

South Dakota SNAP BENEFITS

A Plain-Language Navigation Guide

For Individuals, Families, and Nonprofits Serving Vulnerable Populations | Updated May 2026

What This Guide Covers

Eligibility rules • Income limits • Required documents • Step-by-step application • Work requirements • Why people lose benefits • Key contacts

Federal Changes in Effect (2025–2026)

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA), signed July 4, 2025, expanded ABAWD work requirements (now ages 18–64), narrowed non-citizen eligibility, and made other national changes to SNAP. This guide reflects rules as of May 2026. Always verify current rules with DSS at dss.sd.gov/economic-support/snap or eaportal.sd.gov.

Section 1: What Is SNAP?

SNAP stands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. In South Dakota it is administered by the South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS). Benefits are issued monthly through a South Dakota EBT Card accepted at authorized grocery stores, farmers markets, and major online retailers including Amazon and Walmart.

South Dakota does NOT use Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) — it is one of only approximately six states in the nation that applies the standard federal 130% FPL income limit and enforces both an asset test and a statewide ABAWD requirement without a blanket waiver. South Dakota expanded Medicaid in 2023 through a ballot initiative, meaning many SNAP households now also qualify for Medicaid simultaneously. EBT benefits load on the 1st and 2nd of each month based on the last digit of the case number. South Dakota has significant tribal populations across the Sioux and Lakota nations.

South Dakota SNAP: Key Facts at a Glance

- Standard 130% FPL gross income limit — South Dakota does NOT use BBCE
- Asset limits apply: \$2,250 most households; \$3,250 for elderly/disabled households

- Modified drug felony ban: eligible if complying with sentence terms
- No statewide ABAWD waiver — work requirements enforced statewide
- Medicaid expanded 2023 — many SNAP households now also qualify for South Dakota Medicaid
- EBT loads 1st or 2nd of month based on last digit of case number; EA Portal (eaportal.sd.gov) for online applications

Section 2: Eligibility Requirements

2.1 Residency

You must currently reside in South Dakota. There is no minimum residency period. You do not need a permanent address — a shelter address, transitional housing, or a signed statement from a non-relative can satisfy this requirement.

2.2 Citizenship and Immigration Status

The following individuals are generally eligible:

- U.S. citizens (born or naturalized)
- Lawful Permanent Residents (Green Card holders) who have held status for at least 5 years
- Certain refugees, asylees, and Special Immigrant Visa holders

2025 Change: Non-Citizen Eligibility Narrowed

The OBBBA (July 4, 2025) removed SNAP eligibility for humanitarian parolees, most asylum seekers pending a decision, and several other previously eligible categories. U.S.-born children in mixed-status households may still qualify. Contact your local DSS office or legal aid if your immigration status is unclear.

2.3 Household Composition

Your SNAP household includes everyone who lives together and regularly purchases and prepares food together. Members who buy and prepare food separately may form their own household unit.

2.4 Income Limits

South Dakota uses the standard federal 130% FPL gross income limit and does NOT use BBCE. South Dakota is one of only approximately six states in the nation that has not adopted

BBCE. Most households must pass both income tests and an asset test. Categorically eligible households (receiving TANF or SSI) bypass standard income and asset tests.

Exception: Households where all members are age 60+ or have a documented disability have NO gross income limit — only the net income test applies.

South Dakota SNAP Income Limits and Maximum Benefits (FY 2026, Oct. 1, 2025 – Sept. 30, 2026)

HH Size	Gross Limit	Elderly/Disabled Gross Limit	Net Limit (100% FPL)	Max Monthly Benefit
1	\$1,644	No limit*	\$1,266	\$292
2	\$2,226	No limit*	\$1,714	\$536
3	\$2,808	No limit*	\$2,163	\$766
4	\$3,391	No limit*	\$2,611	\$994
5	\$3,973	No limit*	\$3,059	\$1,155
6	\$4,555	No limit*	\$3,508	\$1,386
7	\$5,138	No limit*	\$3,956	\$1,532
8+	+\$583/person	No limit*	+\$449/person	+\$177/person

* Elderly/disabled households have no gross income limit — only the net income limit applies. South Dakota uses standard federal 130% FPL, NOT BBCE. EBT benefits load on the 1st or 2nd of the month based on the last digit of your case number. Limits update each October 1.

