Using SNAP Benefits

In this section:

Monthly Benefits Issuance Schedule 1

The EBT Card 1

- How to Use the EBT Card 1
- Paying a Portion of the Bill From the SNAP Account 2
- Purchases Above the Available Benefit Amount 2
- Non-SNAP Purchases 2
- Requesting a Second EBT Card 2
- Repeated EBT Card Requests 3

Eligible Food Items 3

- SNAP Benefits Are Used for Food Only 4

Using SNAP to Purchase Food Online 4

Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) 4

Appointing an Authorized Representative 5

Unspent SNAP Balances 5

RESOURCES FOR THIS SECTION 6

LDSS-4217 ID Card Update Form

Using SNAP Benefits

Monthly Benefits Issuance Schedule

EBT BROCHURE
LDSS-5004

GIS 15 TA/DC030

GIS 16 TA/DC047

GIS 17 TA/DC043

GIS 19 TA/DC028

GIS 23DC085

GIS 24DC037

OTDA'S EBT WEBPAGE:
OTDA.NY.GOV/
WORKINGFAMILIES/EBT/

Benefits are generally made available over the first nine to 14 days of every month, based on the last digit of the client's case number. The chart below applies to all counties outside of the five boroughs of NYC:

Case Number Ends In:	Benefits Available On:
0 or 1	1st of the month
2	2nd of the month
3	3rd of the month
4	4th of the month
5	5th of the month
6	6th of the month
7	7th of the month
8	8th of the month
9	9th of the month

View the NYC schedule at:
otda.ny.gov/workingfamilies/ebt/nyc-issuance-schedule.pdf

For NYC cases, benefit postings are spread over 10 different days that are not Sundays or holidays, during the first two weeks of the month. The actual dates change from one month to the next, so NYC publishes a six-month schedule with the exact availability dates.

The NYC schedule above is based on the last digit of the case number, called the toe digit. To use, find the toe digit in the first column of the schedule. On the top row of the schedule, find each month listed with an A and B column underneath. Column A is the date of the SNAP benefit deposit for that toe digit for each month listed.

The EBT Card

How to Use the EBT Card

New York State uses an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system to issue SNAP benefits, TANF benefits, and Medicaid health insurance. SNAP participants use their EBT cards in machines at checkout counters, just like debit and credit cards.

The EBT Card, cont.

To use the SNAP benefits on the EBT card, SNAP recipients:

- Shop and take their purchases to the cash register
- Swipe the card through the machine, and
- Enter their Personal Identification Number (PIN)

The system will take the amount spent on food purchases from the SNAP account.

Paying a Portion of the Bill From the SNAP Account

It is possible to pay only a portion of the bill from the SNAP account and pay the remainder with another form of payment. The machine will ask how much the participant wants to pay from their EBT SNAP account, and the participant can enter any amount up to the amount of benefits available in their account. The grocery store receipt will tell them how much is left.

Purchases Above the Available Benefit Amount

If the amount entered for the EBT payment is more than the amount available, the machine will reject the entire transaction. In that case, the participant should check the balance, which can be done right at the cash register. Once the customer knows how much is available and enters that amount, the machine will accept the transaction, even if it is less than the amount of the purchase. The customer can then pay the balance with another form of payment.

Non-SNAP Purchases

Any non-SNAP-eligible purchases can be paid for with another form of payment. If the participant has a cash assistance account, the non-food purchases can be paid directly from the cash account by swiping the card again. Food and non-food purchases do not have to be separated at the checkout counter.

23-ADM-02

Requesting a Second EBT Card

Certain SNAP households are allowed to have two EBT cards to use at grocery stores and EBT vendors.

Helpful resource at the back of this section:

LDSS-4217 ID Card Update Form

Households that include two parents/guardians are eligible to request a second EBT card if they meet the following criteria:

- Are both on the SNAP case,
- Live in the household full-time, and
- Are over the age of 18, or
- Regardless of age, are the parent/guardian of a minor child.

The EBT Card, cont.

To receive an additional EBT card, the SNAP head of household must submit a written request using the LDSS-4217 ID Card Update Form. The procedure to obtain a second EBT card is the same as obtaining an authorized representative card. In this situation, the second EBT card will have the payee/head of household name and the name of the second parent/guardian in the household. Each card will have its own card number. The second parent/guardian is not considered an authorized representative and does not have the same permissions and responsibilities to act on behalf of the head of household.

