



SNAP OUTREACH PROGRAM

MYTHS: BUSTED



SNAP is only for families with children.



SNAP is for anyone who meets eligibility requirements, including seniors and households with older adults. SNAP assistance leaves more money in your budget to put toward medications, medical care, and other health-promoting activities.



Seniors only get \$23 a month in benefits, making it not worth applying for.



The average SNAP benefit for a senior living alone is \$104 per month. This reflects a recent increase designed to keep benefits in step with rising food costs. The \$23/month figure is the minimum monthly benefit. Approximately 80% of older adults receive more than that. In addition, SNAP benefits don't need to be used the same month they're obtained. You can let your benefits accrue for a certain period, which means that a modest benefit amount can add up to something substantial over time.



Applying for SNAP assistance will take food benefits away from others who need it.



Everyone who qualifies for SNAP assistance is entitled to get it. The funding to help one individual is not taken away from someone else. SNAP in no way takes food or money away from other households.



Not many stores accept SNAP.



There are over 10,000 food retailers in Pennsylvania that accept SNAP benefits. These retailers include grocery stores, farmers markets, and local shops. Select retailers can also accept benefits for online ordering. Redeeming SNAP dollars is easy. Each month, benefits are loaded onto an EBT card that can be swiped at the checkout terminal just like a credit or debit card. With sufficient funds in the EBT card balance, it can cover the cost of eligible grocery purchases.

**MYTH**

Applying for SNAP is too difficult, and I can't get to the County Assistance Office (CAO).

**FACT**

The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank makes applying for SNAP easy. Call or text APPLY to our Food Stamps Helpline at 1.877.999.5964 to apply over the phone. Our staff can assist you in the enrollment process. Applicants no longer need to go in person to the CAO to speak with a caseworker or pick up an EBT card. All interviews can be done over the phone, and EBT cards are mailed to recipients.

**MYTH**

I make too much or have too many cash resources to get SNAP.

**FACT**

For most households, cash resources are only used to determine if a household is eligible for expedited benefits. They are not counted when calculating eligibility for the normal, ongoing program. Pennsylvania income guidelines are 200% of the federal poverty level and updated every October. Call our Food Stamps Helpline to be screened for your eligibility.

**MYTH**

If I get SNAP benefits, the government will put a lien against my house and/or make me pay them back.

**FACT**

The government will never put a lien against your house because you applied for or received SNAP benefits. The only time anyone is required to pay back benefits is if they fraudulently misreported information used in determining eligibility, such as income, household size, or certain expenses. Accidental overpayments of SNAP benefits are deducted from future benefits and not required to be paid back in cash.

**MYTH**

Applying for SNAP will hurt my chances of becoming a citizen.

**FACT**

SNAP, Medicaid, and housing benefits are not counted in a public charge test. This means participating in these programs will not impact citizenship eligibility.

**MYTH**

My benefits got cut, so I do not think I'm eligible for SNAP anymore.

**FACT**

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will notify you if your SNAP case has been closed because you're no longer eligible. Many times, errors occur because they didn't get your semi-annual reporting (SAR) or renewal on time, you missed your renewal interview, or you forgot to report and verify changes in income or address. These errors can all be corrected by calling the PA Department of Human Services' Statewide Customer Service Center at 1.877.395.8930 or our SNAP Helpline at 1.877.999.5964.