SNAP NONCITIZEN ELIGIBILITY
Frequently Asked Questions

Why has SNAP eligibility changed for some lawfully present noncitizens?

Recent federal law passed by Congress and signed by the President limits SNAP eligibility to certain groups of lawfully present noncitizens. This legislation is known as H.R. 1 or the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Public Law 119-21).

Who is eligible for SNAP?

Starting February 1, 2026, you are eligible for SNAP if you are a person who is:

- A Citizen of the United States (U.S.);
- A U.S. National (such as a person born in American Samoa or Swains Island);
- A Cuban and Haitian Entrant (CHE);
- A Citizen of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, or Palau; or,
- A Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) who has met the 5-year waiting period or someone who qualifies for an exemption from the 5-year waiting period, as listed below:
    - Are under 18 years old
    - Have 40 qualifying work quarters
    - Are blind or disabled
    - Were lawfully residing in the U.S. and 65 or older on August 22, 1996
    - Have a U.S. military connection
    - Are admitted to the U.S. as an Amerasian immigrant
    - Certain Hmong or Highland Laotian tribal members
    - Certain other categories of humanitarian noncitizens

Who is no longer eligible for SNAP?

Starting February 1, 2026, you will no longer be eligible for SNAP and your SNAP benefits will be terminated at application or your next recertification if you are a person who is:

- An Asylee;
- A Refugee;
- A Parolee (unless you are CHE);
- An Individual with deportation or removal withheld;
- A Conditional Entrant;
- A Survivor of Trafficking;
- A Battered Noncitizen;
- An Iraqi or Afghan with a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) who is not an LPR;
- A certain Afghan National granted parole between July 31, 2021 and September 30, 2023;
- A certain Ukrainian National granted parole between February 24, 2022 and September 30, 2024

What if my immigration status changed?

Even if you were not eligible for SNAP, you may become eligible if your immigration status changes. Contact your county worker if your status changes to:

- U.S. Citizen;
- U.S. National;
- Cuban or Haitian Entrant (CHE);
- Citizen of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, or Palau; or,
- Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR): This applies to you if you were previously granted one of the following statuses:
    - Refugee
    - Asylum
    - Deportation or removal withheld
    - Amerasian immigrant
    - Victim of trafficking
    - Iraqi or Afghan SIV who is not an LPR; or
    - Certain Afghan or Ukrainian Parolee

I am a noncitizen and I applied for SNAP recently. Will I be eligible?

Starting February 1, 2026, you will be eligible for SNAP only if you are a U.S. Citizen, U.S. National, LPR, CHE, or Citizen of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, or Palau, and you meet all other financial eligibility criteria. A county worker will determine if you are eligible for benefits when you apply or when you recertify. If there are multiple people in your household with different immigration statuses, you will receive a notice showing who is approved and who is denied.

When will my benefits stop if I'm no longer eligible after February 1, 2026?

Your benefits will continue until your next recertification as long as you continue to meet all other non-immigration eligibility criteria. A county worker will determine if you are still eligible for benefits at that time. You can find your recertification date by logging onto your ePASS account at epass.nc.gov or by contacting your county DSS office. Your most recent notice of eligibility also includes your certification period end date.

How will I know if I am losing SNAP eligibility?

A county worker will review your eligibility at your next recertification. You will receive a notice if you are no longer eligible to receive SNAP. For example, if your next annual recertification is due in September 2026, that is when your immigration status will be reviewed to determine if you are still eligible.

Most people recertify every 6 months, but some households have a longer certification period. These households include:

- Those with only an elderly member (65+) who are receiving Supplemental Security Income who have a 36-month certification period.
- Those with only elderly (60+) and/or disabled members and no earned income who have a 12-month certification period.

My household includes both citizens and noncitizens. Will my household be eligible for SNAP?

SNAP eligibility is determined for each individual in your household. Some members of your household may still be eligible for SNAP if:

- You are currently receiving SNAP, a county worker will review your eligibility at your next recertification. A county worker will send you a notice showing which people in your household are still eligible.
- You applied for SNAP, a county worker will review your application, make a determination, and will send you a notice showing you who is approved and who is denied.

Will applying for, or receiving, SNAP affect my immigration status?

Learn about the Public Charge Rule: ncdhhs.gov/media/31405/open.

Where can I get food assistance if I am no longer eligible for SNAP?

- Contact your local food bank for food assistance: feedingthecarolinas.org
- Call NC 2-1-1 for referrals to food assistance and other services
- Contact North Carolina Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) services if you are pregnant, postpartum, breastfeeding, have an infant, or a child up to age 5: ncdhhs.gov/divisions/child-and-family-well-being/community-nutrition-services-section/wic/apply-wic

Where can I learn more information about legal support for immigrants?

For information about legal services assistance, contact Legal Aid of North Carolina: 1-866-219-5262 or visit legalaidnc.org.