SNAP POLICY CHANGES & WHAT TO DO

▲ IN EFFECT: FEBRUARY 1, 2026

■ WORK REQUIREMENTS NOW IN EFFECT — YOUR BENEFITS MAY BE AFFECTED — CHECK YOUR ELIGIBILITY ■

WHAT HAS CHANGED

Work requirements expanded to new groups

Adults ages 55-64, AND parents of children 14 or older must now work at least 20 hours/week – or face a 3-month benefit limit every 3 years.

AGES 55-64 | PARENTS OF TEENS 14+

Exceptions eliminated for 3 key groups

These groups previously held exceptions and are NO Longer protected from work requirements:

VETERANS | PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS | YOUTH AGING OUT OF FOSTER CARE

Immigrant eligibility largely eliminated

Asylees, refugees, and immigrants who are not Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) are mostly no longer eligible for SNAP benefits.

WIC now requires a separate income check

Enrollment in SNAP can no longer certify income eligibility for participants enrolling in WIC. Families enrolled or applying for WIC may need to complete a new and separate income eligibility verification. Contact your local WIC office to learn more.

Fewer children auto-certified for school meals

As families lose SNAP or cycle on and off due to work requirements and time limits, fewer children will be automatically certified for free or reduced-price school meals.

✓ VOLUNTEER & TRAINING COUNT!

Approved volunteer activities and job training can satisfy the 20-hr/week work requirement.

**Note: Adults 60–64 are still subject to the new work requirements even though they are exempt from some basic SNAP work rules. Exemptions to ALL work requirements apply for: pregnant individuals, Native Americans/Tribal Members, and those under 18 or 65+.*

VARIES BY CASE

How these rules apply depends on your situation.
An exemption may still apply. Contact a SNAP Navigator.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

1 Check your status & exemptions

Use Essex County's WeCareCustomer Service Portal to review your application status and see if a work requirement exemption applies to you.

2 Find a free SNAP Navigator

A local SNAP Navigator will assess your eligibility and current benefit status — confidentially and for free. Use the QR code below to find one.

3 Get employment or volunteer support

Find jobs, job-seeking support, and volunteer opportunities through NJ's One Stop Career Centers in East Orange and Newark.

4 Enroll in SNAP Employment & Training

The SNAP E&T Program offers approved training that counts toward your work requirement. Learn more via QR code below.

5 Access food & nutrition resources

Find food resources through Essex County's Food & Health Equity Coalition (FHEC). School Meals and Summer EBT applications are also here.

6 Re-verify WIC eligibility

Check with your local WIC office to confirm your income eligibility requirements are met.

WIC OFFICE CONTACTS — ESSEX COUNTY

East Orange WIC	wic@eastorange-nj.gov
Rutgers NJMS WIC	rutgerswic@njms.rutgers.edu
Newark WIC	newarkwic@ci.newark.nj.us

7 School Meals & Summer EBT

Complete applications for students through the FHEC portal — see QR code below.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Essex County's WeCare Customer Service Portal	Find a SNAP Navigator in Essex County	Find employment and job-seeking support	Learn more about the SNAP Employment and Training (E&T) Program	Access food and nutrition resources	WIC Participant Portal	Complete School Meals and Summer EBT Applications for students

MEND Hunger Relief Network — Together, we feed our community.

Food & Health Equity Coalition of Essex County

Version 2 - Revised 5.21.26
For updates to this one-pager, please email info@mendnj.org

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