



SNAP Cuts Are Here: How Can We Help?

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What's happening?

Starting September 2025, some adults must work 20 hours a week to keep SNAP.

These rules apply to you if:

- You are ages 18-64,
- You don't get SNAP for children under 14 and,
- You don't get disability benefits.

If you don't meet the work requirement, you can only get 3 months of SNAP every 3 years.

SNAP recipients do not need to meet the work requirement if they are **exempt**.

Many people should be exempt from the work requirement.



Work Requirement Cut-offs Began

December 2025

If SNAP recipients have not told the County Assistance Office (CAO) that they are:

- **Working or in job training at least 20 hours per week**
- **Volunteering** OR
- **Exempt** from work requirements

Their benefits may have already gotten cut off, or may be soon.



SNAP Cut-Off Timeline

- People aged 18-44, without kids under 18: **January 1.**
- People aged 44-54, without kids under 18: **February 1.**
- People aged 55-64, or with kids 14+: It depends on their renewal date. Renewals in November would lead to cutoffs March 1.
 - People will continue to be cut off 3 months after their renewal date.

NOTE: November didn't count toward the time limit, because of the federal government shutdown.



Reasons People Lose SNAP

- **These cases can be confusing!** A lot of people are losing SNAP and don't know why.
 - People may not even know about the work requirement.
 - Notices aren't always clear.
 - DHS mail problems in November.
 - November shutdown led some people to think SNAP just isn't there for them.
 - Cut-offs due to immigrant eligibility changes.
 - CAO staffing issues – a lot of new staff, not enough of them.
People make mistakes!
- **A lot of these cases are showing up as renewal problems.**



Key Steps for Assisters

- Ask whether people are getting SNAP
- Screen for exemptions / compliance
- Help with getting SNAP back
 - Renewals
 - Appeals



Background on SNAP Renewals

- SNAP renewals are usually every 12 months.
- Renewals require:
 - Renewal application (paper or COMPASS)
 - DHS mails these the month before SNAP will end (e.g., mid-February if SNAP will end March 31).
 - Interview
 - Verification of income, expenses
 - Submit most recent 4 weeks of paystubs. Now need to submit lease/mortgage bill and heating bill too.
 - CAO to find all documents and get it right.
- Many opportunities for things to fall through the cracks!



Common Reasons for Cut-off at Renewal

- CAO says they did not receive the **renewal paperwork** even though it was submitted
- Missed **interview**
- Outstanding piece of **verification** (missing pay stub, for example)



SNAP Renewals for People Subject to the Work Requirement

- If you are exempt, complying, or live with people who are not subject to the work requirement (like kids), renewals are still every 12 months.
- People who are not coded as exempt or compliant, and who don't live with others not subject to the work rules, have renewals every 3 months.



How Do I Help Someone Without SNAP?

Help them **reapply/complete the renewal** or **appeal** the cut-off.

- a) If the issue was a renewal, appealing won't be enough: need to complete the renewal or reapply.
- b) If the cutoff was not at a renewal, appeal (within 90 days).
- c) Either way, ***show that the person is exempt or complying.***



Step 1: Appeal or Reapply

- If cut-off **at renewal**:
 - Help client reapply or submit renewal.
 - Find out what documentation is needed to complete renewal and help the client submit.
 - Help make sure interview happens.
 - Notify CAO of exemption or compliance and provide verification as necessary.
- If cut-off **during certification period**:
 - Submit the Fair Hearing Request Form that came with your notice via the MyCompass app or at your County Assistance Office (CAO). Ask for a receipt.
 - Appeal within **15 days** of the date on your notice to keep getting SNAP until your appeal is resolved. You can appeal up to **90 days** after the date on the notice.
 - It takes up to 2 months to schedule a hearing. Use this time to work with the CAO to show that you are exempt or meeting the work rules.



Appeals

Fair Hearing Form

- 1. Name:** _____ **Case Number:** _____
Phone number: _____ **Address:** _____
- 2. Tell us which program you want to appeal:**
- Health Care Cash Assistance SNAP
 LIHEAP
 State Supplementary Payment (SSP) Other
- 3. Do you want your SNAP benefits to continue at the same amount pending the hearing decision?** Yes No
- 4. Choose the way you want your hearing:**
- By telephone, at the phone number you write on this form.
 By telephone, at the CAO.
 Face-to-face, with you and the people you bring in the hearing room with a judge and CAO staff on the phone
 Face-to-face, with you and the people you bring in the hearing room with a judge and CAO staff in the hearing room.
- Reminder: You must travel to the assigned Bureau of Hearings and Appeals office for a face-to-face hearing. The location will be assigned to you based on where you live.
- 5. Do you need a free interpreter?** Yes No
If yes, what language? _____

Check yes to keep getting SNAP until appeal is resolved



Appeals

6. If you will need help at the appeal because of a hearing impairment or other disability, please tell us how we can help you. There is no cost to you for this service.

7. Tell us why you disagree with this decision:

8. Signature: _____

9. Date: _____

If someone will be helping you with your appeal, please fill out the information for the representative below.

