

**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT
YOUR FOOD BENEFITS**



This notice gives you information about changes to your food benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). It will tell you the following:

- What are the three changes to SNAP?
- What are some examples of changes to SNAP benefits?
- What do I do if I have questions about this notice?
- What should I do if I disagree with the changes to my SNAP benefits?

What are the three changes to SNAP?

1) Effective October 1, 2016, many SNAP recipients, but not all, will have an increase in cash income that will affect SNAP benefits. This is because, under DC law, cash benefits for most cash programs are increasing by 15.3%. The cash increase will change benefit amounts for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*, Program On Work, Employment, and Responsibility (POWER), Interim Disability Assistance (IDA), General Assistance for Children (GC), and Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA).

These cash benefits are counted when we calculate SNAP benefits. If you receive any of these types of income, you may see a decrease in your SNAP benefit. Generally, about 30% of cash income is used in determining SNAP benefits. The federal regulation that says we count these benefits is found in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations, §273.9(b)(2).

*Note that families who have received TANF for over 60 months since 1996 will not receive an increase in their reduced TANF benefits.

2) Effective October 1, 2016, there are changes in the income limits and deductions for SNAP. Every year, the federal Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) updates income limits and deductions used in calculating SNAP benefits. The income limits are based on the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) figures from the federal government. The federal regulations that tells FNS to update these numbers are found in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations, §273.9(a)(3) and §273.9(d)(1).

Income Limits

Household Size	Gross Income Limit 130% of FPL		Net Income Limit 100% of FPL	
	Current, through 9/30/2016	New, Effective 10/1/2016	Current, through 9/30/2016	New, Effective 10/1/2016
1	\$1,276	\$1,980	\$981	\$990
2	\$1,726	\$2,670	\$1,328	\$1,335
3	\$2,177	\$3,360	\$1,675	\$1,680
4	\$2,628	\$4,050	\$2,021	\$2,025
5	\$3,078	\$4,740	\$2,368	\$2,370
6	\$3,529	\$5,430	\$2,715	\$2,715
7	\$3,980	\$6,122	\$3,061	\$3,061
8	\$4,430	\$6,815	\$3,408	\$3,408

Deduction Changes

a. Standard Deduction

Household Size	Current, thru 9/30/2016	New, Effective 10/1/2016
1	\$155	\$157
2	\$155	\$157
3	\$155	\$157
4	\$168	\$168
5	\$197	\$197
6	\$226	\$226
7	\$226	\$226
8	\$226	\$226

b. Maximum Excess Shelter Cost Deduction

For households of all sizes that do not include an elderly or disabled person, the maximum Excess Shelter Cost Deduction is \$504.00 Effective October 1, 2016, that amount is being increased to \$517.00.

3) Also, effective October 1, 2016, the District is updating the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) deduction based on changes in utility costs and usage.

The SUA is used in determining whether your household is eligible for a deduction due to excess shelter costs. The SUA for the past year has been \$335. The new SUA will be \$316. The federal regulation about the SUA is found in Title 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations, §273.9(d)(6)(iii).

For households who do receive an increase in income, the Excess Shelter Cost Deduction may go down. The increase in income is used to determine if the household's shelter costs are high.

What are some examples of changes to SNAP benefits?

Example 1- Three Person Household receiving TANF: Jasmine Jones receives TANF for herself and two children. She pays \$100 in rent. She has received TANF for 30 months since 1996. She has no other income and is currently receiving \$441 in TANF and \$511 in SNAP. Effective October 1, 2016, she will start to receive \$508 in TANF and \$477 in SNAP. Here are the calculations:

	September, 2016	October, 2016
Income		
Earnings	\$0.00	\$0.00
Unearned Income	\$411.00	\$508.00
Total	\$411.00	\$508.00
Deductions		
Standard Deduction	\$155.00	\$157.00
Earned Income Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Medical Expense Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Dependent Care Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Court Ordered Child Support Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Excess Shelter Cost Deduction	\$307.00	\$240.50
Total Deductions	\$462.00	\$397.50
Net Income	\$0.00	\$110.50
Maximum SNAP Allotment	\$511.00	\$511.00
Minus 30% of Net Income	\$0.00	\$34.00
Monthly SNAP Allotment	\$511.00	\$477.00