Once the household submits the LDSS-4217, the SNAP office has 30 calendar days to review and process the request. The SNAP head of household can request to deactivate the second card at any time without the consent of the second card holder by filling out the LDSS-4217.

SNAP households are permitted to have a maximum of **two** active EBT cards. If a two-parent/guardian household already has an authorized representative card issued, they cannot request an additional card for the second parent/guardian. Similarly, if the two parents/guardians receive a second EBT card, they cannot request an additional card for an authorized representative.

GIS 15 TA/DC030
GIS 17 TA/DC043

Repeated EBT Card Requests

SNAP recipients who have requested and used more than four EBT cards in a 12-month period will receive a letter from NYS, mandated by USDA, warning cardholders that misuse of EBT cards and SNAP benefits will result in a program violation that is subject to various penalties and sanctions. The letter also states that if the recipient continues to request new EBT cards, they can be referred to the local SNAP Program Integrity Unit for possible investigation.

Under this policy, OTDA will continue to monitor EBT card requests of current SNAP recipients and their benefit redemption history.

Eligible Food Items

SNAP benefits can be used to buy almost all foods, as well as seeds and plants that produce food. Households **cannot** buy the following items with SNAP benefits:

- Beer, wine, or liquor
- Cigarettes or tobacco
- Non-food items like toiletries, pet foods, or household supplies
- Vitamins and medicines
- Ready-to-eat hot foods
- Prepared cold foods that will be eaten in the store (prepared cold foods to be eaten at home are allowed)

Visit USDA/FNA for a complete list of SNAP-eligible food items: fna.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items

Eligible Food Items, cont.

SNAP Benefits Are Used for Food Only

SNAP households can never get cash, as their SNAP benefits are only to be spent on food items at approved retailers.

Using SNAP to Purchase Food Online

GIS 19 TA/DC028

Approved SNAP retailers allow SNAP participants to purchase food through their websites using online transactions with their EBT cards. Much like using an EBT card in the grocery store, the websites will only deduct SNAP-eligible items from purchases. Other costs, including delivery fees, can not be paid using SNAP benefits. For more information and a list of participating retailers, visit fna.usda.gov/snap/online

Restaurant Meals Program (RMP)

GIS 23DC085

LDSS-5230

GIS 24DC037

GIS 25DC12

OTDA'S RMP WEBPAGE

The Restaurant Meals Program (RMP) allows SNAP clients who may be unable to prepare meals for themselves or who lack permanent housing for storing and preparing food to purchase prepared meals at restaurants with their SNAP benefits.

To be eligible for the RMP, SNAP clients must be participating in SNAP in a county that has an RMP and all members of the household must be either:

- Elderly (60 years of age or older);
- Disabled (receives disability or blindness payments or receives disability retirement benefits from a governmental agency because of a disability considered permanent);
- Homeless; or
- A spouse of a SNAP client who is eligible for the RMP.

If a SNAP participant meets one or more of the requirements above, their SNAP case will automatically be labeled as RMP eligible. Households can visit ebtEDGE.com and create or log in to their account to check their RMP eligibility.

Clients can also check their RMP eligibility status on the ebtEDGE mobile app. Both the ebtEdge account and the mobile app show a thumbs-up icon next to the message "Account is RMP Eligible" for those who meet the criteria for participating.

Restaurants participating in RMP will display a special decal on their doors or windows and provide a 10% discount to eligible RMP participants when they use SNAP benefits to purchase food.

For more information and a complete list of participating restaurants, visit OTDA's RMP webpage: otda.ny.gov/programs/rmp/

Appointing an Authorized Representative

Individuals who have difficulty accessing their EBT benefits, such as the home-bound, can choose someone to be their authorized representative. This should be a person whom the household trusts, such as a home attendant or family member. Once appointed by the household, the authorized representative can use the original EBT card and PIN or get a separate EBT card and PIN, and use those when grocery shopping for the SNAP household.

See further details on appointing an authorized representative under *The SNAP Interview* in the *Applying for SNAP* section of this guide.

Unspent SNAP Balances

GIS 22 TA/DC075 AND ATTACHMENT 1

The 2008 Farm Bill required states to shorten the timeframe that unspent SNAP balances stay on the EBT card from 365 days to 274 days.

