

# FACT SHEET



## Food Assistance Benefits

The Food Assistance Program – formerly called food stamps and known nationally as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – helps eligible low-income Ohioans stretch their food budgets and buy healthy food. Food assistance benefits are distributed electronically through the Ohio Direction Card, which is similar to a debit card.

### Do I qualify for food assistance benefits?

You may qualify for benefits if your household's gross monthly income is at or under 130 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. These guidelines change yearly; you can find the current figures at <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/index.cfm>. Some households may qualify if they have incomes over the limit if someone in the household is elderly or disabled.

### What can I buy with food assistance benefits?

You can use your benefits to buy most food products. Prohibited items include alcoholic beverages; tobacco; vitamins and/or medicines; hot food products that are made to be eaten immediately (including prepared food from grocery stores and restaurants); and non-food items (such as pet food, paper products, soaps and household supplies). You are not allowed to sell or trade food assistance benefits, buy non-food items with your benefits, or use your benefits to buy food for someone who is not a member of your household.

### How can I apply for food assistance?

You may apply for food assistance online at [www.ODJFSBenefits.Ohio.gov](http://www.ODJFSBenefits.Ohio.gov), or by filling out the "Request for Cash, Food and Medical Assistance" (JFS 7200) form and submitting it to your county department of job and family services. You can get it at your county agency or at <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/inter.asp>. You can find the address and phone number of your county agency at [http://jfs.ohio.gov/County/County\\_Directory.pdf](http://jfs.ohio.gov/County/County_Directory.pdf) or by calling 1-866-635-3748. (Follow the phone prompts for food assistance.) You also may file the application through your local Ohio Benefit Bank site. The Ohio Benefit Bank helps low- and moderate-income Ohioans apply for work supports such as tax credits and public benefits. You can find the site nearest you and get more information at [www.ohiobenefits.org](http://www.ohiobenefits.org).

You will need proof of the following:

- Social Security number or proof that you've applied for one
- Income (from such things as pay stubs, tax records or child support notices)
- Identity (for example, a driver's license or state ID)
- Housing and utility costs
- Any child care or dependent care costs
- Any child support you pay for children not living with you
- Any medical expenses (including prescriptions) for those with disabilities or for those over age 60

Your county agency may verify the information that you provide by contacting other agencies or people. The county agency also may ask you to provide other documents. If you need help getting any documents, be sure to tell your caseworker.

Be sure to get the "Your Rights" (JFS 8000) and "Program Enrollment and Benefit Information" (JFS 07501) brochures from your county agency or online at <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/inter.asp> for more information.

### How much are payments?

Benefit amounts are determined based on household size, expenses and, in some situations, resources. Household size includes the number of people in your household who purchase and prepare food together. Household expenses include your rent or mortgage, gas, electric, water, sewer, phone and medical expenses, as well as any child support or child care payments. Household resources include cash, savings and stocks. In 2013, the average monthly SNAP payment per recipient was approximately \$132.

### When will I receive my food assistance benefits?

If you qualify and started receiving benefits after April 1, 2014, your monthly benefit will be loaded onto your Ohio Direction Card on a regular assigned date sometime between the first and the 20th of the month.

### Nutrition Education Classes

In most counties, Ohioans who receive SNAP benefits can take free classes that help them make healthier food choices, learn thrifty shopping tips and choose physically active lifestyles. Classes are available for adults and youth through a partnership between the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services and Ohio State University (OSU) Extension. The program is called SNAP-Ed, for SNAP Education. For more information about this program, you can go to OSU Extension's webpage, <http://fcs.osu.edu/nutrition/snap-ed>. From there, click on "OSU Extension County Office Directory." This will give you the phone numbers and websites for the counties that offer SNAP-Ed programs near you.

### Nondiscrimination Statement

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the nation's SNAP program.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the **USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form** (AD-3027) found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by one of the following methods:

- Mail:  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- Fax:  
(202) 690-7442; or
- Email:  
[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

# Cash/SNAP/Child Care/Medicaid Benefits Information and Application/Renewal ONLINE!

## THE SELF SERVICE PORTAL (SSP) INCLUDES ENHANCED FEATURES!

### New Users Can:

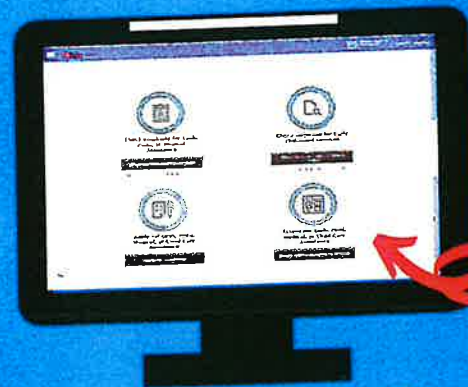


- Apply for benefits
- View application status

### Existing Users Can:



- View benefits
- Renew benefits
- Link/Unlink case
- View application Status
- Report changes
- Complete Interim Reports



**NEW LOOK**



## MOBILE DEVICE FRIENDLY!

Families can now apply directly on their mobile devices with the new mobile friendly portal.