Example 2- Two Person Household with Earnings and TANF: Rachel Richmond receives TANF for herself and one child. She has received TANF for 5 months since 1996. She is working, earning \$800 gross every month, and pays \$400 in rent. She currently gets a TANF benefit of \$133 and \$299 in SNAP. Effective October 1, 2016, after deductions, she will start to receive \$184 in TANF and \$271 in SNAP. Here are the calculations:

	September, 2016	October, 2016
Income		
Earnings	\$800.00	\$800.00
Unearned Income	\$133.00	\$184.00
Total	\$933.00	\$984.00
Deductions		
Standard Deduction	\$155.00	\$157.00
Earned Income Deduction	\$160.00	\$160.00
Medical Expense Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Dependent Care Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Court Ordered Child Support Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Excess Shelter Cost Deduction	\$426.00	\$382.50
Total Deductions	\$741.00	\$699.50
Net Income	\$192.00	\$284.50
Maximum SNAP Allotment	\$357.00	\$357.00
Minus 30% of Net Income	\$58.00	\$86.00
Monthly SNAP Allotment	\$299.00	\$271.00

Example 3: Disabled Person Receiving IDA: Roger Simmons receives IDA for himself. He has no other income and is not paying any rent. He currently receives \$278 in IDA and \$194 in SNAP. Effective October 1, 2016, he will start to receive \$320 in IDA and his SNAP will remain at \$194. Here are the calculations:

	September, 2016	October, 2016
Income		
Earnings	\$0.00	\$0.00
Unearned Income	\$278.00	\$320.00
Total	\$278.00	\$320.00
Deductions		
Standard Deduction	\$155.00	\$157.00
Earned Income Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Medical Expense Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Dependent Care Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Court Ordered Child Support Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Excess Shelter Cost Deduction	\$273.50	\$234.50
Total Deductions	\$428.50	\$391.50
Net Income	\$0.00	\$0.00
Maximum SNAP Allotment	\$194.00	\$194.00
Minus 30% of Net Income	\$0.00	\$0.00
Monthly SNAP Allotment	\$194.00	\$194.00

Example 4 Five Person Household with Earnings: Renita Ables receives SNAP for herself and four children. She works and earns \$3,000 every month. She is buying a home and pays \$1,500 in mortgage and home insurance. She pays \$400 monthly for childcare. She currently receives \$381 in SNAP. Effective October 1, 2016, she will start to receive \$385 in SNAP. Here are the calculations:

	September, 2016	October, 2016
Income		
Earnings	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Unearned Income	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00
Deductions		
Standard Deduction	\$197.00	\$197.00
Earned Income Deduction	\$600.00	\$600.00
Medical Expense Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Dependent Care Deduction	\$400.00	\$400.00
Court Ordered Child Support Deduction	\$0.00	\$0.00
Excess Shelter Cost Deduction	\$504.00	\$517.00
Total Deductions	\$1,701.00	\$1,714.00
Net Income	\$1,299.00	\$1,286.00
Maximum SNAP Allotment	\$771.00	\$771.00
Minus 30% of Net Income	\$390.00	\$386.00
Monthly SNAP Allotment	\$381.00	\$385.00

What do I do if I have questions about this notice?

If you have questions about this notice, please call (202) 727-5355. If you are Hearing Impaired, you may call TTY/TDD 711 (855) 532 5465.

What should I do if I disagree with the changes to my SNAP benefits

If you do not agree with the decision we made, the household may request a fair hearing within 90 days of the date of this notice.

In general, you can appeal any action taken by the agency on your public benefits case that you disagree with or any inaction that affects your receipt, amount, conditions, termination, or kind of public benefits. But, you are not necessarily entitled to appeal that your public benefits changed as a result of a change in the law.

Once you appeal, you can go before an Administrative Law Judge and explain why you do not agree with our decision.

You have **90 days** following the postmark of the notice informing you of the eligibility decision, denial, termination or change to appeal the decision stated in the notice you received. If you do not appeal within **90 days, you may lose your right to appeal.**

How to Request an Appeal

You may appeal through any of the following methods:

- Calling the ESA Call Center (202) 727-5355
- Completing a Request for Hearing form and fax it to (202) 724-2041, or e-mail to DC.OARA@DC.GOV
- Go to any Department of Human Services Service Center to fill out a Request for Hearing.
- Go to the Office of Administrative Hearings Resource Center, located at 441 4th Street NW, Suite 450-North, Washington, DC 20001 and fill out a Request for Hearing form.
- By having a representative request a hearing on your behalf so long as you submit a written authorization, designating that person as your representative within 10 days of the hearing request.

