

Guide to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Ramsey County)



Section 1: Program Information

Purpose of the Program: The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as Food Stamps, helps Minnesotans with low incomes get the food they need for nutritious and well-balanced meals. The program provides support to help stretch your household food budget. It's a supplement, which means it will give you assistance but is not intended to meet *all* of your household's food needs.

The amount of benefits you get is based on your income, expenses, and the number of people in your household. If approved for the program, you will receive an Electronic Benefit Transfer card. This is like a debit card. Each month, your benefits will be credited to your EBT account.

You can use your card to purchase food at stores, farmers markets, senior dining sites, and Meals on Wheels locations that display a poster or sign that reads "We Accept EBT."

The application:

If you are in an emergency and need assistance accessing food immediately, you can answer the "Do you need help right away?" questions on page 1 of the combined application form (page 3 of the PDF) and submit only that section before you fill out the rest of the document. You must sign your name and put the date at the bottom. Depending on your situation, you may begin receiving benefits as soon as 24 hours after the agency gets your application.

After you send in the first page, you must fill out the rest of the application within 30 days in order to continue receiving benefits.

If you are an individual or couple age 60 or older, you will need to fill out a one-page Senior SNAP Application. Everyone else should fill out a combined application, which will allow you to apply for a variety of cash assistance programs along with SNAP. For a description of available programs, including MFIP, DWP, and MSA, visit the [Economic Supports](#) page on Minnesota's Department of Human Services website. Some require you to call Ramsey County at 651-266-4444 first to see if you're eligible and/or if there's funding available.

If you have children in your household, you will be asked to designate a Principal Wage Earner (PWE). Any adult in your home can hold this role. Before you choose this person, call 651-266-4444 number and ask to speak to a county worker. They will give you assistance.

Frequently Asked Questions

I already receive Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits. Can I still apply for SNAP?

Yes. If you are eligible for WIC, you are most likely eligible for SNAP too. You can use your WIC benefits to buy approved staples like egg and milk, and SNAP to fill in the gaps.

Can I receive benefits if I don't have a valid state ID?

Yes. You can provide proof of your identity in other ways, by including a birth certificate, a school or work ID, paycheck stubs, or an ID card for health benefits or another assistance program.

Do I have to provide my race on the application?

No. The ethnicity and race questions are optional and will not affect your eligibility or level of benefits. The reason they ask for this information is to assure that program benefits are distributed without regard to race, color, or national origin.

Will a lien be put against my home if I get SNAP?

No. SNAP does not recover any benefits paid out using a lien against your home.

Can I receive SNAP and MFIP at the same time?

Yes. Most people who are on MFIP actually get a food portion as part of their benefits.

For a more detailed list of frequently asked questions, visit this page:

<https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/adults/economic-assistance/food-nutrition/resources/snap-faqs.jsp>.

Contact Information (With whom will participants be communicating?):

Ramsey County Community Human Service Department

Address: Ramsey County Government Center East Building, 160 East Kellogg Boulevard
St. Paul, MN 55101-1494

Hours: 8 a.m - 4:30 p.m

Note: Due to COVID-19, the Government East Building is closed for in-person appointments. Limited walk-ins are available only as a last resort option for issues that cannot be resolved online, by phone, or by mail. Residents are still welcome to leave applications in the drop-box outside the building.

If individuals need a walk-in, they may come between 8 a.m and 4:30 p.m. The sites will adhere to all public health guidelines and will ensure that no resident is left behind in a moment of need.

Phone numbers: 651-266-4444 or 1-833-956-0693 (toll free)

You can use these to call and request that an application be mailed, faxed, or emailed to you or to ask for assistance in filling out your application.

EZInfo: 651-266-3800

This is a 24/7 automated phone line that provides information about financial assistance programs in English, Espanol, Hmoob, and Soomaali.

Fax: 651-266-3942

Email address: fas.forms@ramseycounty.us

Website: <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/assistance-support/assistance/financial-assistance/food-assistance#:~:text=To%20apply%20for%20Cash%2C%20SNAP,dhs.mn.gov.&text=Ramsey%20County%20helps%20people%20determine,apply%20for%20food%20assistance%20programs>.

To access the website, you can also visit ramsey.us and type “food assistance” in the search bar.

