

## **SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) STUDENT FAQs**

### What Colleges Need to Know About: **New SNAP Rules to Help Hungry Community College Students**

#### **1. Which students have always been eligible for SNAP (also known as food stamps)?**

The general rule is that college students are not eligible for SNAP, but there are many exceptions. Students may be eligible for SNAP if they are:

- (1) working 20 hours a week or more;
- (2) receiving federal or state work study;
- (3) caring for a child under age 6;
- (4) caring for a child under age 12 if the student is a single parent in college full time;
- (5) “unfit for work” (that is, have a medical barrier to employment);
- (6) under age 18 or over age 50; or
- (7) enrolled less than half time.

This isn’t an exhaustive list, but it covers the most common exceptions. For a list of all student exceptions, please see Chapter 514.2 of the PA DHS SNAP Manual online at: <http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/index.htm>.

#### **2. What has changed?**

**Starting in January 2018, many community college students may be eligible for SNAP even if they don’t meet the above exceptions** (if they otherwise qualify). The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services has issued new guidance expanding SNAP eligibility based on community college students’ participation in programs designed to improve their employability. The guidance is available at:

[http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/500\\_OpsMemos\\_PolicyClarifications/SNAP\\_Handbook\\_Operations\\_Memoranda.htm](http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/500_OpsMemos_PolicyClarifications/SNAP_Handbook_Operations_Memoranda.htm)

### **3. Which students are newly eligible?**

Starting in January 2018, Pennsylvania community college students may potentially be eligible for SNAP if they are in either:

- (1) career or technical education program under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006; or
- (2) programs associated with high priority occupations. Almost all community college students should be eligible (assuming they apply for SNAP and otherwise qualify).

### **4. How do students get SNAP under this new policy?**

Students should apply for SNAP, which they can do online at: [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us), or at their local County Assistance Office. They should also submit a copy of the attached form, completed by a college official, with their application or within 30 days of applying.

Students may qualify for SNAP if their monthly income is below \$1,608 per month (or more if their household is larger than one person). Student financial aid, including federal or state work study, does not count as income for SNAP purposes.

### **5. Which college officials can sign the form?**

Any college official with knowledge of the student's enrollment and course of study can sign the form.

### **6. What does it mean to be "enrolled"?**

A student's enrollment begins on the first day of the school term. A student's enrollment ends upon graduation, suspension, expulsion, dropping out, or not intending to register for the next normal school term. A student who was enrolled during the spring term and intends to enroll for the fall term is considered enrolled during summer vacation, even though he or she is not attending college.

### **7. What does it mean to be enrolled "at least half time"?**

Half time status is determined by the community college.

### **8. Why does the form ask about work study?**

All students who receive federal or state work study may qualify for SNAP (if otherwise eligible), regardless of their school or course of study. Work study does not count as income in the calculation of how much SNAP the student will receive. Many work study recipients receive the maximum SNAP grant of \$192 per month for one person.

**9. What is “a career or technical education program under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006”?**

The term ‘career and technical education’ means organized educational activities that:

- (1) Offer a sequence of courses that:
  - (a) Provides individuals with coherent and rigorous content aligned with challenging academic standards and relevant technical knowledge and skills needed to prepare for further education and careers in current or emerging professions.
  - (b) Provides technical skill proficiency, and industry-recognized credential, a certificate or an associate degree.
  - (c) May include prerequisite courses (other than remedial courses) that meet the requirements of this subparagraph.
- (2) Includes competency-based applied learning that contributes to the academic knowledge, higher- order reasoning and problem-solving skills, work attitudes, general employability skills, technical skills, occupation-specific skills, and knowledge of all aspects of an industry, including entrepreneurship, of an individual.

Source: <https://preview.tinyurl.com/yaqphyg8>, page 5.

**10. What is a High Priority Occupation?**

Each Pennsylvania regional Workforce Development Area has created its own list of High Priority Occupations. These are available at:

<http://www.workstats.dli.pa.gov/Products/HPOs/Pages/default.aspx>.

**11. Can students whose major is undecided, or liberal arts, qualify for SNAP under this new policy?**

Students who meet either the Perkins or High Priority Occupations definitions listed above potentially qualify for SNAP. Students whose course of study does not meet one of those definitions can potentially get SNAP if they meet one of the exceptions in #1 above.

**12. Can students in career or technical programs at other colleges get SNAP?**

The new policy only applies to students at Pennsylvania’s community colleges, because of federal rules allowing for SNAP for participants of certain state and local programs that enhance employability. Students at other colleges can potentially get SNAP if they meet one of the exceptions in #1 above.