SNAP for Senior & Disabled Households

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly Food Stamps) is our nation's most important anti-hunger program, providing monthly benefits to purchase food at grocery stores, bodegas, and farmers' markets for individuals and families.

New York provides multiple pathways to SNAP participation for seniors (age 60+) and people with disabilities.

Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP)
NYS Nutrition Improvement Project (NYSNIP)
NYS Combined Application Project (NYSCAP)

ESAP, NYSNIP and NYSCAP are special projects designed to improve access to SNAP for these vulnerable groups. Specific eligibility requirements determine which route to SNAP a potentially eligible senior or disabled person may take. Senior/disabled households can only be determined eligible to participate in one of these three programs.

Seniors and people with disabilities who have no earned income and live in households where all adults are 60 and over and/or disabled can qualify for ESAP. Participants receiving SNAP under ESAP benefit from a simplified application, a longer certification period, and fewer recertification requirements.

As of December 1, 2021, seniors and people with disabilities who live alone and receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) are automatically enrolled in NYSCAP. NYSCAP is replacing NYSNIP, which is phasing out over time. Anyone currently receiving NYSNIP will be transitioned to NYSCAP by 2023.

Seniors who are ineligible for ESAP and NYSNIP/NYSCAP may still qualify for SNAP. SNAP rules include special provisions that expand access and maximize benefits for seniors and people with disabilities, including expanded categorical eligibility, medical deductions and, in some cases, a higher resource test.

This chart (over) compares rules, requirements, and benefits for these different SNAP projects, along with SNAP rules for those not meeting ESAP or NYSNIP/NYSCAP criteria.

HUNGER SOLUTIONS NEW YORK UNITING POLICIES AND PROGRAMS TO END HUNGER

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	ESAP	NYSNIP	NYSCAP	SNAP
Who can participate	***All adults*** in household must be seniors or disabled with no earned income	Seniors or disabled who are on SSI and live alone	Seniors or disabled who are on SSI and live alone	Seniors or disabled who are ineligible for ESAP or NYSCAP—may have earned income
Application & enrollment	*Effective 12/01/2021: Eligible new applicants will be placed in ESAP. Current eligible SNAP recipients will be placed in ESAP at recertification.*	*Effective 12/01/2021: NYSNIP is transitioning to NYSCAP. New participants will be placed in NYSCAP. Current NYSNIP participants will be placed in NYSCAP at recertification.*		
	Apply using the Simplified SNAP-only Application for Seniors and People with Disabilities (LDSS-5166), myBenefits, or AccessHRA	No application—participants are auto-enrolled	No application—participants are auto-enrolled	Apply using myBenefits, AccessHRA, or the SNAP-only Application (LDSS-4826)
Interview required?	Yes	No	No	Yes
Applicant screened for expedited service?	Yes	No	No	Yes
Recertification	- Every 36 months - No interview required - Non-mandatory interim report at 18 months	- Every 48 months - Interview required - Mandatory interim report at 24 months (via phone or mail)	- Every 36 months - Interview required - Mandatory interim report at 18 months (via phone or mail)	- Every 12 months - Interview required - Mandatory change report form at 6 months
Benefits	Individualized budget	Standardized budget	Individualized budget *Participants must redeem benefits within 90 days of auto-enrollment*	Individualized budget *Senior/disabled households can maximize benefits with categorical eligibility, medical deductions and a higher resource test*
Documentation	Computer matches for: - Unearned income - Date of birth - Social security number Self-declaration for: - Shelter expenses - SUA Participants must submit: - Residency - Medical deductions	Participants must submit the NYSCAP SNAP Case Information Collection Sheet (LDSS-4841) to maximize benefits		See our SNAP Prescreening Guide for detailed information on SNAP documentation