Make SNAP Work Harder for You

SNAP is more than grocery money. Used well, it can steady your budget, open doors to other help, and give you room to build what comes next.

Every dollar SNAP covers at the grocery store is a dollar you can put toward rent, the light bill, gas, or a goal. And being on SNAP can open the door to free training, free school meals, and discounts many families never hear about. Here's how to get the most from it.

The basics, fast

What it is

SNAP (food benefits) helps eligible Texans buy groceries. Benefits load each month onto your Lone Star Card, which works like a debit card at most grocery stores, and for online grocery orders at some retailers.

How to apply

Apply at YourTexasBenefits.com or in the Your Texas Benefits app. You'll usually have a short interview. If you have very little money or food right now, ask whether you qualify for expedited (faster) SNAP.

https://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/

Keep it going

SNAP has to be renewed. Watch your mail and the Your Texas Benefits app for renewal notices, and answer by the deadline. Missing one can stop your benefits, even if you still qualify.

Report changes

If your income, address, or household changes, report it the way your notice asks. Accurate information keeps your benefits steady and helps you avoid paying anything back later.

Check SNAP purchase and work rules

What you can buy. SNAP helps pay for eligible groceries, but some items are not covered. Check current Lone Star Card purchase rules with Texas Health and Human Services before you shop, especially for candy and sweetened drinks.

Work rules. Some adults have to meet work or training rules to keep SNAP. The rules and exemptions depend on your situation and can change. Ask your caseworker whether they apply to you and what proof you need. If a health condition keeps you from working or you're pregnant, ask about exemptions.

Keep proof of your hours, such as pay stubs, training sign-in sheets, or a volunteer letter. If you think you're exempt, say so and ask what proof they need. Review your renewal notice so you know what to do next.

Six ways to get ahead with SNAP

1. Stretch every dollar with a plan

Before you shop, look at what you already have. Pick three recipes that use it, then write a list of only what's missing. A list keeps impulse buys out of the cart and makes your benefits last the whole month.

> **In the BBTX app: Meals**
>
> Open Meals. Every recipe is built from Walmart or food bank groceries and feeds a family of 4–6 for about $12–15 or less (prices vary). Use the dietary options for allergies or special diets.

2. Stack SNAP with a food bank

Using a food bank alongside SNAP isn't failure. It's a smart move. The groceries you get there free up SNAP and cash for other needs. Then give that freed-up money a job: catch up a bill, or start a small emergency fund.

> **In the BBTX app: Food Banks and Finances**
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> Go to Food → Food Banks to find pantries near you, and Finances → Finance Counseling for free or low-cost help building a money plan.

3. Turn SNAP into free job training

Texas Workforce Solutions offices offer SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) at no cost to SNAP recipients: job search help, training, and support services such as help with transportation, when funding allows. Training hours can also count toward the work rules.

> **In the BBTX app: Employment**
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> Check Employment → Job Readiness for training programs near you, and Employment → Job Seeker when you're ready to apply.

4. Unlock free school meals

Children in SNAP households qualify for free school meals. It's often automatic, but don't assume. Call the school office or counselor to confirm, especially after a move or a new enrollment. Free breakfast and lunch can take real pressure off your grocery budget.

> **In the BBTX app: School Districts**
>
> Search School Districts to find your child's school, save it, and add the counselor's number to your phone.

5. Use the doors your card opens

Being on SNAP can qualify you for more: a discount on phone or internet service through the federal Lifeline program, free or reduced admission at participating museums through Museums for All (show your Lone Star Card), and WIC if you’re pregnant or have children under 5. Ask when you apply for anything: "Does SNAP help me qualify?"

> **In the BBTX app: Entertainment and WIC**
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> Find free and low-cost outings in Entertainment → Places to Go, and WIC offices in Medical → Women's Health.

6. Protect your card and your benefits

Keep your PIN private and cover the keypad when you enter it. Check your balance often and watch for charges you didn't make. If your card is lost or stolen, call the Lone Star Card help line at 1-800-777-7328 right away. Stolen benefits may not be replaced, so act fast.

> **In the BBTX app: Legal Support**
>
> If you're denied or your benefits stop and you think it's wrong, look in Misc → Legal Support for free legal help. Your notice lists the deadline to ask for a fair hearing.

What you can say

- "I'm on SNAP. Am I exempt from the work rules, and what proof do you need from me?"
- "I get SNAP. Can I enroll in SNAP Employment and Training? Is there help with transportation?"
- "My child's family gets SNAP. Is my child set up for free school meals?"

Words you might hear

- Lone Star Card: Your Texas EBT card for SNAP benefits.
- Renewal (recertification): The check-in that keeps your SNAP going.
- ABAWD: "Able-bodied adult without dependents," the group the work rules apply to.
- SNAP E&T: Free job search and training help for people on SNAP.

This week: your next steps

- [ ] Write your SNAP renewal date on your calendar.
- [ ] Save one food bank near you in the BBTX app.
- [ ] Pick three Meals recipes and build your grocery list from them.
- [ ] Call your local Workforce Solutions office and ask about SNAP E&T.
- [ ] Confirm free school meals with your child's school.

> **Keep BBTX in your pocket**
>
> Search by your location or a simple word. Save what works to your favorites. Listen to guides in the mobile app. Report a wrong number or old hours so the next person gets better info.

If it can't wait

911 for an emergency. 988 call or text for a mental health crisis (veterans, press 1). 1-800-799-7233 National Domestic Violence Hotline. Looking for local help? Open the BBTX app first, then call 2-1-1.

Information and useful links

Rules, programs, eligibility, and available benefits can change. Confirm current details with Texas Health and Human Services or the provider before you act.

https://www.hhs.texas.gov/services/food/snap-food-benefits

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