Your Eligibility during Your Appeal

If you ask for a hearing because you think we did not calculate your SNAP benefit correctly, or you think we did not interpret or apply federal law or regulation correctly, your benefits will continue until:

- you withdraw your request for the hearing,
- a change affecting your public benefits occurs while the hearing is pending and you fail to request a hearing after notice of the change,
- a determination is made at the hearing that the sole issue is one of law and not of incorrect grant computation, or
- a hearing decision upholds the agency action to alter the amount or conditions of the public benefit.
- SNAP benefits may not be continued after the certification period expires unless you apply for and receive benefits for a new certification period.

SNAP benefits will be continued automatically until the end of your certification period unless you specifically waive continuation of SNAP benefits on your hearing request form.

If the hearing decision says the agency's proposed action to change or terminate your benefits was correct, you will have to repay up to the difference in the funds received.

Getting Representation

You have the right to represent yourself or have a lawyer, family member, or friend represent you at the Administrative Review and at the Fair Hearing. Your representative may not be an employee of the District.

If you would like to talk to a lawyer who will represent you for free, you can call any of the following places to see if they can help you. There is no guarantee that you will be able to get legal help. Even if you do not get legal help, there will still be a Fair Hearing held and a decision made.

Bread for the City Legal Clinic
1525 Seventh Street, NW
(202) 265-2400

Bread for the City Legal Clinic
1640 Good Hope Road, SE
(202) 561-8587

Neighborhood Legal Services
1213 Good Hope Road
(202) 678-2000

Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia
1331 H St. NW Suite 350
(202) 628-1161

Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia
2041 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. SE, Suite LL-1
(202) 628-1161

Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia
Friendship Baptist Church,
900 Delaware Ave., SW
(202) 628-1161

Legal Counsel for the Elderly
(for people age 60 and older)
Building A, 4th Floor
601 E St. NW
(202) 434-2120

Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless
1200 U Street, NW
(202) 328-5500

What Happens When You Appeal

Administrative Review – Once your appeal is received, you will be scheduled for an Administrative Review Conference at the Office of Administrative Review and Appeals (OARA). This is a voluntary meeting with a Hearing Examiner from the District of Columbia Department of Human Services (DHS) to identify and discuss your concerns. This meeting will not delay or replace the Fair Hearing process. You can bring your own representative if you choose to have one. Your representative may, but does not have to be, an attorney. Your representative may not be an employee of the District. At the meeting, your representative shall serve only in an advisory capacity.

Please bring documents related to your case to the conference. . This will help the DHS Hearing Examiner identify and understand your concerns. After the conference, the DHS Hearing Examiner will review your case and try to resolve your issues. You will receive a written decision from the DHS Hearing Examiner regarding the issues of your case, including a summary of facts. If you agree with the written decision and write a statement that you wish to withdraw your hearing request, your request for a Fair Hearing will be considered formally withdrawn. If you do not agree with the DHS Hearing Examiner's written decision, your appeal still continues to a Fair Hearing.

Fair Hearing - If you decide not to attend the DHS Administrative Review, the conference will not occur and your case will continue on to a Fair Hearing before an Administrative Law Judge who is not an employee of DHS. The Fair Hearing will take place at the DC Office of Administrative Hearings (OAH) at 441 4th Street NW, Suite 450-North, Washington, DC 20001.

OAH will contact you and tell you when and where your Fair Hearing will take place. OAH will send you a scheduling notice. That notice will tell you when your Fair Hearing will take place.

At the Fair Hearing, you can testify, have others testify for you, and submit documents. At the hearing, DC agency representatives will also be able to ask questions of you or other people who testify. The DC agency representatives will be permitted to present testimony and documents. You will be able to ask questions of the DC agency representative if you want. Finally, the Administrative Law Judge will make a decision in writing, a final order, after the completion of the Fair Hearing, and will send it to you. That decision will also tell you what you can do if you do not agree with the final order.

Any decisions by OARA or OAH about your eligibility for benefits might also change the eligibility of other people in your household.

Reasonable expenses related to the hearing, such as transportation costs for the claimant and his or her witnesses, may be paid by DHS.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

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, 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:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.