

**WHY SNAP/FOOD STAMP BENEFITS ARE DECREASING NOVEMBER 2013 &  
RESOURCES TO HELP SNAP/FOOD STAMP FAMILIES**

**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

SNAP/Food Stamp households will see two changes in their benefit amounts during the fall of 2013. On October 1, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamp) benefits will increase slightly for most households to reflect the cost of living. On November 1, families will see their benefits decrease due to the end of the extra benefits provided by the 2009 “stimulus” federal law.

**Why are some household getting SNAP increases in October?**

SNAP/Food Stamp cost of living adjustments happen every year. The maximum benefit is adjusted every year. Other adjustments include updates to the standard deduction, shelter deduction, income tests (gross and net), and D-SNAP allotment. By law, states must make these SNAP/Food Stamp adjustments each October 1.

**What is the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)?**

The ARRA is also known as the stimulus package. It became law in 2009 in order to foster economic activity in response to the recession.

**How did ARRA affect SNAP?**

ARRA increased the maximum SNAP/Food Stamp allotment to provide larger benefit amounts to clients. This increase in SNAP/Food Stamp benefits is expected to end on November 1, 2013.

**When will the changes from ARRA go into effect?**

SNAP/Food Stamp benefits are scheduled to go down starting on November 1.

**How much will benefits change on November 1, 2013?**

It is hard to say how benefits will change for a particular household. Benefits depend on many things—income, household size and expenses. A family of four with no income and no other changes in their case will see a decrease in their monthly benefit of \$36. A client who receives \$16 a month in SNAP benefits will receive \$15 per month.

This table gives provides an overview of what the reduced amount might be for households that have no income.

<i>SNAP/Food Stamp Maximum Monthly Benefit Levels</i>			
<b>Household Size</b>	<b>October 1, 2013 (ARRA stimulus levels)</b>	<b>November 1, 2013 (June 2013 TFP levels)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
1	\$200	\$189	- \$11
2	\$367	\$347	-\$20
3	\$526	\$497	-\$29
4	\$668	\$632	-\$36
5	\$793	\$750	-\$43
6	\$952	\$900	-\$52
7	\$1,052	\$995	-\$57
8	\$1,202	\$1,137	-\$65
Add on	\$150	\$142	-\$8

### **How will clients be notified of a change in my benefits?**

Information about the changes to SNAP/Food Stamps can be found in the Economic Security Administration service centers, and by contacting the Department of Human Services (202) 727-5355). You will also find more information at [www.foodstampinfodc.org](http://www.foodstampinfodc.org). You may also hear about these changes via the news, posters in local offices, or from retailers where you shop with your SNAP benefits.

### **How can clients check their SNAP/Food Stamps benefits balance?**

Call 1 (888) 304-9167 to check the balance of your SNAP/Food Stamp benefits.

### **How can clients make sure they are receiving the maximum SNAP benefit level?**

To make sure clients are getting the correct SNAP/Food Stamp benefit, it is important that eligibility workers have all the information about a household. This includes information on income, resources, and household costs. Some household costs are called “deductions.” For certain households, deductions can include medical expenses and dependent care expenses:

**Medical Expenses over \$35** that are not paid by insurance or someone else are allowable deductions if someone in the household is age 60 or older or has a disability. Medical expenses are things like doctors’ bills, transportation to or from the doctor, and medicine or medical equipment, insurance premiums, and prescription costs or co-pays.

**Dependent Care Expenses** that SNAP/Food Stamp family member pays for child care or adult day care so that he or she can work, look for work, or attend school are allowable deductions. Child care expenses can include cost of day care, co-pays for dependent care, and afterschool care or camp costs.

***Call the Department of Human Services at (202)727-5355 to report these expenses or contact D.C. Hunger Solutions for more information at (202) 986.2200 x3042.***

## **OTHER FOOD RESOURCES**

### **What are other available nutrition programs?**

Although food stamp benefits are decreasing, there are other federal and local nutrition programs that can help you get food.

#### ***For children:***

- **School Meals** - All D.C. public schools and public charter schools offer free breakfast and lunch for children whose families participate in SNAP. Contact your school to make sure your child is receiving free meals or contact the Office of the State Superintendent of Education.
  - Phone: (202) 727-6436
  - Website: <http://osse.dc.gov/service/wellness-and-nutrition-services>
- **Afterschool Meals** - If you have a child participating in an afterschool program, that program may participate in or be eligible for the federal afterschool meal program. For instance, some Department of Parks and Recreation centers serve afterschool meals. Check with your child’s program to find out if they serve free meals or contact the Office of the State Superintendent of Education.
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- **WIC** is a supplemental food program available for eligible pregnant women, new mothers, babies, and children up to age five. If you need help applying for this program, contact WIC:
  - Phone: (202) 442-9397  
1 (800) 345-1WIC (1942)
  - Website: [www.doh.dc.gov](http://www.doh.dc.gov)

***For seniors:***

- The **Commodity Supplemental Food Program** provides eligible seniors with a monthly food package.
- The **Congregate Meals Program** serves lunchtime group meals to older DC residents at sites across the city.
- The **Home-Delivered Meals Program** delivers meals to seniors who cannot shop or prepare meals on their own.

For more information on these nutrition programs for seniors, call the DC Office on Aging.

- Phone: (202) 724-5622
- Website: [www.dcoa.dc.gov](http://www.dcoa.dc.gov)

***For everyone:***

Contact the Hunger Lifeline at the Capital Area Food Bank at (202) 644-9807 or visit their website at [www.capitalareafoodbank.org](http://www.capitalareafoodbank.org). The DC Food Finder can also help you find free and low-cost meals and groceries, farmers markets, and other food and nutrition resources in DC. Visit the DC Food Finder online at [www.dcfoodfinder.org](http://www.dcfoodfinder.org).

# DEDUCTION CHECKLIST

To make sure you get the correct SNAP/Food Stamp benefit amount, give your caseworker information about your household. This includes information on income, resources and household costs. Some household costs are called “deductions.”

## What is a deduction?

It is a subtraction from your income used to figure out your SNAP/Food Stamp benefits. Some household expenses count as deductions. Deductions are an important part of making sure you get the right amount of SNAP/Food Stamp benefits for you.

## How do I get a deduction?

You may get for a deduction if you...

- ✓ **Pay for child care.**
- ✓ **Pay for care of an elderly family member or for a family member with a disability.**
- ✓ **Have medical expenses over \$35** that are not paid by insurance or someone else. Medical expenses are things like doctors' bills, transportation to or from the doctor, and medicine or medical equipment. *This deduction is available for those who are age 60 or older or who have a disability.*
- ✓ **Pay child support.**
- ✓ **Spend more than half of your income on shelter.** Shelter costs are things like electricity, water, a basic fee for one telephone, and rent or mortgage payments.
- ✓ **Are homeless.**
- ✓ **Work.**

If any of these apply to you, then you might get a deduction.

## Where do I find out more?

Contact the DC Department of Human Services at (202) 727-5355 for more information about your benefits.

For general information, visit [www.dhs.dc.gov](http://www.dhs.dc.gov) or [www.dchunger.org](http://www.dchunger.org).

# MORE FOOD RESOURCES FOR DC RESIDENTS

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