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Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

SNAP Policy on Non-Citizen Eligibility

A person must be a U.S. citizen or an eligible, lawfully-present non-citizen to qualify for SNAP benefits. Non-citizens who are eligible based on their immigration status must also satisfy other SNAP eligibility requirements such as income and resource limits to receive SNAP benefits.

Non-citizens eligible with no waiting period.

The following non-citizens are eligible with no waiting period:

- Qualified alien children under 18.
- Refugees admitted under section 207 of INA (includes victims of severe forms of trafficking).
- Victims of Trafficking under the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000.
- Asylees under Section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).
- Deportation withheld under 243(h) or 241(b)(3) of INA.
- Amerasian immigrants under 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act.
- Cuban or Haitian entrants as defined in 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980.
- Iraqi and Afghan special immigrants under Section 101(a)(27) of the INA.
- Certain American Indians born abroad.
- Members of Hmong or Highland Laotian tribes that helped the U.S. military during the Vietnam era, and who are legally living in the U.S., and their spouses or surviving spouses and unmarried dependent children.
- Elderly individuals born on or before Aug. 22, 1931 and who lawfully resided in the U.S. on Aug. 22, 1996.
- Lawful Permanent Residents in the U.S. and receiving government payments for disability or blindness.
- Lawful Permanent Residents with a military connection (veteran, on active duty, or spouse or child of a veteran or active duty service member).

Qualified aliens eligible after a waiting period.

A qualified alien is a non-citizen with a certain immigration status as defined under PRWORA. A qualified alien who does not belong to one of the non-citizen groups listed above as eligible with no waiting period can get SNAP benefits if the person is otherwise eligible, and is:

- A Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) who has earned, or can be credited with, 40 quarters of work; or
- A qualified alien in one of the following groups who has been in qualified status for 5 years:
 - Paroled for at least one year under section 212(d)(5) of INA.
 - Granted conditional entry under 203(a)(7) of INA in effect prior to 4/1/80.
 - Battered spouse, battered child or parent or child of a battered person with a petition pending under 204(a)(1)(A) or (B) or 244(a)(3) of INA.

Some States have programs to supply food benefits in lieu of SNAP to non-citizens who do not qualify for SNAP benefits. This information can be accessed in the [SNAP State Options Report](#).

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