

Michigan Farmers Market Association's Food Assistance Partnership

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

What is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)?

SNAP is a federal program of the United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (USDA FNS) that helps low-income people and families buy the food they need for good health. Formerly the Food Stamp Program, this is the nation's largest nutritional assistance program. Benefits are distributed monthly through the use of an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system that utilizes a plastic card similar to a bank debit card to deduct food purchases from the shoppers SNAP food account. In Michigan, the card shows the Mackinac Bridge and is called a Bridge Card.

Across the country, 1 in 7 people receive SNAP benefits, totaling 46 million people in 2013. Of that 46 million, 1.8 million were Michigan residents whose benefits totaled \$240 million in the month of June 2013. In 2012, over \$1 million worth of SNAP benefits were redeemed at farmers markets in Michigan.

Is this program known by any other names?

Prior to 2004, this nutrition assistance program was known as the Food Stamp Program. In Michigan, program administrators refer to this program as the Food Assistance Program (FAP) while many customers and retailers refer to it as the Bridge Card program because the EBT debit-like card that distributes the benefits has a photo on it of the Mackinac Bridge.

What foods can be purchased with these benefits?

All food items are eligible to be purchased with SNAP benefits as long as they are not hot and/or prepared for immediate consumption. Eligible food items include: foods for human consumption including breads, meat, dairy products, cereals, seeds, fruit, and vegetables and plants or seeds for use in a home garden to produce food for personal use such as tomato plants.



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How can farmers and farmers markets participate in this program?

Farmers and farmers markets can become authorized SNAP retailers by applying to USDA FNS. The application is available online at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retailers/application-process.htm>. For more information on accepting SNAP benefits as an individual farmer or as a farmers market, please visit www.mifma.org.

Who administers the program in Michigan?

In Michigan, the program is administered by the Department of Human Services.

How is this program funded?

Like many nutrition assistance programs, federal funding for SNAP is determined by the most current Farm Bill. This piece of legislation is set to be reauthorized in 2013.

Who qualifies to receive these benefits?

Eligibility for the Food Assistance Program is based on the financial situation of all members of a household. Contributing factors include: assets, countable income and allowable expenses. To determine if you are eligible to receive these benefits, visit www.mibridges.michigan.gov.

How does someone apply to receive these benefits?

You can apply for Food Assistance Program benefits online at www.mibridges.michigan.gov.

Who should I contact for more information about this program?

For more information, call 1-855-ASK-MICH (1-855-275-6424). You can also visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/> for more information about SNAP and http://www.michigan.gov/dhs/0,1607,7-124-5453_5527---,00.html for more information about the Food Assistance Program in Michigan.

