

Summary of Rights and Responsibilities for SNAP and Cash Programs

Application Processing Timeframes

Your caseworker has 30 days to make a decision about your case. Some households may qualify for their Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) application to be processed within 24 hours or 7 days based on the household circumstances. If you are applying for the Disability Financial Assistance (DFA) program your application can take up to 90 days before a determination is made. You will receive an eligibility determination notice after a determination is made on your application by the county agency. Please review the notices carefully. Each letter will contain contact information for your local office if you have any questions.

State Hearings

You have the right to request a county conference and a state hearing, if you disagree with the action taken on your case. To request a county conference you should contact the county agency. A county conference is a meeting between you and a representative of the county agency who may settle the issue quicker than a state hearing. You may also request a state hearing by submitting the state hearing request form that is attached to each eligibility notice. At the state hearing, a hearing officer will listen to your testimony and determine if your case was completed correctly.

- You can email your request to the Bureau of State Hearings at BSH@jfs.ohio.gov;
- Call 1-866-635-3748, option 1; Fax your request to 614-728-9574; or
- Mail your request to: State Hearings, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, P.O. Box 182825, Columbus, Ohio 43218.

Additional information on **State Hearings** is found in the Program Enrollment and Benefit Information guide.

Nondiscrimination

There are various laws, regulations, and rules against unlawful discrimination. If you feel you have been discriminated against, you may file a complaint. The contact information for filing a complaint is found under the **Civil Rights** section of the Program Enrollment and Benefit Information guide.

Confidentiality

You have the right to have your case information kept in a confidential, secure manner. We will not discuss your case with anyone who is not authorized to receive the information. If you decide later you would like to add a person to be authorized to discuss your case, you should submit a written statement naming the individual.

Social security numbers

Social security numbers will be used to check information you provided against information held by other federal, state, and local agencies, and when contacting appropriate persons, companies, or agencies to verify the information you provided.

Ohio Works First

The Ohio Works First (OWF) program is a financial assistance program, which provides cash assistance to needy families with minor children for up to 36 months. As a condition of eligibility for OWF requirements, the adults or minor head-of-household may be required to participate in a work activity. Work activities can include county approved on-the-job training, community service and/or education. You should also inform your caseworker of any employment barriers you may have such as transportation, child care and medical or physical limitations. Eligible adults or minor head of households must sign a self-sufficiency contract. Failure to sign the self-sufficiency contract or failure to comply with the terms of the contract will result in termination of benefits for the household.

A job quit without just cause results in the imposition of a 6 month period of ineligibility for OWF.

Reporting Requirements for Cash Programs

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You are required to report within 10 days any change in household circumstances, such as change of address, income, or household members. For the DFA program, this includes reporting changes in the status of an application with the Social Security Administration for Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income benefits. In addition, you are required to appeal all denials through the administrative appeal process with the Social Security Administration. A list of changes to report is found under the **Rights and Responsibilities** section of the Program Enrollment and Benefit Information guide.

Reporting Requirements for SNAP

You are required to report when your income exceeds 130% of the Federal Poverty Line (FPL) in the month the change occurs. The 130% income limit for your household size will be listed on the notice you will receive by mail. The income limits are also listed on the **Food Assistance Change Reporting Form (JFS 04196)** attached in your Program Enrollment and Benefit Information guide.

You will receive an Interim Report form in month 5 of your 12 month certification period (or in month 11 for 24 month certification periods) to provide updated information on your circumstances. If your Interim Report is not completed, signed and returned by the 21st day of the month it is mailed, your SNAP benefits will be discontinued. In addition to the SNAP reporting requirements, able-bodied adults without dependents are also required to report when their work hours fall below 20 hours weekly or 80 hours averaged monthly. Failure to fulfill a reporting requirement may result in the loss of your benefits.

Benefit Issuance and Use

The Ohio Direction card is used for SNAP benefits. Cash assistance is issued on the EPPICard. If you have not previously received a card, you will receive the card in the mail. If you do not receive the card, contact the Ohio Direction card customer service at 866-386-3071 for SNAP benefits; for cash assistance, contact EPPICard customer service at 866-320-8822. If you previously received an Ohio Direction card or EPPICard but no longer have it, contact the customer service number to request a replacement card. The EPPICard can be used at MasterCard member banks, ATMs and most retailers that accept MasterCard. It cannot be used at liquor stores, casinos, gaming establishments that provide adult oriented entertainment in which performers disrobe or perform in an unclothed state for your entertainment.

SNAP benefits are to be used only for the purchase of food. Do not use SNAP benefits to buy non-food items such as: alcoholic drinks, tobacco, etc. Do not use your SNAP benefits to purchase or sell firearms or controlled substances. Do not sell, trade, or purchase SNAP benefits. Do not use someone else's SNAP benefits for your household. You can be disqualified from the SNAP program for any of these violations.

