

Navigating Pennsylvania's SNAP Changes – Frequently Asked Questions

SNAP Changes

Q: What are the recent changes to SNAP, and when do they take effect?

A: Under the new law, certain individuals now must participate in an education/training program, volunteer, or be working at least 20 hours per week/80 hours per month during the 1-3 months preceding application for SNAP, or the month preceding a SNAP eligibility redetermination. If they do not meet the work requirement or an exemption, they can only receive three months of SNAP benefits in a three-year period.

The age range for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) has been expanded, formerly capped at age 54, now through age 64.

Additionally, parents with dependent children 14 or older, and homeless individuals, veterans, and current/former foster youth who are 24 years old or younger (all three of these groups were formerly exempt) are also subject to these new work requirements.

College students are not directly implicated in changes to eligibility rules, but they are more likely to now be subject to SNAP work requirements.

Q: What should SNAP beneficiaries be aware of regarding these changes and their benefits?

A: Your SNAP benefits will NOT change without direct notice from PA DHS.

- You may soon receive – or may have recently received – a survey from DHS regarding new work requirements.
- Completing this survey will NOT affect your current benefits in any way. It helps DHS determine if you are:
 - Exempt from new work requirements
 - Currently meeting new requirements
 - Will need to take action to start meeting new requirements
- Keep your address and other contact information up to date with both DHS and USPS.
- Be aware of your renewal date so benefits do not lapse.
- Be on the lookout for more information from DHS.

Q: How do these changes affect individuals with disabilities?

A: SNAP eligibility for children with disabilities does not change based on the new work requirements. Adults with a disability may be exempt from SNAP work requirements. An SSI application alone may not affirm disability status for exemption from work requirements.

Q: How will the new SNAP changes affect parents with immigration challenges but whose children receive these benefits?

A: Eligibility for non-citizens is determined on an individual basis. If a non-citizen has citizens living within their household, those individuals could still be eligible for SNAP.

Impact

Q: How many Pennsylvanians are at risk of losing their SNAP benefits due to these changes?

A: Approximately 143,000 Pennsylvanians are at immediate risk of losing their SNAP benefits, with 3.5 million Americans facing the same risk.

Q: What are the broader impacts of these SNAP changes beyond individual beneficiaries?

A: Broader impacts include:

- Increasing hunger due to higher grocery costs affecting everyone
- Increasing food insecurity which impacts public health and schools
- Increasing demand for county services and programs
- Growing economic risk for SNAP retailers
 - 1,810 SNAP retailers in PA and 27,266 in U.S. at increased risk of financial instability

Q: When can we anticipate these cuts to go into place, and will PA see larger cuts in SNAP?

A: Changes to eligibility will phase in over the next several years. While it's too early to determine the full impact, Governor Shapiro has stated that PA cannot backfill these federal cuts.

Q: What is the SNAP error rate? How does it impact PA's ability to serve SNAP clients?

A: The SNAP error rate measures how accurately a state determines SNAP benefits; it is not a fraud measure, and most errors are unintentional administrative errors by staff. Per new law, a state's SNAP error rate will now determine how much that state must contribute to the cost of SNAP benefits for the first time ever, as SNAP benefits were previously 100% federally funded.

PA's current error rate is 10.76%, which is below the national average. This cost-sharing provision does not take effect until Federal Fiscal Year 2028. States that get their error rates below 6% are not required to contribute funding. PA DHS is actively working to reduce its error rate to below 6%.

Resources

Q: What resources are available for SNAP information and support in PA?

A: Individuals can:

- Use the SNAP Retailer Locator at www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailer-locator
- Find data on projected impact at www.dhs.pa.gov/data
- Contact the Offices of State Senator Art Haywood at www.senatorhaywood.com
- Contact the DHS Statewide Customer Service Center at (1-877-395-8930)
- Contact their local County Assistance Office