

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Understanding Categorical Eligibility



The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program: Categorical Eligibility by Randy Alison Aussenberg

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The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federally funded program that provides food assistance to low-income individuals and families. SNAP benefits can be used to purchase food at authorized retailers, including grocery stores, farmers' markets, and convenience stores.

To be eligible for SNAP, applicants must meet certain income and resource requirements. In addition, applicants must also meet one of the following categorical eligibility criteria:

1. Be receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

2. Be receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
3. Be a member of a household that is participating in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)
4. Be a child who is eligible for free or reduced-price school meals
5. Be a pregnant woman who is eligible for WIC
6. Be an elderly or disabled person who is receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

Categorical eligibility simplifies the application process for SNAP benefits. Applicants who meet one of the above criteria do not have to provide income or resource documentation when they apply. This can save time and make it easier for eligible individuals and families to receive the food assistance they need.

In addition to categorical eligibility, there are also some non-categorical eligibility criteria that applicants can meet. These criteria include:

1. Having a gross income that is at or below 130% of the federal poverty level
2. Having a net income that is at or below 100% of the federal poverty level
3. Having resources that are at or below \$2,250 for a single person or \$3,750 for a family of four

If an applicant does not meet any of the categorical eligibility criteria, they may still be eligible for SNAP benefits if they meet the non-categorical

eligibility criteria. However, they will need to provide income and resource documentation when they apply.

SNAP benefits can make a significant difference in the lives of low-income individuals and families. SNAP benefits can help to put food on the table, freeing up money for other essential expenses such as housing, utilities, and transportation. SNAP benefits can also help to improve the health of low-income individuals and families by providing them with access to nutritious food.

If you are a low-income individual or family, you may be eligible for SNAP benefits. To apply for SNAP benefits, you can contact your local social services agency. You can also apply for SNAP benefits online at the USDA's website.

Additional Resources

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- SNAP
- SNAP Eligibility
- Apply for SNAP
- SNAP Contacts



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