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[A Simple Guide to Virginia SNAP Benefits](#)

Image



If you're having a hard time affording groceries for yourself or your family, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) may be able to help. SNAP helps people stretch their food budgets and puts healthy foods within reach. It's easy to use! SNAP benefits are placed on an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card that can be used like a debit card. Benefits can buy eligible food items from authorized food stores, retailers and farmers' markets.

How to Get SNAP Benefits in Virginia

There is an income requirement to receive SNAP benefits. You may be able to get SNAP benefits if you are:

- Elderly or disabled
- Working for low wages or working part-time
- Unemployed
- Receiving welfare or other public assistance payments

► [Use CommonHelp to apply for SNAP benefits in VA](#)

CommonHelp makes it easy to apply for SNAP and other benefits. You can submit one application to apply for assistance from many Department of Social Services (DSS) programs. These include SNAP, Medical Assistance, and Energy Assistance.

You can also go to CommonHelp and get a Virginia SNAP application to print.

[Watch a video or read a quick guide about how to use CommonHelp](#)

Fast Facts About Virginia SNAP Benefits

- More than 9% of Virginia households are food insecure. This means they can't always afford enough nutritious food to keep everyone healthy and active.
- One in 12 Virginians receives benefits from the SNAP program.
- More than 35% of people who get SNAP benefits are in families with at least one person who is older or has a disability.
- In Virginia, the average monthly SNAP benefit is \$232 per household.

[Source: [The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#)]

► Looking for local meal programs or food assistance? Search for "FOOD" near you on [VirginiaNavigator.org](#).

What Can I Buy with Virginia SNAP Benefits?

SNAP benefits can be used to buy any food for the household, such as:

- Food or food products meant to be eaten by people
- Vegetable seeds and food-producing plants, roots, and trees for the family to eat
- Baby formula, diabetic, and diet foods
- Edible items used in preparing or preserving food, such as spices and herbs, pectin, and shortening
- Water and ice labeled for human consumption
- Snack foods
- Meals delivered to older or disabled SNAP recipients if the organization providing the meal is authorized to accept EBT cards

SNAP benefits cannot be used to buy:

- Prepared hot foods in grocery stores

- Any prepared food (hot or cold) sold and meant to be eaten at the store
- Alcoholic beverages and tobacco
- Cleaning products, paper products, toiletries, and cooking utensils
- Pet foods
- Items for food preservation such as canning jars and lids, freezer containers, or food wrapping paper
- Medicines, vitamins or minerals
- Items for gardening such as fertilizer and peat moss

Can I Shop Online with SNAP Benefits?

Yes! Virginia SNAP recipients can use their EBT cards on the Amazon, Kroger and Walmart websites to buy any item that meets USDA SNAP guidelines. Here's how:

1. Create an account on Amazon, Kroger or Walmart and add your EBT card information.
2. Shop for SNAP-eligible foods (look for the SNAP/EBT label).
3. Pay with your EBT card and PIN.
4. You can choose to have your groceries delivered, if that service is available! However, SNAP benefits may not be used to pay delivery fees or other fees.

[Learn more about using your Virginia SNAP benefits to shop online](#)

More SNAP Information

- [Buying Food with SNAP](#): This fact sheet tells you which items you can and cannot buy.
- [SNAP Special Rules for the Elderly or Disabled](#): This article from USDA explains the special rules when a household's family members includes someone who is older or has a disability.
- [USDA's Ask the Expert](#): Find answers to questions about SNAP benefits, stores, and farmers' markets.

For more information, please call the Virginia Department of Social Services SNAP Hotline at (800)-552-3431 or email commonhelp@dss.virginia.gov.

Want to find your local Department of Social Services (DSS) office? On [VirginiaNavigator.org](https://virgininavigator.org), type DSS in the search box and enter your ZIP code or city/county.

Healthy Eating Resources

- [Healthy Eating Tips](#): ChooseMyPlate.gov offers printable recipes to help you build a healthy plate.
- [Get Fresh!](#) Learn healthy eating habits and cooking techniques through cooking demonstrations, nutrition education, and wellness information, one meal at a time.

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Virginia Department of Social Services

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