Section 2: Eligibility Requirements

Income Eligibility: SNAP eligibility depends on your household’s income. Most types of income (earned and unearned) are counted, and there are many deductions that are allowed. As long as you meet income limits and all other program rules, you can qualify for SNAP whether or not you are employed.

You can use the [self-screening tool](#) to see whether or not you may qualify for SNAP. It will ask you questions about any public assistance programs you may be participating in, as well as your monthly household income before taxes and the number of people living in your home. The tool is available in [Hmong](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), and [Spanish](#).

Please note that the screening tool just *estimates* your eligibility. The only way to know for sure if you qualify for SNAP is to complete the application process.

Note: You may own or buy a home and still receive SNAP. The home you live in and its lot are not counted as assets.

Domestic Violence Waivers

If you are eligible for public assistance and you experience domestic violence, certain program requirements may not apply in your situation. If your household income is at or below 165 percent of the federal poverty guideline and you are a victim of domestic violence, you will not have an asset limit for determining benefits, meaning the value of your vehicles and other assets will not be used to see if you qualify for SNAP.

If domestic violence or abuse makes it hard for you to follow program rules, call 641-266-4444 to ask for help.

All SNAP applicants should receive the Domestic Violence Information Brochure (PDF), which has information about waivers. Make sure you get it before you apply. You can print the brochure from the link provided or ask for it by calling 651-266-4444.

Section 3: Application Process (What do you need?)

The application will have a space for your case number. If you are requesting SNAP for the first time, you won't have one. That's all right. You can leave it blank. If you qualify for food assistance, you will receive a case number later.

You will be asked to indicate which programs you're applying for (SNAP, cash, or emergency assistance). You can check multiple ones. After they receive your application, the agency will let you know which (if any) programs you're eligible for.

You may authorize someone (such as a friend, family member, or neighbor) to act on your behalf and help you apply. This person is allowed to do any of the following: fill out the application, go to an interview for you, talk to your county worker, get notices and information related to your case, and get your SNAP benefits and buy food for you through your EBT account. You can ask for more than one person to help.

All authorized person(s) must sign and date the last page of the application.

APPLICANT'S PERSONAL INFORMATION - If you're filling out the application as an authorized representative for someone else, this should be your information.

- Name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Social security number*
- Proof of identity** (driver's licence, state ID, passport etc.)
- Marital status
- Phone number
- Address, if you have one
- Date most recently moved to Minnesota
- Residency in Minnesota and proof (state ID, lease agreement, etc.)
- What programs are you applying for? (remember you may select more than one)

*You only have to provide a social security number for people who are applying for help. In order for someone to be eligible for benefits, they must have a social security number. If you are not a U.S citizen and are applying for Refugee Cash Assistance (more information here) you do not have to provide a social security number.

If you are filling out the application on behalf of someone or for other household members but aren't requesting benefits for yourself, you don't need to list your social security number or provide any information about your immigration status.

For someone to receive SNAP, they do not need to be a U.S citizen, but they must be here legally. Members of your household who are not citizens and are applying for help must show proof of their immigration status by giving a copy of both sides of their immigration cards or other documents that indicate their status.

The agency will not share information about you with the U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services unless the law requires it. In most cases, applying will not affect your immigration status.

**If you are applying as an authorized representative for someone, still include proof of YOUR own identity.

Note: If you require food assistance immediately, fill out the “Do you need help right away?” section on the first page. You will need the following information:

- Total income (cash or checks) your household received this month
- Amount your household (including children) have in cash, checking, or savings
- Cost of rent/mortgage per month
- Which utilities (if any) you pay

You can submit this page before sending in the rest of the application as long as you sign and date it.

If you're eligible for emergency benefits, you may get them as soon as 24 hours after the agency receives your forms. You must then fill out the rest of the application within 30 days in order to continue receiving benefits.

HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS – Provide the following information for all of the people living in your home, even if you are not applying for them and/or the person is not asking for assistance. You only have to give a Social Security number for people who are applying for help. List members in this order: your spouse, other adult(s), children, all other people, and anyone temporarily away from home.

- Name, date of birth, gender, social security number, marital status
- What programs is this person applying for? (remember that it's all right if family members are applying for different programs)
- Relationship to you and proof (birth certificates, marriage licenses, court documents, etc.)