How Net Income Is Calculated

Net income = gross income minus approved deductions. Standard deductions include:

- 20% earned income deduction — automatically applied to all wages and self-employment income
- Standard deduction: \$204/month for households of 1–3; higher for larger households
- Excess shelter deduction: rent/mortgage plus utilities exceeding 50% of net income after other deductions
- Dependent care deduction: childcare or adult care costs paid while working, searching, or in training
- Medical expense deduction: out-of-pocket costs over \$35/month for members 60+ or with a disability
- Child support deduction: legally obligated child support paid to someone outside the household

South Dakota Deduction Note

South Dakota winters are severe, particularly in the west and central parts of the state. The Standard Utility Allowance for heating costs can significantly reduce net income during winter months. Because South Dakota uses the 130% FPL income limit (not 200% BBCE), deductions are especially important — a household that appears over the gross income limit after deductions may still qualify at the net income level. Always report all shelter and utility costs. Agricultural households should document farm expenses to reduce countable self-employment income.

2.5 Asset Limits

South Dakota HAS asset limits. Most households: \$2,250 in countable assets. Elderly/disabled households: \$3,250. Primary home, personal property, one vehicle, and retirement accounts are generally exempt. Bring bank statements to your appointment.

Section 3: Work Requirements

Work requirements are the most common reason people lose SNAP benefits.

3.1 Standard Work Requirements (All Adults 16–59)

All able-bodied adults between ages 16 and 59 must meet at least one of the following:

- Be employed (any number of hours)
- Be registered for work with Department of Labor and Regulation / Reemployment Assistance
- Participate in an approved employment or training program
- Not have voluntarily quit a job without good cause or reduced hours below 30/week

3.2 ABAWD Rules

ABAWDs are adults ages 18–64 without dependents who are not disabled and not otherwise exempt. South Dakota enforces ABAWD rules statewide with no blanket waiver.

ABAWDs must complete at least 80 hours per month (20 hours/week): employment, job training, volunteering, or participation in an approved work program.

Without meeting this requirement, ABAWDs can only receive SNAP for 3 months in any 36-month period.



South Dakota ABAWD Note

South Dakota does not have a statewide ABAWD waiver. Work requirements apply in all counties. South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation offers approved employment and training activities. Some local areas may have waivers based on unemployment conditions — contact your county DSS office to verify. If you live on or near a reservation, ask specifically whether your area qualifies for a geographic waiver due to limited local employment.

3.3 Exemptions from ABAWD Requirements

The following individuals are exempt from ABAWD time limits:

- Physically or mentally unfit for employment (documented by a physician or licensed clinical social worker)
- Pregnant
- Responsible for a dependent child under age 14 living in the same household
- Enrolled at least half-time in a recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education
- Participating in a drug or alcohol treatment or rehabilitation program
- Age 15 or younger, or 65 or older
- Recently released from an institution (incarceration or psychiatric facility)
- Survivors of domestic violence
- Experiencing homelessness (may qualify under 'unfit for employment' — ask your caseworker)

3.4 How to Document Work or an Exemption

Report work activity or exemption status through EA Portal (eaportal.sd.gov), by phone, or in person at your DSS office. Submit documentation before your benefit period runs out.

Section 4: Required Documents

Gather these before applying. Missing documents are the most common cause of delays.

4.1 Always Required

- Proof of Identity: Driver's license, state-issued ID, passport, or birth certificate
- Social Security Number (SSN): For each household member applying
- Proof of South Dakota Residency: Utility bill, lease agreement, official mail, or a signed statement from a non-relative

4.2 Income Verification

- Pay stubs from the last 30 days (for employed applicants)
- Most recent W-2, 1099, or tax return (for self-employment income)
- Award letter or benefit statement for Social Security, SSI, unemployment, or other unearned income
- Documentation of child support received or paid

4.3 Deduction Documentation (Strongly Recommended)

- Rent or mortgage statement
- Utility bills (especially heating — or claim the Standard Utility Allowance if higher)
- Childcare or dependent care receipts
- Medical bills for members 60+ or with disabilities

4.4 Asset Documentation

Bank statements (most recent month) for all checking and savings accounts. Investment account documentation if applicable. Your primary home and one vehicle are always exempt.

Tip: Apply First, Gather Documents Later

Submit your application to lock in your application date — benefits are generally backdated to that date if approved. Your caseworker will specify what additional documents are needed.

Section 5: Step-by-Step Application Process

Step 1: Check Your Eligibility

Use the SNAP eligibility calculator at snapeligibilitycalculator.com, call 1-605-773-3165, or visit your local DSS office.

Step 2: Apply

Method	Details
EA Portal Online	eaportal.sd.gov — apply online 24/7, renew, and report changes. Recommended.
Phone	Call 1-605-773-3165 or your local county DSS office.
In Person	Visit your county DSS office. Find locations at dss.sd.gov/county-offices .

Method	Details
By Mail	Call 1-605-773-3165 to request a paper application; mail to your local county DSS office.

Step 3: Attend Your Interview

After submitting, DSS will schedule a mandatory interview — typically by phone. Missing the interview is the most common reason applications are denied. Contact your office immediately to reschedule if needed.

