

SNAP for College Students During COVID-19

(Updated 4/28/2022)

The SNAP (food stamps) program helps people with low income buy food. People who have SNAP benefits get a LINK Card, which they can use like a debit card, but they can use it only to buy groceries.

Who is eligible for SNAP?

United States Citizens, most Legal Permanent Residents, and some other immigrants are eligible. Gross household income usually has to be under 165% of the federal poverty line (see chart below). Gross income is how much money you make before taxes and other deductions are taken out of your paycheck.

How much could I get in SNAP benefits?

Usually it depends on your family size, your income, and your expenses. But during the COVID-19 pandemic, all households are getting the maximum amount for their family size plus 15% in extra COVID-19 relief.

Household Size	165% Gross Monthly Income	Monthly benefit during COVID-19
1	\$1,771	\$250
2	\$2,396	\$459
3	\$3,020	\$658
4	\$3,644	\$835
5	\$4,268	\$992

Special Rules for College Students

In Illinois, community college students are eligible for SNAP if they are enrolled in a [Perkins-approved](#) course of study. You must:

- Get a verification form signed by a school counselor or administrator, and
- Bring a copy of your transcript/class schedule to your SNAP appointment

Usually, students of a four-year college cannot qualify for SNAP unless they meet certain requirements. . However, during the Covid-19 public health emergency, college students might be eligible for SNAP if:

- You are eligible for federal or state-funded work study during the regular school year or
- You have an expected family contribution (EFC) of \$0 according to the FAFSA for this school year
- You receive the maximum Pell Grant as part of your financial aid package (\$3,172/semester for full-time students; \$1,586/semester for half-time students)
- You must get proof from your school's financial aid office showing that you qualify for work study, that your EFC is \$0, or that you receive the maximum Pell Grant.

How do I apply for SNAP?

You can apply online at <https://abe.illinois.gov/> or call DHS at **1.800.843.6154**.

What if my household already receives SNAP but doesn't get any benefits for me because I'm in college?

If you were denied before, you can apply again. Because the rules are different after Congress passed the COVID relief bill in December 2020, you might be able to qualify for SNAP benefits now even if you didn't before.

What if DHS denies my application?

DHS will send you a letter to tell you if you are eligible for SNAP. If DHS denies your application and you think it's incorrect, you can file an appeal so that DHS reconsiders. You must file your appeal within 90 days of the date on the denial letter DHS sent you. You can file your appeal online at <https://abe.illinois.gov/>.

If you need help with your application for SNAP or DHS denies your application, you can contact Legal Aid Chicago to apply for free legal help by calling 312.347.8342.



Call
312.341.1070

Monday to Friday
between 8AM and 4:30PM

Or



Apply Online

www.legalaidchicago.org