

# Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly Food Stamps)

## What are Food Stamps?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly Food Stamps) helps people buy the food they need. SNAP is available to those who are:

- Working for low wages
- Working part-time
- Unemployed
- Receiving TANF or other government assistance payments
- Low-income elderly or disabled
- Homeless

## How does it work?

Food stamps are no longer actual stamps; credit is placed onto an EBT card (similar to a debit or bank card), and the money on the EBT card can be used only to buy food, and only at certain locations. Food stamps do not cover a family's total food costs.

The amount of SNAP a family can receive is based on family income and the number of people who live off that income. A family will qualify if all household members receive TANF or SSI. To qualify for food stamps, your assets (savings, investments and possessions, not including your home or car) must be worth: \$2,000 or less if you are single; \$3,000 if at least one person in the household is disabled or at least 60 years old.

## Immigration Status

You do not need to be a US citizen to receive Food Stamps. Food Stamps are available to legal immigrants who:

- Have lived in the country for 5 years
- Are receiving disability benefits, regardless of when they entered the country
- Are children, regardless of when they entered the country

Non-citizens that are in the US temporarily, such as students, are not eligible. See [Food Stamp Policy on Immigrants](#) for more information on Food Stamps for alien immigrants.

Note: All applicants must have social security numbers.

### Income Limits (10/01/09–9/30/10)

People in Household	Gross Monthly Income*	Net Monthly Income**
1	\$1,174	\$903
2	1,579	1,215
3	1,984	1,526
4	2,389	1,838
5	2,794	2,150
6	3,200	2,461
7	3,605	2,773
8	4,010	3,085
Each additional person	+406	+312

\* Gross income is a household's total income before deductions/disregards. Gross income limits may differ for the disabled, elderly and other categorically eligible applicants.

\*\* Net income is household income after deductions such as those for earned income, medical expenses (for elderly or disabled members), child support payments, "excess" shelter costs, and a standard deduction.

Source: US Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. 22 June 2010.

[http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/applicant\\_recipients/eligibility.htm#income](http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/applicant_recipients/eligibility.htm#income).

### How does one apply?

- Submit an application to the [Alexandria Department of Human Services](#) (mail, fax, or e-mail)
  - Pick up an application at the [Alexandria Department of Human Services](#) or ask them to mail one to you. You can apply the same day you pick up or request an application; you may be interviewed on another day, however.
  - Download the Food Stamps [application](#) found on the Virginia Department of Social Services website.

Visit the Virginia Department of Social Services website to use its social services [eligibility screening tool](#).

Proof of your identity (driver's license or picture I.D.), where you live, how much income you earn, how many resources (such as savings) you have, and how much you pay in rent is required. An interview is also required.

An application for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or General Relief is considered an application for Food Stamps unless you request otherwise.

## Contact Information

Virginia State Food Stamp Information/Hotline  
Phone: 1 (800) 552-3431

[Alexandria Department of Human Services](#)  
2525 Mount Vernon Avenue  
Alexandria, VA 22301  
Phone: (703) 746-5801  
Fax: (703) 746-5974

For more information and instructions on how to apply, visit the [Virginia Food Stamp program](#) online.