

Frequently Asked Questions for the Emergency Allotment of SNAP Benefits

Answers to many commonly asked questions about the Supplemental Emergency Allotment (EA) of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits.

What are supplemental EA SNAP benefits?

Answer Revision: The Families First Act (FFA) is a federal law that was passed to respond to the effects of the public health emergency caused by COVID-19. The law authorized the issuance of emergency supplemental benefits to households receiving SNAP. Based on the law, states are to issue supplemental SNAP benefits, up to the maximum allowable SNAP benefit for a household's size, during the emergency or disaster declaration. New York has issued the supplemental benefits monthly for the months of March 2020 through February 2021. Only households whose SNAP benefit for the month was less than the maximum benefit amount for their household's size will get a supplemental EA SNAP benefit for that month. Households who already received the maximum benefit amount for their household size in a month are not eligible to receive a supplemental EA SNAP benefit for that month. Households may not receive more than the maximum allowable amount for their household size. This applies for any of the months OTDA issued the supplemental EA SNAP benefit, currently March 2020 through February 2021.

Who qualifies for the supplemental EA SNAP benefits?

If your household received a SNAP benefit for the months between March 2020 and February 2021 that was less than the maximum benefit amount for your household's size, then you will automatically get a supplemental EA SNAP benefit. The supplemental EA SNAP benefit will only be provided for the months that your household received less than the maximum benefit amount.

What is the maximum SNAP benefit amount for my family's size?

The "Thrifty Food Plan" (TFP) is the maximum amount of SNAP benefits, per household size. Beginning October 1, 2020, the TFP amounts of SNAP benefits per household size have increased. The maximum monthly SNAP benefit amounts by household size are listed below. Please note that a **temporary 15% increase** in SNAP benefits was authorized in the recently signed federal relief legislation and will be in effect for the months of **January through June 2021**:

Maximum Monthly SNAP Benefits

| March—September 2020 | | October—December 2020 | | January-June 2021 | |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|
| SNAP Household Size | Maximum Monthly Benefit Amount | SNAP Household Size | Maximum Monthly Benefit Amount | SNAP Household Size | Maximum Monthly Benefit Amount |
| 1 | \$194 | 1 | \$204 | 1 | \$234 |
| 2 | \$355 | 2 | \$374 | 2 | \$430 |
| 3 | \$509 | 3 | \$535 | 3 | \$616 |
| 4 | \$646 | 4 | \$680 | 4 | \$782 |
| 5 | \$768 | 5 | \$807 | 5 | \$929 |
| 6 | \$921 | 6 | \$969 | 6 | \$1,114 |
| 7 | \$1,018 | 7 | \$1,071 | 7 | \$1,232 |
| 8 | \$1,164 | 8 | \$1,224 | 8 | \$1,408 |
| Each additional person | +\$146 | Each additional person | +\$153 | Each additional person | +\$176 |

What if my household already got the maximum benefit for my household's size for the months of March 2020 through February 2021?

If you got the maximum SNAP benefit for your household's size for the months of March 2020 through February 2021, then you will not get a supplemental EA SNAP benefit for any month you receive the maximum benefit. Only households whose SNAP benefit for the month was less than the maximum benefit amount for their household's size will get a supplemental EA SNAP benefit for that month. Households who already received the maximum benefit amount for their household size in a month are not eligible to receive a supplemental EA SNAP benefit for that month. Households may not receive more than the maximum allowable amount for their household size.

How much will I receive in supplemental EA SNAP benefits?

SNAP households are eligible to receive supplemental EA SNAP benefits in the amount that will bring them up to the maximum SNAP monthly benefit amount for a household of their size. This applies for any of the months OTDA issued the supplemental EA SNAP benefit, currently March 2020 through February 2021.

For example, a household of 4 people may currently receive a maximum monthly allotment of \$680. If that household received \$400 in monthly SNAP benefits, they will receive supplemental EA SNAP benefits of \$280.

Do I need to apply for supplemental EA SNAP benefits?

No, you do **not** need to apply for supplemental EA SNAP benefits. If you already get SNAP and received a SNAP benefit for the months between March 2020 and February 2021 that is **less than** the maximum benefit amount for your household's size, the EA benefits automatically will be made available on your EBT card.

If you are **not** currently enrolled in SNAP, the quickest way to apply for SNAP benefits is online at: www.myBenefits.ny.gov or <https://access.nyc.gov/> (if you live in New York City).

How will I know when my emergency SNAP benefits are available?

You can find information about how to check your available SNAP balance on your EBT card at: <https://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/ebt/>.

What can I purchase with my emergency SNAP supplemental benefits?

The supplemental EA benefits are SNAP benefits. Like regular SNAP benefits, the supplemental benefits can be used to purchase food at authorized retail food stores. A detailed list of food items that may be purchased with SNAP benefits can be found at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items/>.

Do I have to use my emergency SNAP supplemental benefits right away?

No. Unused SNAP benefits, including supplements, remain available and accessible on your EBT card for up to one year from the date they are issued.