Penalty Warning

Do not give false information or hide information to get or continue to receive benefits. If you purposely gave wrong information during an interview, your benefits may be denied or terminated and legal action may be taken against you. If you receive benefits you should not have gotten:

You may be ordered to repay the benefits

You may be charged with fraud

You may be fined (up to \$250,000) or sent to prison (up to 20 years) or both

You may be prohibited from receiving benefits in the future.

This information is found under the **Food Assistance Penalty Warning** section of the Program Enrollment and Benefit Information guide.

Compliance with Quality Control Reviews

Cases are chosen at random throughout the state to make sure people are eligible for the assistance they receive and that they are receiving the correct amount. If your case is chosen for a **Quality Control** review, you must cooperate. If you refuse to cooperate with a review, your benefits may be terminated.

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SNAP Work Registration Rights and Responsibilities

SNAP offers nutrition assistance to eligible, low-income individuals and families. As a condition of eligibility for SNAP, household members may be required to register for work. If you meet any of the following, you are exempt from the work registration requirements:

- An individual younger than 16 years old;
- An individual 60 years or older;
- A parent or other AG member responsible for the care of a dependent child under 6 years old in or out of the home;
- A parent or other AG member responsible for the care of an incapacitated person in or out of the home;
- A person receiving unemployment compensation benefits or who has applied for and is complying with the requirements of the unemployment compensation application process;
- An individual physically or mentally unfit for employment, temporarily or permanently;
- An individual applying for SSI and SNAP simultaneously at the local Social Security Administration office;
- A regular participant in a drug addiction or alcoholic treatment and rehab program, resident or non-resident basis;
- A student enrolled at least half time in any recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education;
- An individual subject to and complying with an OWF work requirement;
- An individual employed and working a minimum of 30 hours weekly or receiving weekly earnings equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours.
- An individual self-employed and working a minimum of 30 hours weekly or receiving weekly earnings equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours.

An individual applying for or in receipt of SNAP benefits who is not exempt from work registration is required to:

- Respond to a request for supplemental information regarding employment status or availability for work;
- Report to an employer when referred by the county agency unless the potential employment is unsuitable;
- Accept a bona fide offer of suitable employment when referred by the county agency;
- Continue suitable employment until it is no longer considered suitable; the individual is terminated for reasons beyond the individual's control; or the individual becomes exempt from work registration; and
- Participate in an appraisal and participate in the SNAP employment and training program.

Work registrants who fail or refuse, without good cause, to meet the work registration requirements (listed above) will be sanctioned. Good cause includes circumstances beyond the individual's control, such as, but not limited to, illness, illness of another assistance group member requiring the presence of the member, an assistance group emergency, the unavailability of transportation, the lack of adequate child care for children who have reached age six but are under age twelve or domestic violence.

If an applicant has a job quit or a reduction of work hours within 60 days of applying for SNAP without good cause they shall be found ineligible for assistance for a specified time period. If a recipient of SNAP has a job quit or a reduction of work hours without good cause they shall be placed on a sanction. In addition to the reasons listed above, good cause for leaving employment includes the following:

- Discrimination by an employer based on age, race, sex, color, handicap, religious beliefs, national origin or political beliefs.
- Work demands or conditions that render continued employment unreasonable, such as working without being paid on schedule.

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- Acceptance of employment by the individual, or enrollment by the individual in any recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education on at least a half time basis, that requires the individual to leave employment; or acceptance by any other assistance group member of employment or enrollment at least half time in any recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education in another county or similar political subdivision which that requires the assistance group to move and thereby requires the individual to leave employment.
- Resignations by persons under the age of sixty which that are recognized by the employer as retirement.
- Employment that becomes unsuitable after the acceptance of such employment.
- Acceptance of a bona fide offer of employment of more than thirty hours a week or in which the weekly earnings are equivalent to the federal minimum wage multiplied by thirty hours that, because of circumstances beyond the control of the individual, subsequently either does not materialize or results in unsuitable.
- Leaving a job in connection with patterns of employment in which workers frequently move from one employer to another such as migrant farm labor or construction work.

When good cause is questionable and the assistance group fails or refuses to provide verification of the questionable information, good cause shall not be determined.

Employment is considered unsuitable under any of the following conditions:

- The wage offered is less than the highest of:
- The applicable federal or state minimum wage; or
- Eighty per cent of the federal minimum wage, if neither the federal nor the state minimum wage is applicable;
- The employment offered is on a piece-rate basis, and the average hourly yield the employee can reasonably be expected to earn is less than the applicable hourly wages;
- The assistance group member, as a condition of employment or continuing employment, is required to join, resign from, or refrain from joining any legitimate labor organization;
- The work offered is at a site subject to a strike or lockout at the time of the offer unless the strike has been enjoined under section 208 of the Labor-Management Relations Act of 1947 29 U.S.C. 141 (6/1947), or unless an injunction has been issued under section 10 of the Railway Labor Act of 1926, 45 U.S.C. 151 (10/1996); or
- Any other criteria established by your county agency.

