

Q&A on D-SNAP

What is D-SNAP?

D-SNAP (Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) provides temporary food assistance to affected households in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Individuals and families can receive a one-time payment if they lived in the identified disaster area, and meet certain other eligibility requirements. The state makes a request for D-SNAP to the USDA only after the federal government declares a “major disaster” in an affected area.

How is D-SNAP different than regular SNAP?

D-SNAP differs in the following ways:

- It provides a one-time benefit to those eligible
- D-SNAP's guidelines allow for a higher income level than regular SNAP.
- Take home pay and other resources (e.g., savings), minus storm-related expenses are considered to determine income eligibility. (for example, a family of four with an income that would normally be too high could be eligible depending on their amount of storm-related expenses)
- Immigration status is not considered.
- Applications may only be filed in person during the seven-day application period.

Who is eligible for D-SNAP?

- Current SNAP recipients CANNOT apply.
- To be eligible for a D-SNAP benefit the applicant must have lived in one of the ten zip codes or two partial zip codes on October 27, 2012:
 - Coney Island, Brooklyn (zip codes 11224 and 11235)
 - Red Hook, Brooklyn (zip code 11231)
 - Gerritsen Beach South of Allen Avenue, Brooklyn (partial area of zip code 11229)
 - Lower East Side, Manhattan (zip code 10002)
 - Staten Island: Southeast shore (zip code 10306), and North Midland Beach South of Seaview Avenue (partial area of zip code 10305)
 - The Rockaways, Queens (zip codes 11691, 11692, 11693, 11694, and 11697)
- The applicant must have incurred disaster related expenses from October 27 to November 25.
- Replacement of food lost cannot be counted as a disaster related expense.
- To receive benefits, applicants must prove their identity and that they lived in one of the affected zip codes on October 27th. They should also provide any relevant documentation regarding income, resources, and family composition, from October 27 to November 25. This information will be reviewed and independently verified.

If a household already receives SNAP benefits can they also receive D-SNAP?

People who receive recurring SNAP benefits and resided in the ten zip codes and two partial zip codes on October 27, 2012, will automatically receive D-SNAP if the benefit amount received for November 2012 was less than the maximum amount allowed for their household size. Current SNAP recipients should not come in to apply and will be turned away if they do. Current SNAP households who received the maximum SNAP benefit for the month of November will not receive a supplement.

When can I apply for D-SNAP?

Eligible people can apply for D-SNAP on the following dates and at two locations:

- Downtown Brooklyn: 495 Clermont Avenue, December 12 to December 18, 2012, 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.,
 - For the first two days, we are accepting applicants alphabetically, according to last names.
Wednesday, December 12, only applicants with a last name beginning with A-M;
Thursday, December 13, only applicants with a last name beginning with N-Z;
All other days, are open to all applicants, regardless of last name.
- Staten Island: New Dorp High School, 465 New Dorp Lane, Friday, December 14, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday, December 15-16, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Monday, December 17, 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.
 - This location is open every day to all applicants regardless of last name.

If a household is eligible, how soon will they receive D-SNAP benefits?

If someone is determined eligible their benefits will be available on a temporary Benefit card, which they should receive from the state's vendor in the mail in three to seven days.

Do people need to appear in person to apply for D-SNAP?

Everyone must come to apply because the federal government requires face-to-face interviews. However, if an applicant has problems with mobility or other issues, they may send a family member, friend or neighbor, or other person to represent them and apply on their behalf. The person must be very knowledgeable about the client's circumstances and must answer questions about their income, resources, and other issues on their behalf.

If someone doesn't live in one of the designated zip codes but still has disaster related expenses, can they get D-SNAP?

No. Although other areas throughout the City may have experienced power outages, the ten zip codes and two partial zip codes that have been identified, had suffered long-term outages and severe damage.

Why the difference in zip codes between auto replacement for SNAP and D-SNAP?

Although there were 82 New York City zip codes that met the criteria for automatic replacement SNAP benefits—because of food loss and spoilage, active SNAP recipients as of October 29, received an additional 50% of their October grant—D-SNAP will be targeted to specific areas within the disaster zones. This reflects the fact that some areas of the City were hit especially hard by the storm, while others experienced damage or power outages which were more limited in scale.

People residing in the D-SNAP areas disproportionately (compared to other areas affected) faced damage to their homes and/or property from the storm, as well as prolonged electricity, heat, and hot water outages.

How were the zip codes determined?

The criteria used in identifying these target areas for the D-SNAP include: (1) storm surge that caused flooding and substantial property damage in a large portion of the targeted area, (2) substantial and extended power outages, some that continued for more than 2 weeks after the storm, and (3) concentration of NYCHA housing developments that were without power for substantial time periods; many of which were still without heat or hot water more than 2 weeks after the storm.

What if someone lost a lot of food?

Food loss alone does not qualify a household for D-SNAP. Applicants may only be considered eligible for D-SNAP if they sustained damage to a home or self-employment business, lived in these hardest hit areas on October 27, and had storm-related expenses or loss of income, which must be disclosed.

What if an applicant doesn't want to, or cannot, disclose certain information on the D-SNAP application?

When applying for D-SNAP, applicants must be honest about their personal information. Applicants must have been living in the affected area as of October 27, and must report their income and resources accurately. Making false statements on an application for government benefits like D-SNAP constitutes welfare fraud – a felony.