

North 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 ND HHS at nd.gov/dhs/services/publicassist/food or 1-866-614-6005.

Section 1: What Is SNAP?

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

North Dakota uses 200% FPL through BBCE with no asset test and has fully lifted the drug felony ban. North Dakota is a small state by population (~780,000) but has one of the most extreme climates in the continental U.S. — winters are among the harshest in the nation, making the Standard Utility Allowance one of the most significant income-reducing deductions available. North Dakota's energy sector (oil, gas, coal) and agricultural economy create significant income volatility. Benefits are administered through Human Service Zone offices, organized by county.

North Dakota SNAP: Key Facts at a Glance

- 200% FPL gross income limit through BBCE — no asset test for most households
- Full drug felony ban lift — no conditions or requirements

- Some of the harshest winters in the continental U.S. — Standard Utility Allowance is especially significant
- Energy sector (oil, gas, coal) and agriculture create significant income volatility
- Benefits administered through Human Service Zone offices (county-based)
- Significant Native American population — Standing Rock, Turtle Mountain, Spirit Lake, and other nations

Section 2: Eligibility Requirements

2.1 Residency

You must currently reside in North 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 ND HHS 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

North Dakota uses Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. There is no asset test for most households.

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

North 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 | \$2,510 | No limit* | \$1,255 | \$292 |
| 2 | \$3,398 | No limit* | \$1,699 | \$536 |
| 3 | \$4,287 | No limit* | \$2,144 | \$766 |
| 4 | \$5,178 | No limit* | \$2,589 | \$994 |
| 5 | \$6,067 | No limit* | \$3,034 | \$1,155 |
| 6 | \$6,956 | No limit* | \$3,478 | \$1,386 |
| 7 | \$7,845 | No limit* | \$3,923 | \$1,532 |
| 8+ | +\$889/person | No limit* | +\$445/person | +\$177/person |

* Elderly/disabled households have no gross income limit — only the net income limit applies. North Dakota uses BBCE at 200% FPL. 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

North Dakota Deduction Note

North Dakota winters are among the most severe in the continental U.S. Home heating costs — for propane, natural gas, fuel oil, and electricity — are extremely high from October through April. The Standard Utility Allowance (SUA) is calibrated for this climate and is often larger than

actual bills. LIHEAP heating assistance receipt may trigger the highest SUA tier. Always claim the full SUA rather than actual utility bills if the SUA produces a larger deduction. Oil and gas workers with fluctuating income should report income drops promptly.

2.5 Asset Limits

For most North Dakota BBCE-eligible households, there is NO asset test. Exception: elderly/disabled households whose income exceeds 200% FPL face a \$4,500 asset limit. Primary home and one vehicle are always exempt.

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 Job Service North Dakota (jobsnd.com)
- 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. North Dakota enforces ABAWD rules, though the energy sector's boom-and-bust cycle can create significant employment volatility.

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.

North Dakota ABAWD Note

North Dakota's oil patch counties (Mountrail, McKenzie, Williams, Dunn, and others) have experienced both extreme employment booms and sharp downturns. If you recently lost work in the energy sector, document your job search activities immediately. Job Service North Dakota (jobsnd.com) offers approved employment and training activities. Some ND counties may have

temporary ABAWD waivers during economic downturns — contact your Human Service Zone office to verify current waiver status.

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 ND Benefits (nd.gov/dhs/services/publicassist/food), by phone, or in person at your ND HHS 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 North 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

 **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 1-866-614-6005, or visit your local ND HHS office.

Step 2: Apply

| Method | Details |
|--------------------|--|
| ND Benefits Online | nd.gov/dhs/services/publicassist/food — apply online and manage benefits. |
| Phone | Call 1-866-614-6005 or your local Human Service Zone office. |
| In Person | Visit your county Human Service Zone office. Find locations at nd.gov/dhs/offices . |
| By Mail | Download application from nd.gov/dhs ; mail to your local Human Service Zone office. |

Step 3: Attend Your Interview

After submitting, ND HHS 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

ND HHS 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. ND HHS 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

North Dakota has fully lifted the federal drug felony ban. Individuals with any drug-related felony conviction are fully eligible for SNAP if they meet income and other standard requirements — no treatment programs, drug testing, or compliance conditions apply.

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 Native American Communities and Tribal Considerations

North Dakota is home to several major tribal nations — Standing Rock Sioux, Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Spirit Lake Nation, Three Affiliated Tribes (MHA Nation), and others. Key SNAP considerations for tribal members: tribal assistance payments and per capita distributions from federally recognized tribes are generally excluded from SNAP income — confirm with your Human Service Zone caseworker how specific payments are classified. Many reservation counties have had ABAWD waivers due to limited local employment. Contact your tribal social services department or the ND Indian Affairs Commission 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 ND HHS 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 Legal Services of North Dakota (legalservicesnd.org, 1-800-634-5263) for free legal assistance.

Section 8: Key Contacts and Resources

| Resource | Contact / What They Help With |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| ND HHS SNAP Line | 1-866-614-6005 nd.gov/dhs/services/publicassist/food |
| ND Benefits Online | nd.gov/dhs — apply and manage benefits |
| Human Service Zone Office Locator | nd.gov/dhs/offices |
| Job Service ND (E&T) | jobsnd.com — employment training for ABAWD compliance |
| Great Plains Food Bank | greatplainsfoodbank.org 701-232-6219 — statewide food resources |
| North Dakota 211 | Dial 211 — food banks, emergency resources, benefits navigation |
| Legal Services of ND | legalservicesnd.org 1-800-634-5263 — free legal help with SNAP appeals |

A Note on Navigating North Dakota's System

North Dakota's 200% BBCE, no asset test, and full drug felony ban lift make it accessible. The extreme winter heating SUA is North Dakota's most underutilized benefit-maximizing tool. For advocates: help clients claim the highest available SUA tier, check reservation county ABAWD waiver status, clarify that tribal per capita income may be excluded from the income calculation, and help energy sector workers document income drops promptly when work slows.

This guide was compiled using information from the North Dakota Department of Health and Human Services (ND HHS), 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 nd.gov/dhs/services/publicassist/food or by contacting your local office.