

If I Need . . .

Food

SNAP—Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps / Link)

SNAP benefits (Food Stamps) help you buy food at grocery stores. Monthly benefits are provided on a debit card known as a LINK card. You can receive SNAP if you meet income and citizenship requirements. To see if you are eligible to receive SNAP, check the SNAP Eligibility Calculator online at <http://fscalc.dhs.illinois.gov/FSCalc/>.

How to Access this Benefit:

Fill out the application online at abe.illinois.gov, by phone at 1-800-843-6154 or in person at an Illinois Department of Human Services office in your area.

You must complete an interview (phone or in-person) as part of the application process. During the interview, a state worker will verify income, number of people sharing meals with you, and household expenses. You must give proof of your identity, income, Illinois residence, and citizenship status.

Special Rules for people age 60 and over (or if someone in the home is disabled*):

- Assets are not counted if income is below 200% FPL. If income is over 200% FPL, assets are limited to \$3,250.
- If you give proof of medical expenses of \$35/month or more, an additional \$245 will be deducted from your income for eligibility purposes.
- If medical bills are over \$245 a month you can use the actual bills to reduce income. Because this information is not requested during online applications, you will need to provide the state a copy of the medical expenses during your interview.

Food Pantries

There are many organizations that provide food to those in need. Some organizations allow you to choose the food you receive. Food pantries have different hours, eligibility criteria and how often you can use the pantry. Some food pantries require a referral.

You can go online to www.feedingillinois.org/, click on **NEED FOOD?**, and find your county on the map.

School Lunches

Children can receive free lunches when their family income is at or below 130% of Federal Poverty Level. Reduced price lunches are available when a family income is at or below 185% of Federal Poverty Level. *If your family receives SNAP benefits, your children will automatically qualify for the school lunch program.*

How to Access this Benefit:

Apply at your child's school for the school lunch program. If you need more information call the US Department of Agriculture Public Information at 703-305-2286 or Illinois State Board of Education at 217-782-2491.

www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp

WIC (Women, Infants and Children)

This food program assists pregnant or breastfeeding women and children up to the age of five. You can enroll in WIC and still receive food stamps, school lunches and food from a food pantry. Income has to be at or below 185% of FPL. To learn more about the WIC Program, visit www.fns.usda.gov/wic/.

How to Access this Benefit: Go to the IDHS website at <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?module=12&officetype=2&county> to find a WIC office in your County.

Senior Food Assistance Programs

There are many food programs for seniors.

- Group Site Meal and Nutrition- meals are often served at sites such as senior centers, churches, senior housing facilities and community buildings
- Home-Delivered Meals- **Illinois Meals-on-Wheels** is a private/public partnership that helps fill "gaps" left by the state and federally funded home delivered meals program.
- Senior Farmers' Market Coupons – This is a federally funded program that provides coupons to low-income seniors to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers' markets.

<https://www.illinois.gov/aging/CommunityServices/nutrition/Pages/nutrition.aspx>

How to Access this Benefit:

Contact your local **Area Agency on Aging**, found online at www.illinois.gov/aging/PartnersProviders/Pages/aaa_list.aspx or the Department on Aging Senior Help Line at 1-800-252-8966, 1-888-206-1327 (TTY).

