

New York State Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP)
Frequently Asked Questions
(Rest of State)

Q. Why did I receive this mailing?

- A. You received this mailing because you receive SSI Benefits and you live alone, which makes you automatically eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Q. What are Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits?

- A. SNAP helps people with little income to buy food for a healthy diet. SNAP benefits are placed in an account that is like a bank account. You use your New York State Benefit Identification Card (the same card that you use for Medicaid) like a bank card to buy food. There is no limit to the number of times you can use your card for SNAP benefit transactions.

Q. Will participation in this project affect/reduce my SSI payments?

- A. No. Participation in this project will not affect or reduce your SSI in any way. You are entitled to receive SNAP Benefits.

Q. Why am I receiving this benefit amount? It seems low.

- A. You are getting this amount because we don't have any information about your shelter (housing) and utility expenses. In order to see if you may get a higher benefit amount each month, we need to know how much you pay each month for rent, or for mortgage, property taxes and homeowners insurance, if you own your home. We also need to know if you pay for heating or air conditioning or electricity separately from your rent. You may submit proof of these expenses to our office by mail or in person. If you do, we will rebudget your case to see if you are eligible for more benefits. You can use the response sheet attached to the notice letter to submit the information and proof.

Q. What should I do if my New York State Benefit Identification Card (Benefit ID Card) is not working?

- A. If your Benefit ID Card is not working:
- Call an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Customer Service Representative at 1-888-328-6399 to check your account balance to make sure there are benefits in your account. Customer Service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The telephone number is located on the back of your card.
 - If you have benefits in your account and your Benefit ID Card still does not work, tell EBT Customer Service that your Benefit ID Card will not work. They will instruct you to call your local district SNAP office to request a card replacement.
 - If EBT Customer Service can't solve the problem, call your local SNAP office. They will check to see if there is a problem with the card, and if there are SNAP Benefits in the system. If your card needs to be replaced, they will need your name, social security number and address. It will take 5 to 7 days to replace your card.

Q. What should I do if I do not receive my Personal Identification Number (PIN)?

- A. If you do not receive your PIN:
- A mailer with your PIN will be mailed to you. If you have not received it yet, you should within a few days. If you do not receive it within five days of receiving this letter, you should order another PIN by calling your local SNAP office.
 - If you want to select the PIN by yourself, call EBT Customer Service at 1-888-328-6399. You will need to know your last four digits of your Social Security Number and your mailing address zip code. Never write your PIN on your card.
 - If you need the help of your local department of social services SNAP worker to request that a new PIN mailer be sent to you, please call your county department of social services. They will need your name, Social Security Number and address in order to request a new PIN mailer. It will take from 3 to 5 days for the new PIN mailer to come to your home. If you don't know the phone number for your county department of social services, you may call the New York State SNAP Hotline at 1-800-342-3009 to get the number for your county office.

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Q. How do I use my PIN?

- A.** At the store or supermarket, after your groceries have been scanned and totaled, either you or the clerk/cashier will swipe your card. You will enter PIN. Only you should enter your PIN. If you enter your PIN incorrectly four times in a row, your account will be locked out until the next day even if you select a new PIN. You will receive a receipt showing your remaining balance. Please keep your receipts so you will know your balance for the next time. You should not give your PIN to the clerk/cashier to enter.

Q. What should I do if I lose my PIN?

- A.** If you lose your PIN, you can get a new one by calling EBT Customer Service at 1-888-328-6399. They will also cancel your old PIN.

Q. What should I do if I forget my PIN?

- A.** If you forget your PIN, call your SNAP worker to request that a PIN mailer containing your current PIN be sent to you. To do this, they will need your name, Social Security Number and address.
You can also call the EBT Customer Service Line at 1-888-328-6399 to select a new PIN. They will also cancel your old PIN.

Q. Where can I use the Benefit ID Card?

- A.** You should be able to use the Benefit ID Card where you currently shop. Before you shop, check your last receipt to find out how much money is in your account, or call 1-888-328-6399 for your balance. Almost all supermarkets and food stores accept the card. If the QUEST logo is not visible where you buy food, you should ask the store if they accept the card.

Q. Should I give my PIN to the grocery clerk?

- A.** No. You should never give your PIN to the grocery clerk.

Q. Can I give my PIN to my home attendant, family member, or friend?

- A.** Yes, you can. However, we caution you to make sure it is someone you know and trust. Keep in mind that providing access to your Benefit ID Card and PIN will give them access to your benefits. If someone uses your card and your SNAP Benefits without your permission, we cannot replace the benefits.

If you would like, you can choose somebody to be your “authorized representative”. This would be a person you trust who can do grocery shopping for you. The authorized representative can get their own Benefit ID Card and PIN. To find out more about choosing an authorized representative, please call your county department of social services. Again, if you don’t know the phone number for your county department of social services, you may call the New York State SNAP Hotline at 1-800-342-3009.

Q. What happens if I don’t receive my Benefit ID Card?

- A.** Your Medicaid card (New York State Benefit Identification Card) is also your SNAP Benefit ID card. However, if you do not have a Medicaid card already, or if you do not get one in the mail within the next week, a new card can be ordered for you. To order one, please call your county department of social services. Again, if don’t know the phone number for your county department of social services, you may call the New York State SNAP Hotline at 1-800-342-3009 to get the number for your county office. It will take 3 to 5 days before you receive your card. They will need your name, Social Security Number and address.

Q. What do I do if my Benefit ID Card is lost or stolen?

- A.** If your Benefit ID Card is lost or stolen, you must call the EBT Customer Service Helpline at 1-888-328-6399 to report your lost or stolen card. This action will automatically cancel your card that has been lost or stolen. You must then contact your county department of social services to request a new card be sent to you. If you don’t know the phone number for your county department of social services, you may contact the New York State SNAP Hotline at 1-800-342-3009 to get the number.