Step 4: Receive a Decision

DSS must process standard applications within 30 days. If approved, you will receive an EBT card by mail. If denied, you have 90 days to appeal.

Expedited / Emergency Processing (7-Day)

You may qualify if: gross monthly income is under \$150 AND liquid assets under \$100; OR combined monthly income and liquid assets are less than monthly rent plus utilities; OR you are a migrant/seasonal farmworker with liquid assets under \$100.

Section 6: Special Situations

6.1 Experiencing Homelessness

You do not need a permanent address to apply. DSS accepts shelter addresses, transitional housing, or a signed statement from a non-relative. Dial 211 for local shelter and benefits navigation resources.

6.2 People With Disabilities or Elderly Members

Households where all members are 60+ or disabled benefit from: no gross income test (only net income limit), uncapped shelter deduction, medical expense deduction, and higher asset limits (where applicable).

6.3 Drug Felony Convictions

South Dakota has a modified drug felony ban. Individuals with drug felony convictions may receive SNAP if they are complying with the terms of their sentence, including any required probation conditions and drug treatment programs. Bring documentation of your current compliance status when applying.

6.4 Students

Students enrolled at least half-time must meet at least one exception: work 20+ hours/week, participate in work-study, care for a dependent child under 6, receive TANF, or be enrolled in an approved training program.

6.5 Tribal Communities and Medicaid Expansion

South Dakota has nine federally recognized Sioux and Lakota tribal nations, including Oglala Lakota (Pine Ridge), Rosebud Sioux, Standing Rock Sioux, Cheyenne River Sioux, and others. Shannon County (now Oglala Lakota County) consistently has the highest poverty rate in the United States. Tribal assistance and per capita payments from federally recognized tribes are generally excluded from SNAP income — confirm with your DSS caseworker. South Dakota's 2023 Medicaid expansion means many SNAP recipients now also qualify for Medicaid health coverage. Apply for both through DSS. Contact your tribal social services department or Native American Rights Fund (narf.org) for culturally appropriate benefits navigation support.

Section 7: Why People Lose Benefits — and How to Avoid It

Most Common Reasons SNAP Benefits Are Cut Off

1. Missing the recertification (renewal) deadline

Certification periods last 6–12 months. Set a calendar reminder 60 days before your certification end date and monitor your online account regularly.

2. Failing the ABAWD work requirement without claiming an exemption

ABAWDs who do not work 80 hours/month and have not claimed a valid exemption are cut off after 3 months. Verify waiver status and document any exemption in writing at every recertification.

3. Missing the interview or not responding to agency notices

Keep your phone number and mailing address current. Check your online account regularly for notices.

4. Failure to report changes in income or household composition

Report changes within 10 days. Failure to report can result in overpayments and case closure.

Your Right to Appeal

If DSS denies or reduces your benefits, request a Fair Hearing within 90 days of the notice. If you request within 10 days of a termination notice, your benefits may continue during the review. Contact East River Legal Services (ercls.org, 605-336-9230) or Dakota Plains Legal Services (dakotalaw.org, 605-747-2578) for free legal assistance.

Section 8: Key Contacts and Resources

Resource	Contact / What They Help With
DSS SNAP Line	1-877-999-5612 dss.sd.gov/economic-support/snap
EA Portal	eaportal.sd.gov — apply, renew, report changes
County DSS Office Locator	dss.sd.gov/county-offices
SD Dept. of Labor (E&T)	dlr.sd.gov — employment training for ABAWD compliance
Feeding South Dakota	feedingsouthdakota.org 605-335-0364 — food bank network statewide
South Dakota 211	Dial 211 — food banks, emergency resources, benefits navigation
East River Legal Services	ercls.org 605-336-9230 — free legal help with SNAP appeals (eastern SD)
Dakota Plains Legal Services	dakotalaw.org 605-747-2578 — free legal help (western SD and tribal areas)

A Note on Navigating South Dakota's System

South Dakota's 130% FPL limit, asset test, and no BBCE make it one of the stricter SNAP states in the Plains region — similar to neighboring Wyoming and Kansas. Deductions are especially important in South Dakota because households that appear over the gross income limit may still qualify after shelter and utility deductions. Tribal communities across the state have high food insecurity and deserve prioritized outreach. For advocates: help clients on or near reservations verify geographic ABAWD waiver status, document all farm income expenses, and note that 2023 Medicaid expansion means many clients may qualify for both SNAP and Medicaid simultaneously.

This guide was compiled using information from the South Dakota Department of Social Services (DSS), the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, and publicly available state SNAP resources. It is informational only and does not constitute legal advice. Rules may change — always verify at dss.sd.gov/economic-support/snap or eaportal.sd.gov or by contacting your local office.