KANSAS APPLESEED
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EXPANDED ELIGIBILITY TO SNAP DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: What the changes to food assistance means for hungry Kansans

SNAP Overview

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as "food stamps," is the largest food assistance program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). SNAP is one of the primary ways we address hunger, malnutrition, and poverty in the United States. SNAP plays an essential role in reducing food insecurity and improving the health of our hungry neighbors. In Kansas, SNAP is administered by the Department for Children and Families.

On Wednesday, March 18, 2020, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act was signed into law by the President after passage by the US Congress. In addition to other sweeping changes, this law allows the USDA and states the necessary flexibility to address food insecurity by making SNAP work best in the new reality of the pandemic. (Read the bill here.)

What the Family First Coronavirus Act Guarantees for Kansans and their families:

- **Pandemic-EBT**
  - Kansas families with students on free and reduced-price school meals will soon be eligible for additional SNAP food assistance.
  - Families participating in SNAP will receive an additional, one-time benefit of $274 per child. Families not participating in SNAP will be able to apply for this one-time benefit.
- **Work-related time limits**
  - DCF is temporarily waiving work requirements and work training to receiving food assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic
- **Adjustments to Interview Requirements**
  - Temporarily, households are not required to do initial in-person interviews prior to receiving SNAP. This requirement has been waived until May 2020.
- **Emergency Allotments to Current SNAP**
  - Due to the pandemic, households currently receiving SNAP benefits will have their benefit increased to the maximum monthly allotment for a household of that size for the months of April and May 2020. See maximums here.

    - All emergency allotments will be delivered on the household's EBT card.
    - If your monthly SNAP benefit is **less than** the maximum SNAP for your household, you will get a supplemental benefit up to the maximum SNAP benefit. If you get the maximum SNAP benefit, you will **not** get extra SNAP. This is because of a decision made by USDA.
- **Extended Certification Periods**
    - SNAP participants normally require a minimum certification period of 6 months for most households, due to the pandemic, this has been waived to 12 months.
    - For seniors and people with disabilities the Certification Period has been
    - extended to 24 months.
    - If you need to change anything in your assistance case or need to provide information, you may call, email or mail the local DCF service center. See a list of regional office locations here.

How to apply for SNAP:

- You can create an online account and apply for food assistance and other DCF programs using this link here.
- Paper applications are now available outside each DCF service center across the state. Your completed application(s) may be left in drop boxes outside each service center. See a list of regional office locations here.
- Or call the regional office at (785) 296-3271
- Harvesters Community Food Network has an Outreach Team that can help you determine if you are eligible for SNAP, and navigate the SNAP application process. See more information here or call (877) 653-9522.
- Note: as long as DCF offices remain closed due to the pandemic, there will be no in-person interviews for applications and recertifications. A DCF staff person will call you to schedule a phone interview.

Other things you should know:

- **Stretch your EBT food dollars with Double Up Food Bucks**
    - With the Double Up Food Bucks Program, every $1 spent at participating farmers markets and grocery stores in Kansas will be matched with another $1 FREE so you can buy more fruits and vegetables, up to $25 more per day.
    - For more information, and to find a list of farmers markets and grocery stores participating in Double Up Food Bucks, please go to doubleupheartland.org
- **Requesting an alternate person to use your SNAP benefits on your behalf**
    - You can file a form to let another adult use your benefits for you. This could be especially helpful if child care is impossible and someone in the house is either immunocompromised or self-quarantining. Click here for the form.

- You may call, email or mail the local DCF service center (see list here) to submit the form and make any changes to your assistance case.

SNAP could be working better for hungry Kansans:

- In 2015 and 2016, the Kansas legislature passed into law two bills commonly referred to by its supporters as the "HOPE Act" which threw up barriers to SNAP food assistance to tens of thousands of hungry Kansans. Hunger for these Kansans was a political choice made for them by state lawmakers. Policy decisions like these make pandemics and everyday struggles even more challenging.
- Learn more about these barriers in our recent report here. Join Kansas Appleseed's efforts to make SNAP work better for hungry Kansans by signing up for our Hunger Action Team: www.KansasAppleseed.org/HAT

On-line application link for SNAP:

- https://cssp.kees.ks.gov/apspssp/sspNonMed.portal

About Kansas Appleseed:

Kansas Appleseed Center for Law and Justice is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to the belief that Kansans, working together, can build a state full of thriving, inclusive, and just communities. For more information, visit: www.KansasAppleseed.org