
Towson University SNAP Application Guide for Students



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INTRODUCTION

College Students and Food Insecurity

Food insecurity has long afflicted college campuses. At Towson University we are eager to support you along your journey in your academic goals. At Towson University, one in four students are classified as potentially being food insecure creating an estimate of 27.9% of the student population being food insecure.

Food insecurity is the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable and nutritious foods. Since food insecurity exists on a spectrum, many people do not recognize that they qualify as food insecure. Food insecurity has proven to disrupt focus, reduce academic performance and impact extracurricular participation. Towson University believes that food insecurity should not be a barrier to students academic success.

The Hub has created this guide to help develop a longer-term solution to food insecurity on campus for students and their households. Being a participant in the federal SNAP program does not limit your access to The Hub at Towson University. We are excited to support you in this process.

What is SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally funded program that aids in nutrition assistance to limited income individuals and households. Eligible participants are provided a monthly benefit amount that they can use via an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card.

The TU SNAP toolkit

The Towson University SNAP toolkit is a guide designed to cater to the TU community to help facilitate applying for SNAP. Please reach out to The Hub with any further questions.

SNAP Rules and Regulations

Eligibility Rules

1. Citizenship and Immigrant Status

- a. To be eligible for SNAP assistance you must have a valid social security number. Exceptions to this rule includes:
 - i. refugees
 - ii. asylees
 - iii. immigrants whose deportation has been withheld
 - iv. Cuban/Haitian entrants
 - v. Amerasians
 - vi. some immigrants legally admitted for permanent residence
 - vii. parolees
 - viii. aliens granted conditional entry
 - ix. certain battered spouses and children
 - x. Border Crossing Native Americans
 - xi. certain Iraqi and Afghan immigrants
 - xii. victims of human trafficking
 - xiii. Hmong or Laotian tribe members
 - b. It's important to note that those eligible in the same household as those who are not, can still apply for SNAP benefits
2. Social Security Numbers
 - a. A social security number is needed for every household members, as well as children, except for undocumented immigrants applying on behalf of others.
 - b. If a household member, that is not an undocumented immigrant, does not have a social security number, they must apply for one.
 3. International Students
 - a. International students are not eligible for SNAP benefits but other members in their household may be. Feel free to stop by The Hub during open hours to discuss resources as an international student.
 4. Income Requirements
 - a. The income requirement for SNAP eligibility is based on household sizes and fluctuates over time. Please visit [here](#) for the most updated information.

Application Timeline

- Application processing is within 30 days but the process can be streamlined by applying online and having identity verification documents handy. A complete list of verification documents is located under "Getting Started."

SNAP FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

Students between the ages of 18 through 49 enrolled in a college or institution of higher education for at least half time are eligible for SNAP if they meet an exemption.

Exemptions can include any one of the qualifying factors below:

- receive cash assistance or payments:
 - under a Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) program,
 - under disability and SSI, SSA or VA disability payments.
- participate in a federal work study program;
- work at least 20 hours a week (not averaged);
- is the caretaker of:
 - a child under the age of 6; or
 - a child between the ages of 6-12 AND cannot afford adequate childcare to attend school and work a minimum of 20 hours or participate in a federal work study program.
 - a child under 12 while in school full-time as a single parent
- are assigned to or placed in college through:
 - a Work Force Investment Act program,
 - a Section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974 program,
 - an employment and training program under the Food Stamp Act, or
 - a State or local government employment and training program.
- have a disability that is verified by a doctor or licensed psychologist.

**Please note: As of February 28th, 2023, the COVID-19 SNAP exemptions are no longer applicable, eligibility for SNAP is dependent upon the list above*

Dhs.maryland.gov

Meal Plans and Roommates

- How do meal plans effect SNAP?
 - a. If you reside in a dorm and have a meal plan that covers the cost for half of your meals, you are not eligible for SNAP.
- How do roommates affect SNAP?
 - a. If you and your roommates are purchasing and preparing meals together, then they would be considered a part of your household

GETTING STARTED

Verification Documents

- Proof of Identity

1. Driver's license, photo ID card, passport, adoption records or birth certificate are all valid options
- Social Security card
 - Proof of residency
 - Proof of utility bills
 - Verification of income
 1. paystubs, letter from employer or award letter.
 - child-support payments, such as a court order and cancelled checks and the legal obligation to pay;
 - verification of citizenship or legal immigrant status for eligible immigrants;
 - medical expenses for individuals 60 or older or disabled;

Examples of these verification documents can be found [here](#).

Application

- Apply online at myDHR to streamline your application process
- Renewing your benefits
 1. You must renew your benefits before your certification period
- Issuance Dates
 1. You should hear back regarding your application within 30 days from when you applied.
 2. If you are in need of immediate assistance, expect to be reached out sooner
 3. An electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card will be issued to your household

USING YOUR BENEFITS

What can I buy with my benefits?

- Foods for the household that are:
 1. Fruits
 2. Vegetables
 3. Meat, poultry, fish
 4. Dairy
 5. Breads and cereals
 6. Snack foods
 7. Non-alcoholic beverages
 8. Seeds and plants that produce food
- Non-eligible purchases include
 1. Alcoholic beverages
 2. Cigarettes, tobacco or nicotine products
 3. Supplements or medicines including vitamins

- If there is a supplement label, consider it non-eligible
- 4. Hot foods
- 5. Non food items
 - Cleaning products
 - Paper products
 - Household supplies
 - Hygiene items
 - Cosmetics

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TOWSON UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

Peer to Peer SNAP Assistance

SNAP assistance will be held at The Hub but facilitated by your peers who are trained in SNAP assistance. All meetings and personal information remain strictly confidential within our training guidelines. Please reach out to The Hub with any inquiries.

Where to access transcripts

- Please access [this link](#) for more information on accessing your TU transcript.

Making an appointment

- Please fill out [this link](#) to schedule an appointment for SNAP assistance

Using Your Benefits Around Campus

Our [local SNAP Retailer Guide](#) has a comprehensive list of sites around campus that accept SNAP benefits. For additional food assistance resources around campus, please visit our [Food Security Food Map](#).

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

PDF of Online Application

A PDF version of the online application can be found [here](#). While the application may seem intimidating, our team at The Hub are prepared to help you through this process. You can also visit our video on SNAP [here](#) to summarize the information in this guide. Please reach out to The Hub with any additional questions.

Being Nutritional Focused with SNAP

Initially SNAP, formerly known as The Food Stamps Program, was focused on providing food to limited income households. Recently, there has been a push to bring nutrition into the picture as well.

SNAP Fraud

Unfortunately, recently there has been a rise in SNAP benefits theft and scams. To best protect yourself and your benefits we recommend:

- Avoiding simple pins
- Keeping your PIN and card number secret
 - Do not share your PIN or card number with anyone that is outside of your household
 - Cover the keypad when entering your PIN on a machine
- Be on alert for phishing
 - No state agency or EBT processor will ever call or text you for your PIN or EBT card number
 - Ignore any of these messages or calls and NEVER click on any links that are texted or emailed to you asking for your PIN or EBT card number
- Be on alert for card skimming
 - Card skimming is when an illegal device is placed on an ATM or retailer's card swiping machine to copy EBT information
 - Information from these machines can be used to make a copy of your EBT card, this is called card cloning
 - If you think you are a victim of card skimming or cloning, please contact your local SNAP office for help
- Change your PIN often
 - The USDA recommends to change your PIN at least once a month
 - i. It's best to change your PIN right before your benefit issuance date
- Check your EBT account regularly for unauthorized charges
 - Report any suspicious activity to your local SNAP office
 - Report any cases of card skimming to your local SNAP office

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