As of January 14, 2021, temporary new flexibilities for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) were put into place through the Emergency Coronavirus Relief Act (H.R. 133). These flexibilities will make approximately 6 million additional college students eligible for SNAP benefits, which you can use to purchase groceries. If you meet the following criteria, you may qualify for SNAP and should complete an application:

1. Enrolled as a student in a higher education institution at least half-time.
2. Have an expected family contribution (EFC) of $0 based on your FAFSA/Student Aid Report OR are eligible to participate in state or federal work-study. (Note: You do not have to be placed or participating in work-study, just eligible for it.)
3. Your income is under 185% of the federal poverty level (FPL) (less than $23,206 per year, or $1,967 per month for 1 individual).

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**I thought I didn’t qualify for help from SNAP because there were certain requirements I didn’t meet?**

That may have been true, but the good news is that more flexibilities have been put in place by the new COVID relief bill now making about 6 million more students eligible for SNAP! Even if you didn’t qualify before, you might now (see above criteria).

**How do I apply?**

Complete an application: **ONLINE** www.healthyarizonaplus.gov; **BY PHONE** 855-HEA-Plus / 855-432-7587

After completing an application, you will be contacted for a brief interview and to provide verification on the information submitted.
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Pandemic Student Exemptions for SNAP

For more information on SNAP and these flexibilities, please visit www.azfoodbanks.org/college.

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I'm concerned about going to grocery stores and prefer to purchase my groceries online. Can I do that with SNAP?

Yes! SNAP benefits can be redeemed online for groceries at certain retailers, including Amazon, Walmart, and Aldi/Instacart. Learn more about Arizona's SNAP Online Program.

Will participating in SNAP affect my tax returns?

No. SNAP benefits are not taxable income.

Will participating in SNAP affect my employment? Can future employers see I used SNAP?

No. A past record of having received SNAP or any other government assistance isn't publicly available information. Current and future employers can't get this information without your written consent.

Will participating in SNAP affect my credit score?

No. By law, credit reporting agencies can't include whether or not you have received any government assistance.

If I use SNAP benefits, will I be taking away benefits from other people that may need them too?

No. Using SNAP doesn't impact someone else's ability to use SNAP. Similar to Medicare, SNAP is an entitlement program, which means that anyone who qualifies can receive benefits.

How do I receive the benefits?

If you're approved, you will be issued an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card in your name, which looks like a debit card. The card can then be used to purchase groceries at participating retailers.

Will this impact my ability to use other benefits I need, like unemployment insurance?

No.