10. Representative Name: _____

11. Representative Address: _____

12. Representative Telephone Number: _____

The Bureau of Hearings and Appeals will send you a letter to tell you when and where your hearing will be.

Explain how they are meeting the work requirements or exempt



Troubleshooting Renewal Issues

1. **What paperwork does the person have?** Renewal form?
Cutoff notice?
2. **Call the Customer Service Center at (877) 395-8930 (in Philadelphia, (215) 560-7226).** They can explain what the issue is.
 - a. Renewal required but not submitted?
Submit via COMPASS: compass.dhs.pa.gov
 - b. Paperwork not submitted (or lost)?
 - c. Interview needed?



Troubleshooting (2)

3. In Philadelphia, assisters can become PCAO Partners.
 - a. PCAO Partners get a list of liaisons (managers) in each office to work with: can email to find out what the issue is or to submit documents. Could also call.
 - b. Become a PCAO Partner by emailing MPileggi@clsphila.org
4. Outside Philadelphia, develop a relationship with local CAO. Maybe they'll give you a liaison?
5. Can refer person to CLS or local legal services program



Step 2: Identify Exemptions

Tell the CAO (in-person or by calling the Customer Service Center at: 215-560-7226 ((877) 395-8930 outside Philadelphia) if you:

- **Are earning at least \$217.50/week or working at least 30 hours/week**
- **Have a health condition that makes it hard to work**
- Are pregnant
- Are in school or job training at least half-time
- Applied for or receive unemployment benefits
- Care for someone who is sick or elderly
- Are in drug or mental health treatment
- Will start a job within 60 days
- Cannot work because of domestic violence, or
- Are homeless.

Proof required



Reporting Exemptions

- Can report exemptions during the SNAP interview.
- Or upload exemption information to COMPASS.
- CLS screening tool will create a PDF of DHS's screening form:
 - [2025 SNAP Requirement Screener](#)



Exemption Screening Form



Pennsylvania
Department of Human Services

RECIPIENT NAME:	
COUNTY:	CASE NUMBER:

Adults who are healthy and able to work, and who do not live with children under 14, have a time limit on their SNAP benefits. After receiving benefits for three months, they need to show they are meeting certain work-related rules or qualify for an exemption to keep getting benefits. They can meet these rules by working at least 20 hours a week or taking part in approved training programs, or a mix of both. If this applies to you, you will receive another letter with more information.

To help us determine if you are eligible for an exemption, please complete the survey below and return it to us in the enclosed postage-paid envelope as soon as possible - preferably within 10 days:

Individual and Household Questions - Circle Yes or No:

- Yes No Is anyone in your house age 13 or younger?
If yes, do you purchase and prepare your meals with this person? Yes No
- Yes No Are you pregnant?
- Yes No Is your ability to work at least 20 hours a week limited by your physical or mental health?
- Yes No Are you receiving or have you applied for any disability or sick benefits, such as SSI, Workers' Compensation, Veterans Disability Benefits, or vocational rehabilitation services?
- Yes No Are you caring for an ill or disabled household member?
- Yes No Are you participating in a drug or alcohol treatment program?
- Yes No Are you unable to work because of domestic violence? Circle Yes if:
• You or your children will be at risk of being harmed if you work, or
• It will be more difficult for you to recover from abuse if you work.
- Yes No Are you homeless or facing homelessness?
- Yes No Are you receiving or have you applied for Unemployment Compensation?
- Yes No Do you expect to return to work within the next 60 days?
- Yes No Are you a migrant or seasonal farmworker returning to work within 30 days?

Employment, Training, and Community Service Questions - Circle Yes or No:

- Yes No Are you working?
If yes, where? _____
How many hours a week? _____ What is your hourly rate? _____
- Yes No Are you taking classes to learn English or earn a GED?
If no, are you interested in taking free classes? Yes No
- Yes No Are you in school or a training program?
If yes, what are you studying? _____ How many hours a week? _____
If no, are you interested in going back to school? Yes No
- Yes No Are you doing community service or volunteering with a local agency?
If yes, where? _____ How many hours a week? _____
If no, are you interested in volunteering? Yes No

If you have questions about this survey or need help completing it, please call the Statewide Customer Service Center at 1-877-395-8930. In Philadelphia, please call 215-560-7226.



Step 3: Meet the Work Rules

- If you are not exempt, you must **work** (unpaid work counts) or do **job training** for 20 hours a week, or a combination.
- You can also **volunteer** to meet the work rules (talk to your caseworker).
- The CAO can refer you to a job program if you ask.
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- **Tell the CAO what work you are doing.** Submit online, go in person or call the Customer Service Center at 215-560-7226 (877- 395-8930 outside Philadelphia).



Step 4: Withdraw the Appeal

Once the CAO **approves your exemption** or **confirms you are meeting the work requirements** and **reopens your case**, you can withdraw your appeal.



Resources

CLS web site: clsphila.org/SNAPchanges

Toolkit with flyers and social media:
[SNAP Work Requirements - Google Drive](#)

DHS page on work requirements: DHS.PA.gov/work



Questions?

