

FOOD & NUTRITION SERVICES ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS



NCDHHS

Food and Nutrition Services (FNS), also known as Food Stamps, helps eligible people with limited incomes supplement their food budget. Benefits are given on an EBT card, which works like a debit card, and can be used to buy food at stores that accept EBT. **Eligibility is determined by income, household size, assets, and other factors. Meeting these criteria does not guarantee approval for benefits.**

Individuals MAY Qualify If They:

- Have no job or a low-paying job
- Receive Work First Family Assistance (WFFA), TANF (also known as welfare), or SSI benefits (for people with disabilities)
- Are elderly or disabled, and low-income
- Are experiencing homelessness

Other Requirements:

- Must be a North Carolina resident and a U.S. citizen or have certain legal status; Undocumented immigrants are not eligible.
- Must have a Social Security number or have applied for one.
- Individuals convicted of certain drug-related felonies may not be eligible.
- College students are not eligible unless they meet certain work requirements or exceptions.
- Adults without dependents (who are able to) may need to work or take part in a work program to keep receiving benefits.

HOW TO APPLY FOR FNS BENEFITS

1 Gather Your Documents

The following is needed for each household member:

- Identification for the head of the household (a driver's license, birth certificate, or other government-issued ID)
- Social Security Numbers, birthdates and citizenship status for each household member
- Records on income, cash, bank accounts, investments, and retirement accounts
- Household monthly bills, including childcare, child support, and disabled adult care
- Medical bills for anyone over 60 or who is disabled
- Proof of income for each household member
- Paperwork or IDs from other benefits received, such as Medicaid, SSI, or WFFA/TANF

2 Submit Application

There are three ways to apply:

- **Online** via ePASS (an account must be created first)
- **In person** at your local Department of Social Services (DSS) office
- **By mail** by completing and mailing a paper application to your local DSS office

3 Speak with Case Worker

- If application is submitted **online**, a case worker will contact them within a few days to conduct the interview either in person, by telephone, or through a video conference.
- If application is submitted **in person or by mail**, the interview may occur during drop-off or be scheduled for a later date.