

# Dispelling Myths



# Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

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# MYTH: SNAP is a drain on taxpayers

FACT: Every \$1 spent in SNAP benefits generate around \$1.50 - \$1.80 in local economic activity. SNAP benefits are a highly effective way of stimulating the economy.

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## MYTH: SNAP is only for families with children

FACT: SNAP is for everyone and anyone. It is open to all households who meet the eligibility requirements, including single individuals, families, and older adults.

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# MYTH: I am not eligible for SNAP because I am a student

FACT: College students may be eligible for SNAP as long as they meet one of the exemptions to the standard eligibility requirements. Exceptions include:

- Work at least 20 hours a week;
  - Participate in work study program;
  - Participate in an on-the-job training program;
  - Care for a child under the age of 6;
  - Care for a child age 6-11 and lack childcare rendering you unable to attend school and work 20 hours a week or participate in work study
  - Are a single parent enrolled full-time in college and taking care of a child under 12
  - Receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
  - Are placed in a college or other higher education program through SNAP Employment and Training program or other similar state and federal programs
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MYTH: Applying to SNAP assistance will take food benefits away from others who need it

FACTS: Anyone who is eligible receives SNAP assistance and is not taking food or money away from other households.

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## MYTH: Applying to SNAP is difficult

FACT: You can receive help navigating the application process if it feels too daunting. In Idaho you can apply online, by phone, or in person. You will be asked basic information such as household size, annual income, and any assets you have. All personal information you provide is strictly confidential.

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## MYTH: SNAP is a welfare program

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FACT: SNAP is not a welfare program or part of the welfare system at all; it is a nutrition assistance program. The goal of the program is to increase a household's ability to buy more nutritious food.

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## MYTH: People on SNAP don't work

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FACT: The majority of able-bodied SNAP recipients that can work do work. In fact, at last count nearly 80% of SNAP households nationally has at least one working adult in the home.

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MYTH: I can't receive SNAP benefits if I have assets like a car or retirement savings

FACT: The asset limit in Idaho is \$5,000 for most households.

Retirement accounts are excluded and one car for each adult in the household is not considered in determining eligibility for the program.

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MYTH: I am not eligible for SNAP because I don't have an address

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FACT: Being homeless does not mean that you must go hungry. You do not need a fixed address to be eligible.

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MYTH: I am not eligible for SNAP because I don't have an I.D.

FACT: Proof of identity is necessary however this can be a photo ID, work or school badge, health benefits card, ID from another social service, pay stub, birth certificate, or a voter registration card. SNAP workers can also check identity by calling shelter workers or employers.

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## MYTH: I can only use my SNAP benefits at the grocery store

FACT: Not only can you use your SNAP benefits at most grocery stores, you can also use them at most farmers markets and some road side farm stands. There are also some farmers markets that will allow you to double your SNAP benefits for purchase of fruits and vegetables at the market.

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# MYTH: SNAP benefits have to be paid back

FACT: People who get the right amount of SNAP benefits do not have to pay them back. Make sure the information you give when you apply is correct. If you get SNAP benefits based on wrong information, then you will have to pay them back.

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# Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

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MYTH: I need a Social Security Number to be eligible

FACT: WIC does not ask for or verify a WIC participants Social Security Number.

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MYTH: If I receive SNAP I can't receive WIC

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FACT: If you receive SNAP you meet the income limit for WIC and could be eligible for both programs!

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MYTH: I have a job so I am not eligible for WIC

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FACT: Around 75% of WIC families work! You are eligible for WIC as long as you fall below the income limit.

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MYTH: My child is over the age of 1 so I am not eligible

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FACT: Children are eligible for WIC until their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

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MYTH: I do not have legal immigration status so I am not eligible

FACT: Citizenship or legal status are not required to receive WIC Service. WIC also does not ask for or verify the legal status of participants or participants parents.

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MYTH: I am a foster parent, legal guardian, or relative caregiver of a child under 5 so I am not eligible

FACT: WIC Benefits can be issued to a legal guardian with a child under the age of 5 as long as they meet the income limit. Proof of legal guardianship is required.

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# Resources

1. Idaho Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. February 13, 2023. [https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap\\_factsheet\\_idaho.pdf](https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/snap_factsheet_idaho.pdf)
2. About SNAP. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/services-programs/food-assistance/about-snap>
3. Apply for SNAP. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/services-programs/food-assistance/apply-snap>
4. SNAP Eligibility. USDA Food and Nutrition Service. November 1, 2023. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/recipient/eligibility>
5. FAQ. Southwest District Health. <https://swdh.id.gov/wic/faq/>
6. Seniors & SNAP: 5 Myths Busted. National Council on Aging. August 4, 2022. <https://www.ncoa.org/article/seniors-snap-5-myths-busted>
7. About WIC. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/services-programs/food-assistance/about-wic>
8. Apply for WIC. Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. <https://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/services-programs/food-assistance/apply-wic>
9. WIC Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). USDA Food and Nutrition Service. November 7, 2023. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/frequently-asked-questions>
10. WIC. Public Health Idaho North Central District. <https://idahopublichealth.com/women-infants-children/wic-home>