

SNAP for Senior & Disabled Households

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly Food Stamps) is our nation’s most important anti-hunger program, providing monthly benefits to purchase food at grocery stores, bodegas, and farmers’ markets for individuals and families.



New York provides multiple pathways to SNAP participation for seniors (age 60+) and people with disabilities.

Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) and NYS Combined Application Project (NYSCAP)

ESAP and NYSCAP are special projects designed to improve access to SNAP for seniors and people with disabilities. Each program has specific eligibility requirements.

Seniors and people with disabilities who have no earned income and live in households where all adults are 60 and over and/or disabled can qualify for ESAP. Participants receiving SNAP under ESAP benefit from a simplified application, a longer certification period, and fewer recertification requirements.

Seniors and people with disabilities who live alone and receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are automatically enrolled in NYSCAP. Separate applications, interviews, or verifications are not needed for NYSCAP enrollees to receive SNAP.

Seniors who are ineligible for ESAP and NYSCAP may still qualify for SNAP. SNAP rules include special provisions that expand access and maximize benefits for seniors and people with disabilities, including expanded categorical eligibility, medical deductions and, in some cases, a higher resource test.

This chart (over) compares rules, requirements, and benefits for these different SNAP projects, along with SNAP rules for those not meeting ESAP or NYSCAP criteria.

ESAP		NYSCAP		SNAP	
Who can participate	All adults in household must be seniors or disabled with no earned income	Seniors or disabled who receive SSI and live alone	Seniors or disabled who are ineligible for ESAP or NYSCAP—may have earned income		
Application & enrollment	Apply using the Simplified SNAP-only Application for Seniors and People with Disabilities (LDSS-5166), myBenefits, or AccessHRA	No application—participants are enrolled automatically	Apply using myBenefits, AccessHRA, or the SNAP-only Application (LDSS-4826)		
<i>Interview required?</i>	Yes	No	Yes		
<i>Applicant screened for expedited service?</i>	Yes	No	Yes		
Recertification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 36 months • No interview required • Non-mandatory interim report at 18 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 36 months • Interview required • Mandatory interim report at 18 months (via phone or mail) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every 12 months • Interview required • Mandatory change report form at 6 months 		
Benefits	Individualized budget	Individualized budget <i>Participants must redeem benefits within 90 days of auto-enrollment</i>	Individualized budget <i>Senior/disabled households can maximize benefits with categorical eligibility, medical deductions and a higher resource test</i>		
Documentation	Computer matches for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unearned income • Date of birth • Social security number Self-declaration for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter expenses • SUA Participants must submit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residency • Medical deductions 	Participants must submit the NYSCAP SNAP Case Information Collection Sheet (LDSS-4841) to maximize benefits	See our SNAP Prescreening Guide at SNAPGuideNY.org for detailed information on SNAP documentation		