



Food Support for Seniors

Only 50% of seniors in Minnesota who are eligible for SNAP benefits are getting them.

Note: *The Food Support (food stamps) program is called SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).*

How do I know if I qualify for SNAP food support as a senior?

The SNAP program has special rules for seniors over 60 years of age. They still look at income, resources, and the amount of help available. But the limits and deductions are different for seniors. It can be complicated. It's best to apply and let them figure out if you are eligible.



How do I apply to get SNAP?

- Go to your county Human or Social Services office and get the application form. Fill it out and turn it in.
- If you can't go yourself, you can give permission to someone in writing. They can take your letter to the office and get the form and help you apply.
- You might be able to apply online. To find out, go to www.mn.bridgetobenefits.org/Home2.

If you qualify, your benefits are put on an electronic benefits card- like a cash card. You use this card to buy food at any store that accepts SNAP benefits.

Can I get help?

You can get information on SNAP, do an eligibility screening, and get help with an application by calling The MN FoodHelp line at 1 (888) 711-1151. You can also call the Senior LinkAge Line at 1 (800) 333-2433.

Find help online at: www.MinnesotaHelp.info

→ On the home page click *Seniors*

→ Click on *Food Assistance and Other Nutrition*

This site also has listings of [emergency food resources](#) around the state.

What if my human services office says I don't qualify for food support?

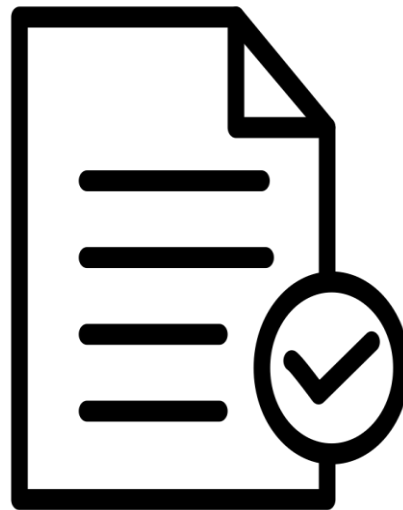
If the county denies your application for SNAP or any other public benefit, you have the right to appeal. The denial notice you get from them explains your appeal rights and your appeal deadline. Your Legal Aid office might be able to help you with your appeal. Call them as soon as possible.

Do I need to work in order to get food support?

No. If you are 51 years old or more, you do not need to work in order to get Food Support.

How often are my food support benefits reviewed?

If all adult members of your household are seniors or disabled your Food Support benefits are reviewed every 2 years. Otherwise it may be every 3 months.



Can I get SNAP if I live with other people who don't qualify?

If you are over age 60 and live with others you can qualify as a separate SNAP household from the people you live with even if you can't buy and make your food separately.

Can I get SNAP if I live in a group home?

If you live in a group home, assisted living building, or other institution that provides you with meals you may still be eligible for SNAP benefits. You should apply.

I have medical and prescription drug bills.

Does that count in figuring out my how much food support I can get?

If you are over 60 you can deduct unreimbursed out-of-pocket medical and dental expenses that are more than \$35 a month. Only the amount over \$35 can be deducted. Bring your medical and prescription drug bills to your local Human Services office and they will do the calculation for you.

Note: You cannot do this if an insurance company or someone who is not a household member pays for the expenses.



I have a part-time community service job. Do my wages count toward income limits?

If the income is from a program carried out under the Community Service Employment Program (Title V of the Older Americans Act) it does not count. These are programs like the Experience Works and the Senior Aides Program.

I get a stipend for volunteering. Does that count as income?

Volunteer stipends from programs like Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents are not counted as income in figuring out how much food support you should get. If you volunteer and get a stipend, make sure you ask your local Human Services office about it when you apply for Food Support. If you already get benefits and want to start volunteering, talk to your worker.

Ask your Human Services Office about other income deductions that seniors can get.

I get a monthly check from a retirement account.

Does that count toward income or asset limits?

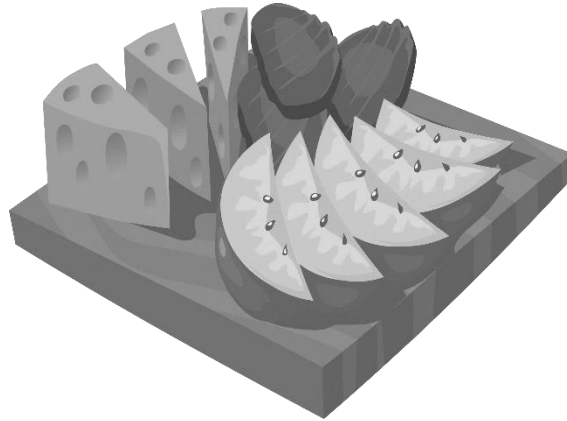
Yes. Monthly income you get from a retirement account counts towards the income limit. The balance in the account usually does not count towards the assets limit. However, any cash you keep from your monthly check will count toward the assets limit.



I am a senior, but I am not a citizen.

Are there other food programs that can help me?

A separate state program, the Minnesota Food Assistance Program (MFAP) is available to non-citizens 50 years of age or older. Apply for MFAP at your local Human Services office. You get the same amount of food assistance that you would get if you had been eligible for the SNAP program.



Find more fact sheets at www.lawhelpmn.org/LASMfactsheets

Find your local legal aid office at www.lawhelpmn.org/resource/legal-aid-offices

Fact Sheets are legal information NOT legal advice. See a lawyer for advice.

Don't use this fact sheet if it is more than 1 year old. Ask us for updates, a fact sheet list, or alternate formats.

© 2018 Minnesota Legal Services Coalition. This document may be reproduced and used for non-commercial personal and educational purposes only. All other rights reserved. This notice must remain on all copies. Reproduction, distribution, and use for commercial purposes are strictly prohibited.