



North Carolina Immigrant Eligibility for Nutrition Programs



SNAP (Food Stamps)

What is SNAP or Food Stamps?

SNAP (food stamps) is a program that provides benefits on a card each month which can only be spent on certain grocery items.

Who Qualifies for SNAP?

To qualify for food stamps:

- You must reside in North Carolina
- You must have income below certain limits, and

If you are an adult who is under the age of 53 (55 starting October 1, 2024) who does not live with children, you must be working or meet an exception to the work requirement. You can receive food stamps for up to three months without meeting this work requirement.

Some common exceptions are experiencing homelessness, receiving a disability-based benefit, being pregnant, or being a veteran. For more information, [see this flyer](#).

Can I receive SNAP if I am not a citizen?

Yes, but you must have an eligible immigration status to qualify for SNAP (food stamps). The chart on the next page shows which noncitizens can be eligible for SNAP.

Do I need a Social Security Number (SSN) to Receive SNAP?

People who are applying for food stamps for themselves must show that they have a Social Security Number (SSN) or have applied for one. People who do not have an SSN should leave the question blank and say, "I am not applying for benefits for myself."

That person will not receive SNAP benefits for himself or herself. The SNAP program cannot deny SNAP benefits to other eligible members of the household because one person does not provide an SSN.

Does the SNAP program share my information?

Your information is confidential. The SNAP program shares information with Immigration only for the citizens or lawful residents who are applying for SNAP. This is only to find out if they are eligible for SNAP. The SNAP program does not share information with Immigration about anyone else in your household. The SNAP program should not ask about the immigration status of anyone who is not applying for SNAP for themselves.

WIC, School Lunch/Breakfast, and SUN Bucks

What is WIC and who qualifies?

The Women, Infant, and Children's Nutrition Program (WIC) provides nutritional support to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers and children. To qualify for WIC, you must show that you reside in North Carolina, and you have income below certain limits.

WIC is available to:

- people who are pregnant
- breastfeeding mothers up to 1 year after the birth, and
- infants and children up to age five.

What are the school lunch/breakfast program and SUN Bucks, and who qualifies?

Free/reduced price school lunch and breakfast programs provide lunches and breakfasts to children in public schools and some (but not all) private and charter schools. To qualify for the free or reduced cost school lunch/breakfast program, you must show that you reside in North Carolina, and you have income below certain limits.

SUN Bucks provides a one-time payment of \$120 for summer food assistance to children who also qualify for free/reduced price school lunch or food stamps. [More info is here.](#)

Can I receive WIC, school lunch/breakfast, or SUN Bucks if I am not a citizen?

Yes. The WIC Program, school lunch/breakfast, and SUN Bucks programs in North Carolina are available to everyone, with or without current lawful immigration status.

Do I need a Social Security Number (SSN) to receive WIC, school lunch/breakfast, or SUN Bucks?

No. If the application asks for an SSN, leave it blank.

Do WIC, school lunch/breakfast, or SUN Bucks programs share my information?

No. These programs do not collect or share information about your immigration status.

U.S. Citizen Family Members

U.S. citizen children and other U.S. citizens who live in a household with immigrants are eligible for any/all public benefit programs if they meet all other eligibility criteria. U.S. citizens are eligible no matter what the immigration status of the other family members in their household is.

Public Charge Rule

Many immigrants have heard that they should not apply for benefits programs because they will have difficulty getting a green card in the future. This rule does **not** include any nutrition programs.

If you are eligible, you or your family members can use SNAP, WIC, school lunch/breakfast, and SUN Bucks programs with no impact on your immigration application.

How do I apply for nutrition programs?

SNAP:

Contact or visit your local county DSS office, or

Apply online at: <https://epass.nc.gov>

WIC:

Visit your local WIC agency (which is often the public health department), or

Apply online at: <https://bit.ly/NC-wic>

Free/reduced price school lunch:

Speak to your child's school or visit your child's school district website for an online application

SUN Bucks:

Children participating in other nutrition programs will be automatically enrolled. If you are not automatically enrolled, ask your child's school about enrollment or apply online here: <https://bit.ly/SUNBucksapp>