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

- If anyone in the household has a job or expects to get income* from a job this month or next month, include proof (paystubs, pension, etc.) and list employer name, hourly wage (optional), and gross monthly earnings
- If anyone in the household is self-employed** or expects to get income from self-employment this month or next month, include proof and list gross monthly earnings
- If anyone in the household has applied for or gets any of the following types of income each month, check yes and include proof (check stub, award letter, etc.): Social Security, Veteran Benefits, Workers'

Compensation, Tribal payments, Supplemental Security Income, Unemployment Insurance, retirement benefits, child support or spousal support, or other unearned income such as trusts or gambling

*Include income from Work Study and paid internships, as well as free benefits or reduced expenses received for work (shelter, food, etc.)

**Examples of self-employment include product sales, farming, property rental, taxi driver, paper route, and in-home daycare.

EXPENSES - If your household has any of the following expenses, check yes and **include proof (rent/house payment receipt, mortgage, lease, etc.)**

- Rent (include mobile home lot rental)
- Mortgage/contract for deed payment
- Homeowner's insurance (if not included in mortgage)
- Real estate taxes (if not included in mortgage)
- Rent or Section 8 subsidy
- Association fees
- Room and/or board

UTILITIES - If your household pays any of the following utility expenses any time during the year, check yes. **You only need to include proof (utility statement, phone bill) if you want to be considered for cash programs. If you're only applying for SNAP, you don't need to.**

- Heating/air conditioning
- Water and sewer
- Electricity
- Garbage removal
- Cooking fuel
- Phone/cell phone
- Did you or anyone in your household receive LIHEAP (energy assistance) of more than \$20 in the past 12 months?

ASSETS - If anyone in your household owns or is buying any of the following items, check yes. **You only need to include proof (statements, etc.) if you want to be considered for cash programs. If you're only applying for SNAP, you don't need to.**

- Cash
- Stocks, bonds, annuities, 401K, etc.
- Bank accounts

❑ Vehicles

If your household has medical expenses and you wish to get a deduction, you must provide proof (prescriptions, etc.) of all medical bills incurred by anyone in your household who is disabled or 60 years or older. Do not bring medical bills that are being paid for by any health care program, insurance, or someone not living with you. If you're only applying for cash assistance programs and not SNAP, you do not need to provide proof of medical bills.

Section 4: Expectations (What will happen?)

What is the timeline for receiving services?

If you are applying for emergency benefits, you can start receiving assistance as soon as 24 hours from the date that the agency receives your application.

In most cases, you will receive a notice about your eligibility within 30 days.

If you do not receive a notice within 30 days, you have a right to ask why.

If you are unhappy with the action taken or feel the agency did not act on your request for assistance. For cash assistance, you may appeal within 30 days from the date you received the notice and within 90 days for SNAP.

Submit your appeal request:

Online: <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-0033-ENG>

Write: Minnesota Department of Human Services Appeals Division P.O. Box 64941 St. Paul, MN 55164-0941

Fax: 651-431-7523

Call: Metro: 651-431-3600 Greater Minnesota: 800-657-3510 or use your preferred relay service

For access to free legal services, contact Ramsey County at 651-266-4444.

What additional steps must participants take to receive services?

After you submit your application, you will be contacted to schedule a phone interview with your assigned case worker. If you miss your interview appointment, you must reschedule. If you do not reschedule, you will be unable to receive benefits.

You may be asked for additional proof, which you will need to either bring to the interview or send to your case worker as soon as possible.

If you receive SNAP, report all changes in your income and assets by the 10th of the month after the change. For example, if a change happens in March, you must report it by April 10th.

If you receive cash assistance, report any changes within 10 days of the change, or, if you use a Household Report For, complete the form and return it by the 8th of the month.

To replace your EBT card, call 888-997-2227.

How to apply:

If you have internet access, follow these steps:

1. Before you fill out an application, we highly recommend that you use the [self-screening tool](#), which will give you an estimate of whether you're eligible for SNAP. To find out if you qualify for other cash assistance programs, call your county worker at 651-266-4444.
2. If your county worker asks you to fill out an application, you have four options.
 - a. Print this PDF [form](#) and fill it out by hand. You can access applications in [Hmong](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), and [Vietnamese](#).
 - b. Go to <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/adults/economic-assistance/food-nutrition/programs-and-services/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program.jsp>. Click "apply." If you click on the combined application form, you will see this page <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfservlet/Public/DHS-5223-ENG>. Click "complete the form electronically." This will allow you to type your answers into a PDF, but it requires Adobe Reader or Acrobat. If you don't have those programs on your device, you will need to use a different option. When you're finished, print the form.
 - c. If you are an individual or couple who is 60 or older, you should use the one-page Senior Application, which you can find [here](#) in PDF form and fill out by hand. If you need it in a different language or a more accessible format, call 651-266-4444.
 - d. Submit an application online at [ApplyMN](#). This allows you to complete a senior application if you wish. You will have to create an account first.
3. Read all instructions at the beginning and end of the application.

