

Applying for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits

If you want to apply for SNAP benefits in Monroe, Ontario, Seneca, or Wayne County, you may contact the Nutrition Outreach and Education Program Coordinator (NOEP) at Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. at:

Monroe County: 585-325-2520

Ontario, Seneca, or Wayne County: 315-781-1465.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides electronic benefits that can be used like cash to purchase groceries. SNAP benefits are provided through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, similar to a bank debit or credit card. If you are eligible, an EBT account is set up for you, and every month your benefits will be deposited right into your account.

To check to see if you are eligible for SNAP benefits, visit mybenefits.ny.gov. Please note that completing the eligibility form differs from applying for SNAP benefits. The eligibility form is meant to help you view the benefits or services you may qualify for. If you have any problems while checking your eligibility, a NOEP coordinator can help you. Contact with NOEP Coordinators is both free and confidential. They will assist you with collecting necessary documents, filling out and submitting forms, informing you of your rights as a SNAP applicant, and advocating for you to ensure that you and your rights are respected.

Click on the [link](#) to find a local NOEP Coordinator outside these counties.

To apply for SNAP benefits, you must complete an application through one of the following ways:

Online

You can apply online at mybenefits.ny.gov or access.nyc.gov if you are located in New York City. If you need assistance when filling out the online application, you can contact a local NOEP coordinator.

In-person

To complete an application for SNAP benefits in person, you can visit your [Local Department of Social Services](#) (LDSS/HRA) or [SNAP centers](#) (HRA) in New York City. You may also call the toll-free New York State Temporary Assistance Hotline at 1-800-342-3009 to find the address and phone number of the SNAP office closest to you. If you request a SNAP application from the LDSS/HRA, they are required to provide it to you. When you submit your application, the office must accept and register it. To be accepted, your application only needs to include your name, address, telephone number, and a signed copy of the form. If you have difficulty providing more information, a SNAP worker will assist you during your eligibility interview. By turning in your application containing your name, address, telephone number (if you have one), date, and a signature as soon as possible, you preserve what is known as your "filing date."

By mail or fax

If you prefer a mailed application, you can request one by calling your local LDSS/HRA. If a person asks an LDSS/HRA SNAP office to mail an application form, the office must send it that same day. Another option is to print the [SNAP Application](#) and [How to Complete the SNAP Application](#) forms. Once these forms are completed, you can mail or fax them to your local LDSS/HRA.

Suppose you are experiencing hardship, or have a disability that prevents you from completing an application on your own. In that case, you may have someone apply for you. To do this, you must print the person's name, address, and phone number on page 8 of your [SNAP Application](#) or fill out and sign the [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) Authorized Representative Request Form](#). Once either form is completed, give it to the person representing you or directly to the SNAP office.

Remember, if you encounter any problems while completing the application, you can find and contact a local NOEP coordinator [here](#). The LDSS/HRA is also available to help you complete your application. If you ask the LDSS/HRA for help and are told

they cannot assist you, ask to speak to a supervisor.

After completing your application:

After you turn in (file) your application, LDSS/HRA will review the information and schedule an eligibility interview. All SNAP applicants must be interviewed either in person or over the phone. This interview may happen on the same day as your application submission, or it may be scheduled for a later date. Applicants always have the right to request an in-person interview and bring anyone they want. Note: If you need to reschedule the appointment or miss the interview, you may contact your local NOEP Coordinator. The NOEP Coordinator can assist with rescheduling your interview with the LDSS/HRA office. If you do not have a telephone, the NOEP Coordinator can help set up a face-to-face interview with the LDSS/HRA.

Whether or not you have a phone or in-person interview, you must turn in certain documents to support the information on your application. A list of the documents required can be found [here](#). If you do not have all the documents at your interview, do not worry; the LDSS/HRA will give you a written list of the documents that are still needed and additional time to obtain them. If you have any issues providing documents, you can ask the LDSS/HRA for assistance. If the worker tells you they cannot help you, ask to speak to a supervisor.

Once your application is turned in, LDSS/HRA must give you a written decision within 30 days explaining whether or not you are eligible. For eligible households, you will receive SNAP benefits within 30 days from the date the application was filed.

Note: If you have little or no food, let the LDSS/HRA know. LDSS/HRA may be able to meet your food needs under another program. LDSS/HRA may also be able to meet your needs by referring you to another agency that can help. In addition, you can check the [Regional Food Bank](#) to find a food pantry closest to you.

Expedited processing:

Under specific circumstances, some households can receive SNAP benefits within five calendar days. Families who qualify for these SNAP benefits will receive benefits within five days or so under expedited (fast) processing of their application. The LDSS/HRA must review all applications to see whether or not they qualify for expedited (fast) processing.

Households have to meet at least 1 of the following 3 requirements to have their application expedited:

1. If your monthly rent or shelter costs (ex., heating and utility bills like electricity or water) are more than your household's total monthly income and available funds (money at home or in the bank).
2. Your household receives less than \$150.00 in total monthly income and has less than \$100.00 in available funds.
3. Your household consists of migrant or seasonal farm workers with less than \$100.00 in available funds and
 1. You have not received any income since you applied for SNAP benefits, and your source of income has discontinued or
 2. Your only income for the month is from a new source, and within 10 days after applying for SNAP benefits, the most income you will earn is \$25.

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This article provides general information about this subject. Laws affecting this subject may have changed since this article was written. For specific legal advice about a problem you are having, get the advice of a lawyer. Receiving this information does not make you a client of Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.

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