Unspent SNAP balances stay in the household's EBT account for 274 days. The only exception is in certain cases when a new NYSCAP participant has not accessed any SNAP benefits within the first 90 days of case opening. In those cases, the benefits are expunged after the first 90 days (See the *Programs to Help Seniors and Disabled Applicants Access SNAP* section for more details about NYSCAP).

SNAP participants can check their account balance at any time by calling the customer service number at 1-888-328-6399 (listed on the back of the EBT card) or by visiting myBenefits.ny.gov and logging into their account. Many larger stores also have machines available at the customer service desk where participants can check their balance before shopping.

Resources for This Section

On the following pages, you will find this resource:

LDSS-4217 ID Card Update Form

LDSS-4217 (Rev. 4/08)

ID CARD UPDATE FORM

CASE NUMBER:	CASE NAME:	DATE:

WIDMNU (ID CARD MENU)

Section **1**	**Function**: (check one) ☐ 1 ID Card Update, Case Update ☐ 3 Auth Rep Card Request ☐ 11 EBT PIN Mailer Request (☐ Client ☐ Auth Rep.) ☐ 4 Plastic Only Request CIN _____ App Reg # _____ Line # _____ Card Number 600486 _____ Case Number _____

WIDUPD/WIDARP

Section **2**	**REASON CODE:** (check one) ☐01 Lost ☐04 Mutilated ☐09 Other/New ☐02 Stolen/Never Received ☐06 Surrendered ☐03 Defective MAG Strip ☐07 Tempcard Lost-Stolen **REVISE MAILING ADDRESS** Street_____ For requested card: City/Town _____ State _____ Zip Code_____ **PHOTO ID:** (Check One) ☐Yes ☐ NO Auth Rep Name _____ _____ _____ *First* *MI* *Last*
Section **2A**	**ADD OR DELETE** (check one) ☐ ADD ☐DELETE Individual as PA/FS Payee for Case Case #_____
Section **2B**	**ADD A VAULT CARD OR DELETE A CARD** (check one) ☐ADD A VALUT CARD 600486 2_____00 ☐DELETE A CARD #600486 _____

Worker Name (Print Name):	Office	Unit	Worker ID:

Telephone No.:	Form Created By:

Recipient Signature
Worker Signature
DEO Signature

INSTRUCTIONS ON REVERSE

LDSS-4217 (Rev. 4/08)

COMMON IDENTIFICATION CARD ACTION GUIDE AND TRANSMITTAL

To issue a CBIC to a recipient or an applicant.

Section 1

- Check Function 1 for a plastic CBIC and a temporary cardboard CBIC.
- Check function 4 for a plastic CBIC only.
- For an **APPLICANT** if a CIN exists enter the CIN and registry #; otherwise enter a registry #/line #.
- For a **RECIPIENT** enter a CIN.

Section 2

- Check Reason Code.
- If plastic card is to be mailed to other than case address enter a new address.

To add, change or delete the PA/FS payee on an application in receipt of a BICS pre-reg benefit or to add, change or change the PA/FS payee on a case.

Section 1

- Check Function 1
- For an APPLICANT **without** a CIN enter the line number and registry #.
- For an APPLICANT **with** a CIN enter both the CIN and the registry #.
- For a RECIPIENT enter a CIN.
- Enter the case number.

Section 2A

- Check either Add or Delete

NOTE: If you Delete a payee you should replace that payee with another one. If not, then no one on the case can receive the benefits for the case.

To issue an Authorized Representative card

Section 1

- Check Function 3
- Enter the CIN of a case member who is a PA/FS payee.

Section 2

- Check reason code.
- Indicate if a photo is desired by checking **Yes** or **No**.
- Enter Authorized Representative name.
- If plastic card is to be mailed to other than case address enter a new address.

To issue a Vault Card or Deactivate a Card

Section 1

- Check Function 1
- Enter the CIN, or an App Reg #/Line #.

Section 2B

- Check ADD A VAULT CARD – (Leave card number area blank to request a vault card) OR
  DELETE A CARD – Write in the card number to be deleted) OR
  Delete ALL Cards for a client by writing in "ALL" in the card number area

---

To mail a PIN to a client or an Authorized Representative

Section 1

- Check Function 11
- Enter the CIN, or an App Reg #/Line #.
- Check Client or Authorized Representative.