What is SNAP?

■ The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, is a federal program that helps low-income individuals pay for food. It helps put food on the table each month.

■ The goal of the program is to alleviate hunger and malnutrition by increasing food purchasing power for all eligible households.

■ It supplements food budgets, enabling Minnesotans to buy more nutritious food, including fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods, dairy products, plants and seeds to grow food. It is the cornerstone of the nation’s nutrition assistance safety net.

How does it work?

■ Minnesotans who are approved for the program receive a plastic debit card called an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. Each month, benefits are deposited into the household’s card account. The card can be used in grocery stores, markets, and some local farmers markets to buy food, or plants and seeds to grow food to eat.

■ These benefits can be used to purchase foods to be prepared at home. Benefits cannot be used to buy non-food items, such as paper products, household and personal hygiene supplies, alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, vitamins, medication, pet foods, foods eaten in the store or hot ready-to-eat “deli” food.

Who can use this program?

■ SNAP is intended to help supplement the food and nutrition needs of people with low incomes. These benefits are for eligible families and individuals of all ages, including children and seniors. Minnesota has an estimated 88,000 seniors who struggle with hunger each year, but fewer than half are enrolled in the program. Currently, more than 476,000 Minnesotans—children, adults, families, seniors—participate in this nutrition assistance program.

■ Household size, income and other factors determine program eligibility and benefit amounts. Those who qualify must meet certain income guidelines. To find out if you qualify, visit the online screening tool Bridge to Benefits at http://mn.bridgetobenefits.org/ or call the Minnesota Food Helpline at 1-888-711-1151. To apply online, visit ApplyMN at https://applymn.dhs.mn.gov/.

Is it worth the hassle of applying?

■ The amount of benefits depends on family size, income and certain expenses. The current monthly average program allowance in Minnesota is $109.16. For a four- person household, the maximum benefit amount is $649 per month. For a single individual, benefits can be as much as $194 per month. Even the minimum benefit amount of $16 a month can mean a grocery bag of nutritious foods.

What if I don’t want others to know I’m receiving nutrition assistance?

■ Shopping for food with this program is simple. People with benefits use EBT cards, which are plastic cards that look like any other credit or debit cards. And getting much needed help in the form of healthy, nutritious food is smart. This program is meant to supplement a family’s or individual’s budget, to stretch dollars elsewhere on other essential items.
I already receive WIC benefits. Can I still apply for this nutrition assistance program?

- If you are eligible for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits, you are most likely eligible for these benefits as well. You can use your WIC benefits to buy approved staples, such as eggs, milk and cheese, and your SNAP benefits to fill in the gaps.

If I am a senior who receives nutrition assistance benefits, will I still be able to get Meals on Wheels?

- Households can receive these benefits and still get Meals on Wheels. SNAP benefits can be used to purchase food at stores or farmers markets. This means you will have extra food in addition to Meals on Wheels.

If I am a senior and receive nutrition assistance, aren’t I taking this away from families who have more of a need?

- People of any age who apply and are eligible will receive nutrition assistance program benefits. Well-nourished children have better school attendance and are more focused on learning. Seniors who are eating healthy diets may remain independent and live in their own homes longer rather than in long-term care facilities.

Can people without a valid state ID receive benefits?

- SNAP regulations require applicants to verify their identity to receive program benefits. Though a valid state issued ID is a common document used to prove identity, you can also use:
  - A birth certificate
  - An ID card for health benefits or another assistance program
  - A school or work ID card
  - Paycheck stubs containing applicant’s name

How do I apply?

- Applying is easy. Minnesotans can complete an online application by visiting ApplyMN at https://applymn.dhs.mn.gov. Those who prefer to fill out a paper application can use the state of Minnesota’s Combined Application Form and return it by mail or in person. Applicants are then interviewed by phone or in person by a county human services worker to determine financial and nutrition assistance.

Where can I get more information?

- To learn more, visit the Minnesota Department of Human Services’ website http://mn.gov/dhs/, or call Minnesota Food Helpline at 1-888-711-1151.

Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, ask your worker or call the number below for your language.

ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، إطلب ذلك من مشرفك أو اتصل على الرقم 777-358-0377.

Paźnja. Ako vam treba besplatna pomoć za tumačenje ovog dokumenta, pitajte vašeg radnika ili nazovite 1-888-234-3785.

Thov ua twb zoo nyem. Yog hais tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus rau tsab ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces nug koj tus neeg lis dej num los sis hu rau 1-888-486-8377.

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Vнимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в устном переводе данного документа, обратитесь к своему социальному работнику или позвоните по телефону 1-888-562-5877.

Digniin. Haddii aad u baahantahay caawimaad lacag-la’aan ah ee tarjumaadda qorralkan, hawlwaan waxaad ugu horreeyso ama wac lambarka 1-888-547-8829.

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para interpretar este documento, comuníquese con su trabajador o llame al 1-888-428-3438.

Chú ý. Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỡ dịch tài liệu này miễn phí, xin gọi nhân viên xâ hội của quý vị hoặc gọi số 1-888-554-8759.

This information is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by calling your county worker. TTY users can call through Minnesota Relay at 800-627-3529. For Speech-to-Speech, call 877-627-3848. For additional assistance with legal rights and protections for equal access to human services programs, contact your agency’s ADA coordinator.