

SNAP & Students

Checklist for Determining Student Eligibility

SNAP rules limit the eligibility of certain groups of people, including students. Follow this checklist to determine if an applicant meets the criteria of an eligible student under SNAP rules.

Please note that there are additional SNAP income and eligibility rules that all SNAP applicants, including students, must meet in order to qualify to receive a SNAP benefit each month.

1. Establish applicant's status as a student. The applicant:

- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** Is enrolled in a higher education institution that normally requires a high school diploma or equivalency certificate for enrollment. This includes but is not limited to: colleges, universities, correspondence school or online courses, vocational and trade/technical schools at the post-high school level.
- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** Is enrolled at least half-time (using the school's definition of half-time).
- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** *For an applicant applying between semesters:* intends to register for the next school term.

If "Yes" to all of the above, the applicant is considered a student and the student rule applies. Proceed to Step 2. If "No" to any of the above, the applicant is **not** considered a student and the student rules do not apply (continue to screen the applicant under regular SNAP rules).

2. Is the student enrolled in a college meal plan?

- ☐ **Yes** ☐ **No** The applicant receives 50% or more of their meals from a college meal plan.
Note: This is based on 3 meals for seven days equaling 21 meals. The SNAP office must screen each student to identify the number of meals the student is granted under their meal plan.

If "Yes", the student is **not** eligible for SNAP, as they are defined as living in an institution.
If "No", continue to Step 3.

3. Does the student meet ANY of the following exemptions? If so, provide the SNAP office with the documentation noted.

Student Is Working:

- ☐ Employed an average of 20 hours per week.
 - ▶ *Provide proof of wages and work hours including: pay stubs, income tax records, or a contract with the employer.*
- ☐ Self-employed an average of 20 hours per week and receives average weekly earnings at least equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 20 hours.
 - ▶ *Provide proof of wages including: most current income tax return, earnings and expense report, or records and related materials concerning self-employment.*

Individual Characteristics:

- ☐ 17 years of age or under or 50 years of age or over.
 - ▶ *Provide proof of age including; birth certificate, drivers license, school records, or statement from another person.*
- ☐ Physically or mentally unfit to work: An individual is considered physically or mentally unfit for work if they have an illness, condition, or life circumstance, whether temporary or permanent, that reduces or affects their ability to work 20 hours a week.
 - ▶ *Provide a letter from a medical or mental health provider stating that the applicant is not able to work 20 hours per week. The letter should include the medical professional's contact information, and can come from any of the following: doctor, doctor's assistant, representative of a doctor's office, nurse or nurse practitioner, licensed or certified psychologist, or social worker.*
- ☐ Primary caretaker for a household member who is under 6.
 - ▶ *Child in case should be documented in the case record; nothing further should be needed.*
- ☐ Primary caretaker for a household member between the ages of 6 and 11, if no adequate child care is available that would make it possible to work and go to school.
 - ▶ *Child in case should be documented in the case record; nothing further should be needed. The caretaker can self declare the inadequate childcare.*
- ☐ Single parent enrolled full-time who is responsible for the care of a child under 12.
 - ▶ *Single status and child should be documented in the case record; nothing further should be needed.*

Student Participates in a Qualifying Government Program:

- ☐ Receives Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
 - ▶ *Information on participation in TANF is in the case record; nothing else should be needed.*
- ☐ Receives unemployment benefits.
 - ▶ *Provide proof of unemployment benefits including letter from Unemployment or unemployment check stubs.*
- ☐ Participates in a state or federal work-study program during the regular school year.
 - ▶ *Provide proof of work study including: financial aid award letter or written request that the institution of higher learning communicate the student's eligibility to participate in work study to the SNAP office.*
- ☐ Attends a State University of New York (SUNY) or City University of New York (CUNY) community, comprehensive, or technology college and is enrolled in a qualified certificate or degree in a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program.
 - ▶ *Provide proof of participation in a CTE program using the LDSS-5172 SUNY/CUNY/EOC Student Verification of Enrollment (available at our website).*

- ☐ Attends an Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) and is enrolled in a qualified CTE program, remedial courses, basic adult education, literacy, or English as a second language.
 - ▶ *Provide proof of participating in an EOC program using the LDSS-5172 SUNY/CUNY/EOC Student Verification of Enrollment (available at our website).*
- ☐ In school through SNAP E&T, Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA), or Department of Labor programs.
 - ▶ *Tell the SNAP office or provide proof of your participation in one of these programs.*

If a student meets **any** of the above exemptions, they are an “eligible student” based on SNAP’s student eligibility criteria. Note that there are additional SNAP income and eligibility rules that all SNAP applicants, including students, must meet in order to receive a SNAP benefit each month.

Additionally, those considered “eligible students” are exempt from:

- SNAP E&T work requirements, and
- SNAP Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWD) Time Limit Rule (currently suspended in New York State until February 28, 2025).

For more information and resources, visit our Students and SNAP webpage:
HungerSolutionsNY.org/federal-nutrition-programs/snap/snap-eligibility-for-college-students/