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IMMIGRATION STATUS	VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS	SNAP			WIC	FREE/ RE- DUCED PRICE LUNCH AND BREAK- FAST, SUN BUCKS
		Children under 18	Disabled Adults, Elderly Adults, Pregnant Adults, Adults with Dependents	Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents		
Afghani Parolees Admitted 07/31/21–09/30/23 (and their spouses or children paroled in at later dates)	Many types of immigration documents are acceptable to prove immigration status. Potential verification documents are not limited to those provided in the list below. Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) and Green Cards/LPR Cards both contain letter and number codes in the center of the card that help identify the cardholder's immigration status category.	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓
Active Duty Military	Green Form DD-2 marked "active"	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓
Asylee	EAD marked A5 OR order granting Asylum OR I-551 marked "AS"	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓
Battered Alien (Violence Against Women Act) (includes approved and certain pending VAWA applications)	Form I-797 Notice of Action (reference to pending I-130/I-360) OR EAD marked C9, C10, C14 or C31.	✓	★	△	✓	✓
Cuban-Haitian Entrant	EAD marked C8 or C11 OR I-551 card coded CA, CU, HA, or HB	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓
Granted Withholding of Deportation or Removal	EAD marked A10 or C10	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓
Deferred Action	EAD marked C14 or I-797 approval notice	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)	EAD marked C33	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Iraqi or Afghan Special Immigrant Visas (SIV)	Iraqi or Afghan Passport with an IV visa marked SIV, CPR, or SIP	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓
Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) ¹	"Green Card" (Form I-551). The "category code" in the middle helps identify how the cardholder obtained his or her green card.	✓	★	△	✓	✓
Non-Immigrant Visa Holder (includes student visas, tourist visas, work visas, U [victim of crime] visas and many more)	Form I-94 or passport indicating admission with nonimmigrant visa OR EAD marked A6, A7, A9, A15, A19, A20, C1, C3, C4, C5, C6, C17, C21, C26	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓
Order of Supervision (with employment authorization)	EAD marked C18	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓

1. Other forms of status which are less common exist, including American Indians born in Canada, Amerasian immigrants, citizens of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau, Family Unity Beneficiaries, and more. For questions about eligibility of these immigrants, please contact the NC Justice Center at 919-856-2570.

2. Legal Permanent Residents ("LPRs") who come through either family or employment pathways must generally wait 5 years for eligibility for SNAP. LPRs who came originally as refugees, asylees, certain parolees from Ukraine, Afghanistan, Cuba, and Haiti (and some others as indicated on this chart) do not have to wait 5 years. Immigrant children who are Legal Permanent Residents, refugees, asylees, and trafficking victims (and some other categories indicated on this chart) do not have to wait 5 years for SNAP.

✓ = Eligible, no five-year bar or any waiting period required

★ = Eligible, only after 5 year waiting period

✗ = Not eligible

▲ = Eligible, with no five-year waiting period, work requirements may apply

△ = Eligible only after a five-year waiting period, work requirements may apply

IMMIGRATION STATUS	VERIFICATION DOCUMENTS	SNAP			WIC	Free/ Reduced Price Lunch and Break- fast; Sun Bucks™
		Children under 18	Disabled Adults, Elderly Adults, Preg- nant Adults, Adults with Dependents	Able-Bodied Adults without Dependents		
Parolees Admitted for Less than One Year	Form I-94 indicating "parole" or "212(d)(5)," EAD marked A4 or C11	X	X	X	✓	✓
Parolees Admitted for More than One Year (Nicaraguans, Venezuelans are included; see different rules for Ukraine, Afghanistan)	Form I-94 indicating "parole" or "212(d)(5)," EAD marked A4 or C11	✓	★	△	✓	✓
Refugee	EAD marked A3 or A4 OR refugee travel document (I-571)	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓
Temporary Protected Status (TPS)	EAD marked A12 OR I-797 approval notice	X	X	X	✓	✓
Trafficking Victim/ "T" Visa	EAD marked A16 OR I-797 approval notice OR I-551 coded ST6	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓
Trafficking Survivors – Derivative beneficiaries	I-797 Notice of Action indicating T2, T3, T4 or T5 status OR I-766 EAD marked C25 OR I-551 coded ST7, ST8, ST 9 or ST0	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓
Ukrainian Parolees Admitted 2/24/22 – 09/30/23 (and their spouses or children paroled in at later dates)	Form I-94 indicating "parole" or "212(d)(5)," EAD marked C11; passport marked U4U or UHP	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓
Undocumented immigrants/immigrants with no current legal status	Not applicable (N/A)	X	X	X	✓	✓
Veteran (includes spouse & unmarried dependent children under 21)	DD-214 indicating honorable discharge	✓	✓	▲	✓	✓
APPLICANTS						
Applicant for Asylum or withholding of deportation/removal	I-797 showing pending I-589 or CAT OR I-766 EAD coded C8	X	X	X	✓	✓
Applicant for Adjustment to LPR Status w/Approved Visa	Receipt showing pending I-485 OR I-688B of I-766 EAD coded C8	X	X	X	✓	✓
Applicant for Temporary Protected Status	Receipt or notice showing filing or pending status of Form I-821 OR Form I-688B or I-766 EAD coded C19	X	X	X	✓	✓
Applicant for Cancellation of Removal or Suspension of Deportation with employment authorization (not through VAWA)	Receipt or notice showing filing Form EOIR-40, EOIR-42, or I-881 OR Form I-688B or I-766 EAD coded C10	X	X	X	✓	✓
Applicant for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status	Form I-797 Notice of Action Special Immigrant Juvenile Approval Notice OR I-551 coded "SL6"	X	X	X	✓	✓

✓ = Eligible, no five-year bar or any waiting period required

★ = Eligible, only after 5 year waiting period

X = Not eligible

▲ = Eligible, with no five-year waiting period, work requirements may apply

△ = Eligible only after a five-year waiting period, work requirements may apply