



SNAP Facts: An Overview of Benefits

The SNAP program targets its benefits according to participants' needs. Very low-income households receive more SNAP benefits than households closer to the poverty line since they need more help affording an adequate diet. Since 2008, SNAP benefits have been provided primarily through an electronic debit (EBT) card that can be used to purchase food, which has eliminated the use of previous food stamp coupons.

Maximum Monthly Benefit Allotment (October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015)

Household Size	Maximum Monthly Allotment
1	\$194
2	\$357
3	\$511
4	\$649
5	\$771
6	\$925
7	\$1,022
8	\$1,169
Each Additional Person	+\$146

SNAP benefits can only be used to purchase food at authorized retail locations around the country, including 6,450 in Virginia. Any retail location that regularly sells qualifying perishable and non-perishable foods in each of four staple food groups (meat, grains, fruits/vegetables, and dairy) has the potential to be a SNAP retailer. This even includes over 3000 farmer's markets nationwide, with 100 in Virginia alone.

To find a SNAP retail location near you, use the USDA's [Retailer Locator tool](#). To find a farmer's market that accepts SNAP benefits, you can use the USDA's [list](#) of authorized farmer's markets.



What You Can and Can't Buy

Items that can be purchased with SNAP include:

- Vegetable seeds and food producing plants, roots, and trees
- Baby formula
- Spices, herbs, pectin, and shortening
- Water and ice
- Snack foods
- Meals delivered to elderly or disabled SNAP recipients if the organization providing the meal is authorized to accept EBT cards
- Produce and canned goods
- Meat and dairy products
- Dried goods, beans and rice
- Soft drinks, candy, cookies, snack crackers, and ice cream
- Seafood, steak, and bakery cakes
- Energy drinks that have a nutrition facts label
- Coffee and tea
- Live fish such as lobsters and other shellfish
- Edible pumpkins/gourds
- Gift baskets that contain both food and non-food items, as long as the food items are more than 50% of the basket

Items that cannot be purchased with SNAP include:

- Any prepared food (hot or cold) sold and meant to be eaten at the store
- Alcohol and tobacco
- Non-edible household products, such as cleaning products, paper products, toiletries, and cooking utensils
- Pet foods
- Items for food preservation (canning jars and lids, freezer containers, food wrapping paper, etc.)
- Medicines (prescription or over the counter), vitamins, or minerals
- Items for gardening such as fertilizer and peat moss

REFERENCES

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility>

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/snap.cgi>



SNAP Facts: An Overview of Financial Eligibility

When determining SNAP eligibility, a "household" is defined as a group who lives together, but are not necessarily related, and purchases and prepares meals together. In Virginia, applicants must undergo gross and net income tests in addition to an asset test.

Eligibility for SNAP is limited to people with gross incomes up to 130 percent of the federal poverty line. Participants must further show a net income of less than or equal to 100 percent of the federal poverty line.

Income Eligibility Limits

Household Size	Maximum Gross Income	Maximum Net Income
1	\$1,276	\$981
2	\$1,726	\$1,328
3	\$2,177	\$1,675
4	\$2,628	\$2,021
5	\$3,078	\$2,368
6	\$3,529	\$2,715
7	\$3,980	\$3,061
8	\$4,430	\$3,408
Each Additional Person	+\$451	+\$347

Households may have \$2,250 in countable resources, such as a bank account, or \$3,250 in countable resources if at least one person is disabled or age 60 or older. Certain resources, however, are not counted. Examples include: a home and lot, the resources of people who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the resources of people who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF, formerly AFDC), and most retirement (pension) plans. A complete list of excluded resources can be found in Part 9D of the Virginia SNAP Manual: <https://jupiter.dss.state.va.us/FoodStampManual/mainpage.jsp>

The Virginia Department of Social Services has created a [pre-screening tool](#) to help people determine whether they are financially eligible for SNAP.

REFERENCES

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligibility>

<http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/snap.cgi>