4. If you need assistance at any point, call your county worker at 651-266-4444. Here's a script you can use: "Hello, my name is [blank]. I'm currently filling out an application for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and I had a question about..."
5. Send your completed application, along with any supporting documents, to your county worker. You have five options for this:
 - a. **Mail to:** 160 East Kellogg Boulevard, St. Paul, MN 55101-1494
 - b. **Drop off your application in the drop box at 160 East Kellogg Boulevard, St. Paul, MN 55101-1494 between 8 a.m and 4:30 p.m.** The box is picked up every weekday (Monday-Friday) in the morning and afternoon. If an item is picked up at 7:30 a.m, it is time stamped with the previous business (Monday-Friday) day, meaning they will consider your application as having been submitted the business day before. If an item is picked up at 3:30 p.m, it will be time stamped with the current business day. **If you would like your application to be received the day you drop it off, try to arrive before 3:30 p.m.**
 - c. **Fax to:** 651-266-3942
 - d. **Email to:** fas.forms@ramseycounty.us. If you use a fillable pdf, you can attach it as a document. If you handwrite your answers, you can scan the forms or take a picture.
 - e. Submit your application online at [ApplyMN](#).

If you don't have internet access, call 651-266-4444 and request that an application be mailed or faxed to you. Here's a script you can use: "Hello, my name is [blank]. I'm a resident of Ramsey County and I would like to be [mailed or faxed] an application for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program." You can ask for forms in Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese, or an application in large-print.

Screenshots: Step 2 (b)



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Program info
Eligibility
Benefits
Apply

Apply

You can apply:

- **Online** at ApplyMn.dhs.mn.gov
- **On paper** using the [Combined Application Form \(PDF\)](#) for families and people under age 60; individuals and couples who are 60 or older should use the one-page [Senior SNAP Application \(PDF\)](#). Mail or bring the completed form to your local [county or tribal office \(PDF\)](#).

The Combined Application Form is also available in:

- [Hmong - Combined Application Form \(PDF\)](#)
- [Burmese - Combined Application Form \(PDF\)](#)
- [Somali - Combined Application Form \(PDF\)](#)
- [Spanish - Combined Application Form \(PDF\)](#)
- [Vietnamese - Combined Application Form \(PDF\)](#)

When your benefits begin depends on the date the county receives your application through ApplyMN or the first page of the paper application. The county cannot decide if you will get benefits until you complete the entire application and provide required verifications. You will also need to complete an interview with a county worker.

For some emergency situations, you could get benefits within **five working days** of your application.

Learn more by reading the [SNAP FAQs](#). If you have more questions or need help applying, call your [county or tribal office or other SNAP phone lines](#).



Combined Application Form (DHS-5223)



Complete the form electronically



Print the form to complete it by hand

If you are having trouble viewing the PDF in your browser, [download the PDF](#) and open it with Adobe Reader or Acrobat. The downloaded file will be named "form.pdf."

For more troubleshooting help, [see the DHS website](#).

Updated: 8/10/2020

About Summer Reads:

This resource was created by Summer Reads VISTA members. Summer Reads is an [AmeriCorps VISTA national service](#) program of Literacy Minnesota. For 8 weeks over the summer, Summer Reads VISTA members volunteer full-time as children's/youth literacy mentors in schools, libraries and out-of-school-time programs across Minnesota. They bring literacy to life for low-income students through a variety of activities – one-on-one tutoring, creative enrichment activities like using arts and drama to explore language or practicing vocabulary and comprehension in science and other subjects. They also connect students and parents/caregivers to community resources through wrap-around basic needs support. At the same time, the VISTA members build their own leadership, explore career paths, pay for college and become lifelong advocates for the communities they serve due to the power of their experience. www.literacymn.org/summerreads