SNAP Employment and Training (SNAP E&T) Program

As a work registrant, you are required to participate in SNAP E&T. You will be required to attend an appraisal where the county agency will assess yours skills and barriers and assign you to an employment and training activity. This activity will be documented in an employability plan.

As a SNAP E&T participant, your rights include, but are not limited to:

- Receiving copies of all employability plans.
- Notification of the right to request a state hearing on issues related to SNAP E&T and failure or refusal to participate.
- Nondiscrimination in SNAP E&T assignments.
- Receiving supportive services for the authorized SNAP E&T activity.
- Filing a conciliation request; and
- Accepting employment pursuant to the work registration requirements listed above.

As a SNAP E&T participant, your responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

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- Reporting to the appraisal and other appointments with the county agency program staff or providers.
- Reporting to the work experience program (WEP), education, training, supportive service, or job search sites at the scheduled dates and times.
- Obeying the rules at the work site, following instructions, and otherwise demonstrating acceptable work habits and behavior.
- Providing the county agency with information relevant to securing or retaining employment and providing supplemental information as requested.
- Notifying the immediate supervisor, other designated individual, or the county agency staff of the reason for nonparticipation as scheduled.
- Participating in SNAP E&T activities for the scheduled number of hours as assigned.
- Accepting necessary supportive services determined to be needed for participation.
- Reporting any changes which would affect the individual's ability to participate in SNAP E&T.
- Providing the county agency with documentation of attendance and participation in a SNAP E&T activity as requested.
- Providing a good cause reason for nonparticipation.
- Contacting the county agency, unless otherwise instructed by the county agency, if a monthly scheduling notice or the participant expense allowance has not been received.
- Reporting to a job site, to an employer for a scheduled job interview or to any related subsequent interviews or testing appointments when referred by the county agency or its designee.
- Accepting a bona fide offer of employment pursuant the work registration requirements listed above.

Failure or refusal without good cause to participate in an employment and training program to the extent required by the county agency will result in a sanction. The good cause criteria for work registration failures (described above) applies to E&T failures as well.

ABAWD Rights and Responsibilities

A work registrant is also an able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD), unless the individual is any of the following:

- Under 18 years old;
- 50 years of age or older;
- A parent (natural, adoptive or step) of an assistance group member (eligible or ineligible) who is under age 18;
- Residing in an assistance group where an assistance group member (eligible or ineligible) is under age 18;
- Medically certified to be physically or mentally unfit for employment, temporarily or permanently; or
- Pregnant.

If you are an ABAWD, you are required to comply with the work registration requirements above, participate in the SNAP employment and training program, and meet the ABAWD work requirement. The ABAWD work requirement can be met by doing one of the following:

- Work 20 hours per week (80 hours averaged monthly) in exchange for money, goods or services (in-kind work) or verified unpaid work averaged monthly (unpaid work is defined as doing or performing something for which no compensation is received and that benefits the community or a member of the community that you do not reside with);
- Participate in and comply with the requirements of a work program (e.g. the SNAP employment and training program, a workforce program through an OhioMeansJobs center) for twenty or more hours per week;
- Any combination of working and participating in a work program for a total of twenty hours or more per week; or

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- Participating in and complying with a work experience program (WEP) as assigned by the county agency.

You are required to report to the county agency if your work hours fall below 20 hours weekly or 80 hours averaged monthly. If you do not meet the ABAWD work requirement, without good cause, during any 3 months in a 36 month period, you will be ineligible to receive SNAP benefits. Good cause is determined by your county agency and includes circumstances beyond your control, such as, but not limited to: illness, illness of another assistance group member requiring your presence, an assistance group emergency, or the unavailability of transportation. If terminated or denied SNAP for receiving 3 of 36 months, you can regain eligibility during this time period by meeting the work requirement for 30 days or meeting an exemption, after which you remain eligible to receive SNAP for as long as you continue to meet the work requirements or meet an exemption. If your failure is related to SNAP employment and training requirement, you will be sanctioned.

Domestic Violence

If you are and OWF and/or SNAP recipient and you are a victim of domestic violence, some program requirements can be temporarily waived, meaning they will not be applied to you. This could include being temporarily excused from a work requirement and/or cooperating with child support rules, and/or continuing to receive OWF beyond the 36 month time limit.

For further information regarding your benefits, please consult your **Program Enrollment & Benefit Information Guide**.