 90 days to ask for a hearing. If you lose the hearing, you have 30 days to go to court. You have the right to see your file, and you have the right to bring someone to the hearing to help you. If you are turned down for SNAP benefits, you should call a lawyer right away.

7. Do I need to have a job?

Under Federal law, there is a limit to how long you can get SNAP benefits if you are an able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD) and if you are not working or in a workfare program. Some states have been able to get a waiver (or exception) to this rule from the federal government because of high unemployment and high labor surplus in the state.

South Carolina is one of the states with a waiver to the ABAWD limit. Because of the high unemployment rate and high labor surplus, South Carolina currently does not limit SNAP benefits for ABAWDs. However, this could change in the future.

8. What if I do not do what I am asked to do by DSS?

If you are the head of the household and do not do as DSS asks, all members of your household will lose your SNAP benefits for some length of time. If your family receives FI, then only the head of household will lose SNAP benefits. This is called a sanction. The sanction will increase depending on how many times you fail to cooperate.

9. How are SNAP benefits delivered?

SNAP benefits are now delivered only through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT). You will be given an EBT card when you are approved for SNAP. DSS will have your
