



How To Get Food Assistance During Coronavirus Crisis

The state and federal government have implemented various changes to federal nutrition programs to make it easier for people to get food during the Coronavirus pandemic. Following is information about key programs and how to access them. Changes are occurring regularly so always check with the appropriate agency for the latest information.

SNAP Assistance

Several temporary changes have been made to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, aka food stamps) to make it easier for people to receive benefits. These include:

- Eliminating the interview requirement,
- Allowing applications to be submitted without a hard copy signature,
- Allowing people to apply over the phone.

In addition, at least through May, recipients will receive the maximum benefits, based solely on household size, without regard to income or assets.

With county welfare offices largely closed to the public, the New Jersey Department of Human Services is encouraging residents to apply for SNAP or cash assistance online at NJHelps.org. This site can also be used to apply for Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance.

Any needed documentation (i.e. pay stubs) or other paperwork can be mailed or faxed. Some county welfare agencies are providing drop boxes outside the offices where applicants can leave documentation. SNAP provides monthly benefits through Electronic Debt Transfers (EBTs) for recipients to buy food at grocery stores and other retail outlets.

For more info, visit NJSNAP.org.

WIC Assistance

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance for Women Infants and Children, commonly known as WIC, has also implementing flexibilities to help pregnant women, mothers of young children, infants and toddlers receive assistance. This includes waiving requirements that people physically come to the office for initial approvals and re-certifications, according to state health officials.



Learn more at state.nj.us/health/fhs/wic.

Feeding Kids During School Closures

The federal government allowed many flexibilities so schools could provide meals to children during these unplanned school closures. Many districts are offering multiple days of meals at various distribution sites, while some are delivering food to families using buses or other methods. There is no central information about how school meals are being provided. **Parents and other caregivers should check with their local school district.**



New Jersey also received federal approval to provide SNAP (food stamps) benefits to children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. For families already receiving SNAP, additional benefits will be added to their card. For families not receiving SNAP, a card will be mailed to their home.

The state expects to deliver these additional benefits by June, state officials have said.

Emergency Food Assistance

Food banks and pantries throughout New Jersey continue to help in a variety of ways. Center for Food Action, HFNJ's parent organization, provides food and other assistance to Northern New Jersey residents. Learn more at cfanj.org. For links to New Jersey's major food banks and more information on nutrition programs, visit hungerfreenj.org/food-assistance.

Remember to visit hungerfreenj.org for the latest info on efforts to address hunger during this time.