

# Texas 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 HHSC at [hhs.texas.gov](https://hhs.texas.gov) or [yourtexasbenefits.com](https://yourtexasbenefits.com).

## Section 1: What Is SNAP?

SNAP stands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. In Texas it is administered by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Benefits are issued monthly through the Texas Lone Star Card accepted at authorized grocery stores, farmers markets, and major online retailers including Amazon and Walmart and H-E-B.

Texas uses 200% FPL through BBCE but retains an asset limit for non-BBCE households (and a \$4,500 limit for elderly/disabled exceeding 200% FPL). Texas has a modified drug felony ban. A purchase restriction on candy, sweets, and sugar-sweetened beverages (including those with artificial sweeteners) became effective April 1, 2026. With over 3 million recipients, Texas has the largest SNAP caseload in the nation. Benefits are issued on the Texas Lone Star Card. 2-1-1 Texas (dial 211) is the primary helpline for SNAP and social services statewide.

### Texas SNAP: Key Facts at a Glance

- 200% FPL gross income limit through BBCE — NO asset test for most BBCE-eligible households

- ACTIVE April 1, 2026: Candy, sweets, and sugar-sweetened beverages (including diet sodas) restricted
- Texas's restriction is notable for including artificial sweetener beverages (diet sodas) — broader than most states
- Modified drug felony ban: eligible if complying with sentence or completed sentence
- Largest SNAP caseload in the nation: 3+ million recipients
- 2-1-1 Texas (dial 211): primary helpline for SNAP applications and social service referrals statewide

### **ACTIVE PURCHASE RESTRICTION — Effective April 1, 2026**

Candy and sweets: Products containing sugar or artificial sweeteners as the primary ingredient — including chocolate bars, gummies, hard candy, and similar confections.

Sugar-sweetened beverages: Drinks with 5 or more grams of added sugar per serving OR beverages with artificial sweeteners (including diet sodas). Specific items and detailed definitions available at [hhs.texas.gov/snap](https://hhs.texas.gov/snap).

Your benefit amount does NOT change. Still fully eligible: all fresh/frozen produce, meat, poultry, fish, dairy, bread, cereals, 100% juices, plain water, plain sparkling water, sports drinks (if under 5g added sugar), and all other standard SNAP foods.

The Texas restriction is broader than some other states on artificial sweeteners — diet sodas with artificial sweeteners are also restricted. For a full list of restricted and eligible items: [hhs.texas.gov/snap](https://hhs.texas.gov/snap) or call 2-1-1 Texas.

## Section 2: Eligibility Requirements

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### 2.1 Residency

You must currently reside in Texas. 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 HHSC 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

Texas uses Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. There is no asset test for most BBCE-eligible households. However, households where all members are elderly or disabled whose income exceeds 165% FPL face an asset test of \$4,500 — making Texas a partial BBCE state for some elderly/disabled 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.

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

HHSize	Gross Limit	Elderly/DisabledGross Limit	Net Limit(100% FPL)	Max MonthlyBenefit
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. Note: elderly/disabled households whose income exceeds 165% FPL face a \$4,500 asset limit (\$5,000 per some sources — verify with HHSC). Most BBCE-eligible households have no asset test. 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

### Texas Deduction Note

Texas's summer heat drives significant air conditioning and electric costs — particularly in South Texas, the Rio Grande Valley, and urban areas like Houston and Dallas. Always claim the full Standard Utility Allowance; AC utility costs in Texas are among the highest in the country and make the SUA especially valuable for reducing net income. Border and Rio Grande Valley communities should note that Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) is available after flood events. H-E-B SNAP online ordering with curbside pickup is available in Texas — a significant access tool for households without reliable transportation.

## 2.5 Asset Limits

For most Texas BBCE-eligible households, there is NO asset test. Exception: elderly/disabled households whose income exceeds 165% FPL face a \$4,500 asset limit. Primary home, one vehicle, and retirement accounts are always exempt.

## Section 3: Work Requirements

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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 Texas Workforce Commission / Workforce Solutions offices
- 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. Texas enforces ABAWD rules in most areas, though county-level waivers may apply in some regions.

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.

### Texas ABAWD Note

Some Texas counties may have ABAWD waivers based on local unemployment conditions — contact HHSC or call 2-1-1 to check current waiver status in your county. Texas Workforce Commission and Workforce Solutions offices offer qualifying employment and training activities. Given Texas's size (254 counties), waiver status varies significantly by region — always verify for your specific county before assuming work requirements apply.

