

SNAP is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program that used to be called Food Stamps. SNAP helps low income people buy the food they need for good nutritional health. If you qualify for SNAP, you will get an Illinois Link card. Each month, the amount of your SNAP benefits will be added to your Link Card account, and you can use it like a debit card to pay for food at most grocery stores.

You can apply in the following ways:

- Online at <https://abe.illinois.gov/abe/access/>
- Through the mail: the downloadable written application can be accessed at <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=33698> or **directly here**.
- In person at your local Family Community Resource Center (FCRC). Find your FCRC here: **DHS Office Locator**. Formerly known as “Public Aid” offices, the FCRCs are under the direction of the IL Department of Human Services (DHS). Choose Family Community Resource Center as “Office Type.”
- By phone call the DHS Help Line: 1-800-843-6154

Those individuals with disabilities who reside in a Community Integrated Living Arrangement (CILA) are required to have SNAP to cover the costs of their food.

Household and parent income is counted for SNAP for people with disabilities who share a home with their families until the age of 22.

Work Requirements as of February 2026

SNAP now requires adults ages 18-64 to work or volunteer at least 80 hours per month. **See more information from IDHS here**. This **list of FAQs from IDHS** is also very helpful.

Those who must work need to report their work.

- To report a new job or changes to an existing job,
 - Use **SNAP Change Report Form IL444-1978 (pdf)**, **SNAP FORMULARIO PARA REPORTAR CAMBIOS IL444-1978S (pdf)**
 - Use the **Manage My Case** customer portal
- To report community service, use **SNAP ACTIVITY REPORT IL444-2610 (pdf)**, **INFORME DE ACTIVIDAD DE SNAP IL444-2610S (pdf)**.

Exemptions from Work Requirements

Some individuals are exempt from this requirement. **People with disabilities are exempt. So are caregivers of people with disabilities.** You can **use this screener to find out if you are exempt.** Exemptions includes:

- People age 17 and younger. No exemption form needed.
- People age 65 and older. No exemption form needed.
- People with a physical or mental condition that prevents them from working or makes it difficult to maintain work.
- People experiencing chronic homelessness.
- People who are pregnant. No exemption form needed.
- People who live in a SNAP household with a child age 13 and younger. No exemption form needed.
- Alaskan Natives, American Indians, American Urban Indians, and California Indians (as defined in the Indian Health Care Improvement Act). No exemption form needed.
- People who have an exemption from certain Work Provisions are also exempt from Work Requirements. This includes people who:
 - Go to a school, college, or training program at least half-time.
 - Applied for or are receiving unemployment benefits.
 - Are in a drug or alcohol treatment program or suffering from substance addiction.
 - Are currently receiving TANF and participating and complying with the TANF work and training requirements.
 - Care for another person who needs help caring for themselves. This person does not have to live in your home.
 - Care for a child under the age of 6. The child does not have to be your child or living in your home.
 - Work an average of 30 hours or earn wages at least equal to \$217.50 per week, before taxes and other deductions. This includes paid work, unpaid work (volunteer or community service), and/or work in exchange for goods or services for the required number of hours. No exemption form needed.
 - Are migrant or seasonal farm workers under contract with an employer to begin work within 30 days who will be working the required hours or earning at least \$217.50 per week.

If you ARE exempt, make sure you fill out an exemption form well before May 1, 2026. Otherwise, you will lose your SNAP benefits after three months. You can fill out the exemption form in any of these ways:

- Online using **Manage My Case** at www.abe.illinois.gov
- Call the ABE Customer Service at 1-800-843-6154
- Submit a form: **IL444-2341 (pdf)**, **IL444-2341S (pdf)**
- Visit or call your local Family Community Resource Center (FCRC). Use the **IDHS Office Locator** for help finding your local FCRC.

The following groups of people with disabilities are automatically exempt and do not need to fill out an exemption form:

- People receiving SSI
- People receiving SSDI

Food Resources

- To locate a nearby food bank, food pantry, or other food assistance: <https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank>
- Call the USDA National Hunger Hotline at 1-866-348-6479 or (1-877-842-6273 for Spanish). Information is available in English and Spanish. The hotline operates Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM to 10:00 PM Eastern Time.
- Call the Illinois Hunger Coalition Hunger Hotline: 1-800-359-2163 or www.ilhunger.org
- Search for Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens in Illinois: <https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=31245>
- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) link to Nutrition programs: <https://www.isbe.net/Pages/Nutrition-and-Wellness.aspx>
- Call 211 for information about local assistance that may be available to you.
- Catholic Charities – phone numbers listed for locations in Alton, Effingham, Mattoon, Quincy & Springfield: <https://cc.dio.org/programs/food-pantries>

Chicago and Cook County/Suburban Resources

- Call the Greater Chicago Food Depository hotline Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at 773-843-5416. They will answer benefits questions, help you submit the application and provide support to ensure you get connected to eligible benefits.

- <https://www.chicagosfoodbank.org/find-food/> to search for food pantries and food programs in Chicago and Cook County
- Neighborhood Food Pantries: <https://www.neighborhoodfp.org/our-pantry-locations>
- Catholic Charities phone numbers for Cook and Lake Counties: <https://www.catholiccharities.net/food-and-basic-needs/food-pantries/>
- Lastly, check with your village, township, city, neighbors, school and faith based communities