

# Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc. ®



We provide free legal aid to people with civil legal problems in western New York.

[www.lawny.org](http://www.lawny.org)

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## 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.

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

NOEP Coordinators offer free and confidential prescreening to help you find out if you may be eligible for SNAP. They can also help you complete and submit an application, assist with gathering, copying, and submitting the supporting paperwork that you need to apply for SNAP. NOEP Coordinators can also inform you of your rights as a SNAP applicant, and advocate on your behalf to ensure your rights are being met according to SNAP regulations.

You also may obtain an application at your Local Department of Social Services (LDSS/HRA) or Human Resources Administration (HRA) in New York City. The LDSS/HRA is required to make SNAP applications available to anyone who asks for one. If you cannot get to the LDSS/HRA, you may be able to call and ask to be mailed an application. If a person asks a LDSS/HRA SNAP office to mail an application form, the office must mail it that same day.

You may also apply online for SNAP benefits by visiting [mybenefits.ny.gov](http://mybenefits.ny.gov). A NOEP Coordinator can also assist you with applying online and uploading the supporting documents.

You can also ask the LDSS/HRA to help you with completing your application. If you ask the LDSS/HRA for help and you are told that they cannot assist you, ask to speak to a supervisor. Also, keep in mind that LDSS/HRA has to accept your application if it contains at minimum your name, address (if you have one), date, and a signature. You will need to fill out the rest of the information, but that can be done at a later date. By turning in your application as soon as possible, you preserve what is known as your "filing date."

For households that are eligible, SNAP benefits are provided back to the date that the application was filed.

After you turn in (file) your application, LDSS/HRA will review the information contained on it and schedule an eligibility interview. All SNAP applicants must be interviewed either in person or over the phone. Applicants can be interviewed at the time of application submission or at a later date. Applicants are always able to have an in-person interview when requested and they can bring anyone they want with them. 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 with setting up a face to face interview with the LDSS/HRA.

Once your application is turned in, LDSS/HRA must give you a written decision within 30 days, explaining whether or not you are eligible. If you are eligible, generally you will receive benefits back to the date that your application was filed.

Some households are eligible to receive SNAP benefits within 5 calendar days. Households who receive SNAP within 5 days do so under expedited (fast) processing of their application. The LDSS/HRA is required to 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. Your household's gross monthly income, plus your liquid resource (money at home or in the bank, for example) must be less than your shelter costs - rent or mortgage plus utility expenses (the Standard Utility Allowance).
2. Your household expects to receive less than \$150.00 in gross income in the month of application, and has less than \$100.00 in liquid resources.
3. Your household consists of destitute migrant and/or seasonal farm workers, and you have less than \$100.00 in liquid resources.

Whether or not you have a phone or in-person interview, you will need to turn in certain documents to support (verify) the information on your application. SNAP rules require that the SNAP interviewer get proof of the following: (1) identity of the applicant, (2) household size, (3) age, (4) citizenship status, (5) social security numbers for everyone in the household, (6) income and resources, and (7) residence in the county. Some of the more common documents needed are: wage statements showing a month's worth of pay; your Social Security award letter; a driver's license or birth certificate; a rent receipt or lease; a heating or other utility bill; a recent bank statement. If you do not have all the documents at the time of your interview, do not worry, the LDSS/HRA is supposed to give you a written list of the documents that are still needed, and give you additional time to obtain them.

If you have little or no food, make sure you let the LDSS/HRA know. If you are not eligible for

expedited processing of your application, LDSS/HRA may be able to meet your food needs under another program. LDSS/HRA may also be able to meet your need by referring you to another agency that can help.

If you have previously given the LDSS/HRA documents that do not change, for example, birth certificates and photo ID, then you should not have to provide them again. Also, if the LDSS/HRA asks you to provide a document, and you have tried but cannot get it on your own, you can ask them to help you get it. If the worker tells you that he or she cannot help you, ask to speak to a supervisor.

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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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