

## Frequently Asked Questions for the Emergency Allotment of SNAP Benefits

Answers to many commonly asked questions about the Supplemental Emergency Allotment (EA) of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Benefits.

### What are supplemental EA SNAP benefits?

In March 2020, the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) was passed in response to effects of the public health emergency caused by COVID-19. The law authorized issuance of emergency allotment supplemental benefits to households receiving SNAP. Based on the law, beginning in March 2020, states were given permission to issue supplemental EA SNAP benefits to households not receiving the maximum benefit for the household's size. The amount of the supplement was the difference between the benefit the household normally would receive and the maximum for the household's size. States were given permission to issue the supplements as long as the state has either a disaster declaration or a state of emergency in effect, and as long as the federal public health emergency caused by the pandemic remains in effect. New York has issued the supplemental benefits every month since March 2020 and will continue issuing monthly EA SNAP benefits as long as the state's emergency declaration and the national public health emergency remain in effect.

Beginning in April 2021, the United States Department of Agriculture changed the supplementation policy and authorized the payment of a supplement of at least \$95 to all households receiving SNAP benefits.

### Who qualifies for the supplemental EA SNAP benefits?

Beginning April 2021, all households receiving SNAP benefits will receive at least \$95 per month in supplemental EA SNAP benefits. This includes households already receiving the maximum SNAP benefit amount for their household size, and households that previously would have received a monthly supplement of less than \$95.

### What is the maximum SNAP benefit amount for my family's size?

In March 2021, signed federal relief legislation extended the temporary 15% increase of maximum SNAP benefit amounts until September 2021. The current maximum monthly SNAP benefit amounts by household size are as listed:

#### Maximum Monthly SNAP Benefits

January-September 2021	
SNAP Household Size	Maximum Monthly Benefit Amount
1	\$234
2	\$430
3	\$616
4	\$782
5	\$929
6	\$1,114
7	\$1,232
8	\$1,408
Each additional person	+\$176

### **What if my household already got the maximum benefit for my household's size?**

If you have been receiving the maximum SNAP benefit amount for your household's size and formerly were not eligible for a supplement, beginning in April 2021 you will receive a monthly supplemental EA SNAP benefit of \$95. If you have been receiving supplemental EA SNAP benefits of less than \$95 a month to bring your household's benefit to the maximum monthly amount for your household's size, you now will receive an EA SNAP supplemental benefit of \$95 a month. If you have been receiving EA SNAP supplemental benefits of at least \$95 a month to bring your household's benefit to the maximum monthly amount for your household's size, your monthly EA SNAP supplemental benefit amount will not change.

### **How much will I receive in supplemental EA SNAP benefits?**

While New York State's emergency declaration and the federal public health emergency remain in effect, SNAP households are eligible to receive EA supplemental SNAP benefits in the amount that will bring them up to the maximum SNAP monthly benefit level for their household size or a supplement of \$95—whichever amount is greater.

For example, the maximum allowable monthly amount of SNAP benefits for a household of 4 people is \$782. If that household receives \$400 a month in normal SNAP benefits, they will receive a supplemental EA SNAP benefit of \$382. If the same household receives \$700 a month in normal SNAP benefits, the household would receive \$95 a month in supplemental EA SNAP benefits, instead of \$82, as would have been the case for months prior to April 2021.

Please note, benefit amounts will remain unchanged for households that have been already receiving EA SNAP benefits of at least \$95 per month.

### **Do I need to apply for supplemental EA SNAP benefits?**

No, you do not need to apply for supplemental EA SNAP benefits. Households automatically receive their supplemental EA SNAP benefits on their EBT card.

If you are **not** currently enrolled in SNAP, the quickest way to apply for SNAP benefits is online at: [www.myBenefits.ny.gov](http://www.myBenefits.ny.gov) or <https://access.nyc.gov/> (if you live in New York City).

### **How will I know when my supplemental EA SNAP benefits are available?**

You can find information about how to check your available SNAP balance on your EBT card at: <https://otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/ebt/>.

### **What can I purchase with my supplemental EA SNAP s benefits?**

The supplemental EA benefits are SNAP benefits. Like regular SNAP benefits, the supplemental benefits can be used to purchase food at authorized retail food stores. A detailed list of food items that may be purchased with SNAP benefits can be found at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items/>.

### **Do I have to use my emergency SNAP supplemental benefits right away?**

No. Unused SNAP benefits, including supplements, remain available and accessible on your EBT card for at least 274 days from the date they are issued.