**VISIT THE SSP AT:**

[ssp.benefits.ohio.gov](http://ssp.benefits.ohio.gov)

## SSP Functionality Enhancements

### PASSWORD RESET

Families no longer need to call to reset passwords.

### MOBILE VERIFICATIONS

Families can provide verifications by uploading a photo of the document.

### CHANGE REPORTING

Families can manage benefits and easily report a change.

For all questions regarding benefit eligibility, please contact your local county JFS office.



# NECESSARY DOCUMENTATION- INTAKE

## Identity:

- Drivers License or State ID
- School or Work ID
- Birth Certificate/ Crib Card
- Military ID
- US Passport
- School Records
- Social Security Number (SSN)
- Non-Citizen Documentation, if applicable.
- Residency/Address

## Income:

- Earned Income
  - Employment Paycheck Stubs
  - Self-Employment recent business ledgers or previous years tax returns with all filed schedules.
  - If lost employment, then verification of final day worked and last pay check received.
- Rental Income
- Unearned Income
  - Unemployment
  - Disability Benefit
  - Retirement Benefit
  - Military Income
  - In-Kind Support
  - Child Support Received

## Allowable Expenses:

- Shelter
  - Rent (lot rent or condo fees if applicable)
  - Mortgage, Property Taxes, Homeowners Insurance
  - Utilities
- Dependent Care Payments (e.g. child care)
- Child Support payments made to a child living outside the home
- Assistance groups containing a person age 60+ can have Medical Expenses deducted.

## NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST & SOME OVERLAP CATEGORIES



# Who can get child care payment assistance?



## Know the Facts

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services offers financial assistance to eligible parents and guardians to help them with child care costs while they engage in work, education, or job training. Families can be eligible to have all or part of their monthly child care expenses paid on their behalf.

### Are you a parent or guardian who is:

- Employed
- In school
- In job training
- Receiving Ohio Works First cash assistance
- Homeless
- Required by a children's services case plan to have protective child care for children living in the home

### AND

- Your income is at or below 145% of the federal poverty level

### OR

- Your family needs care for a child with a county-agency-verified special need, and your income is at or below 150% of the federal poverty level

**You may qualify for child care payment assistance. Applying is as easy as 1, 2, 3.**

## To Apply:

### 1 Find a Provider

Search and find a licensed provider at [childcaresearch.ohio.gov](http://childcaresearch.ohio.gov).

### 2 Have Your Verifications Ready

- Household information
- Income (pay stub) information
- Employer/school information
- Child care provider name and address
- Birth verification(s) for child(ren) needing care

### 3 Apply

- Online at [ssp.benefits.ohio.gov](http://ssp.benefits.ohio.gov)
- In person at **your local county JFS office**
- Complete an **electronic form** and submit it to your county **JFS office**

# Questions & Answers

## What is the Ohio Benefits Self-Service Portal (OBSSP)?

It is an online site you may use to apply for public benefit assistance, get information about your existing benefits, manage your benefits, and renew your benefits.

## Can I submit my needed verifications through the OBSSP once my application is submitted?

Yes, you can upload and update your case information using your OBSSP account.

## Can I report provider changes through the OBSSP?

Yes, you may report provider changes by using the “report a change to my case” tab in your OBSSP account.

## What is an authorized representative?

An adult other than yourself, who has your permission to submit case information on your behalf. You must submit a written statement to the county department of job and family services (CDJFS) agency informing them of your authorized representative.

## Who can be my authorized representative?

You may choose an adult, at least 18 years of age. This individual will have access to your information and the ability to report changes to your case which may affect other benefits you may be receiving such as Cash, SNAP (food), and Medical eligibility. It is not recommended to name your child care provider as your authorized representative.

## How long will it take to process my application?

Your local county agency has up to 30 days from receipt of a valid application to determine eligibility.

## What is the difference between a valid and a complete application?

| Valid Application  | Complete Application  |
|--|---|
| <p>Must have the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name</li> <li>Address, and</li> <li>Applicant’s Signature</li> </ul> <p>A valid application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allows up to 30 days for all verifications needed (see complete application)</li> <li>Eligibility will go back to the valid application date if you are found eligible</li> </ul> | <p>Is a valid application with the following submitted to the CDJFS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Verification of citizenship for children needing care</li> <li>Verification of income for all household members</li> <li>Verification of qualifying activity for all caretakers</li> <li>Name and address of eligible provider</li> </ul> <p>A complete application allows the CDJFS to determine your eligibility for Publicly Funded Child Care</p> |

**Important:** You are responsible for your benefits, including reporting all changes to your local CDJFS. Changes must be reported within 10 days, changes to your child care provider must be reported prior to starting or within the same week.