## 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 YourTexasBenefits ([yourtexasbenefits.com](https://yourtexasbenefits.com)), by phone, or in person at your HHSC office. Submit documentation before your benefit period runs out.

## Section 4: Required Documents

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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 Texas 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 (or claim the Standard Utility Allowance — ask your caseworker which produces a higher deduction)
- 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

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### Step 1: Check Your Eligibility

Use the SNAP eligibility calculator at [snapeligibilitycalculator.com](https://snapeligibilitycalculator.com), call 211 (statewide) or 2-1-1 Texas, or visit your local HHSC office.

## Step 2: Apply

Method	Details
YourTexasBenefits Online	yourtexasbenefits.com — apply for SNAP, Medicaid, TANF, and CHIP in one application. Available 24/7. Recommended.
Phone — Preferred: 2-1-1 Texas	Dial 211 (statewide) — SNAP questions, application help, referrals to local HHSC offices.
In Person	Visit your local HHSC benefits office. Find locations at <a href="https://hhs.texas.gov/office-locator">hhs.texas.gov/office-locator</a> .
By Mail	Download application from <a href="https://yourtexasbenefits.com">yourtexasbenefits.com</a> ; mail to your local HHSC benefits office.

## Step 3: Attend Your Interview

After submitting, HHSC 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

HHSC 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

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### 6.1 Experiencing Homelessness

You do not need a permanent address to apply. HHSC 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

Texas has a modified drug felony ban. Individuals with drug felony convictions may receive SNAP if they are in compliance with the terms of their sentence (probation, parole, or community supervision) OR have fully completed their sentence. Those who have completed their sentence are generally eligible without further conditions. Bring documentation of sentence completion or compliance (letter from probation/parole officer) 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 2-1-1 Texas and Disaster SNAP

2-1-1 Texas (dial 211) is the state's primary helpline for SNAP questions, application help, and referrals to food banks, emergency food resources, and other social services across all 254 Texas counties. For most SNAP questions in Texas, calling 211 will connect you with local resources faster than the HHSC line. Disaster SNAP (D-SNAP) activates after federally declared disasters in Texas — particularly relevant for the Gulf Coast (hurricane zone), the Rio Grande Valley (flooding), and West Texas (wildfire). After a disaster, watch for HHSC D-SNAP announcements and apply promptly — D-SNAP has broader eligibility than regular SNAP and provides one-time EBT benefits for disaster-affected households. Additionally, H-E-B SNAP online grocery ordering with curbside pickup is available at many locations — a major access tool for households without transportation.

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

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### 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. Check county/local 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 HHSC 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 Texas Legal Services Center (tlsc.org, 512-477-6000) for free legal assistance.

## Section 8: Key Contacts and Resources

Resource	Contact / What They Help With
2-1-1 Texas (Primary Helpline)	Dial 211 — SNAP questions, application help, all social service referrals across TX
YourTexasBenefits Portal	yourtexasbenefits.com — apply for SNAP, Medicaid, TANF, and CHIP
HHSC SNAP Line	hhs.texas.gov   1-877-541-7905 — specific SNAP case questions
HHSC Office Locator	hhs.texas.gov/office-locator — find your local HHSC benefits office
Purchase Restriction Info	hhs.texas.gov/snap — detailed list of restricted and eligible items
Feeding Texas (Food Banks)	feedingtexas.org   512-328-5129 — food bank network across Texas
Texas Legal Services Center	tlsc.org   512-477-6000 — free legal help with SNAP appeals
Texas Appleseed	texasappleseed.org   512-473-2800 — SNAP advocacy and policy resources

### A Note on Navigating Texas's System

Texas is the largest SNAP state in the nation — 3+ million recipients, 254 counties, and a uniquely diverse population from urban Dallas and Houston to rural border communities. The April 2026 purchase restriction is notable for including diet sodas and artificial sweetener

beverages, broader than most other states. 2-1-1 Texas is the most important contact for advocates — it routes to local resources faster than the statewide HHSC line. D-SNAP is an important disaster tool for Gulf Coast, Rio Grande Valley, and West Texas communities. H-E-B SNAP online ordering is a significant access tool for rural households without transportation.

*This guide was compiled using information from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), 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 [hhs.texas.gov](https://hhs.texas.gov) or [yourtexasbenefits.com](https://yourtexasbenefits.com) or by contacting your local office.*