

## Instructions for **AmeriCorps State** members applying for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

### Special Considerations for AmeriCorps\*State Members

- The National & Community Service Act of 1990 states that all allowances, earnings, and payments to participants in AmeriCorps programs “shall not be considered income for the purpose of determining eligibility for the amount of income transfer and in-kind aid furnished under any Federal or federally-assisted program based on need, other than as provided in the Social Security Act. *42 U.S.C. § 12637(d)*.

#### So what does this mean?

- State & national benefits (or income) should be excluded when determining the amount of SNAP benefits that a member receives.

### Step 1- APPLY, whether or not you believe you are eligible

- There are enough SNAP benefits for everyone. If you apply and are eligible, you will not be taking benefits from others in need.
- Many potential applicants don't apply, believing that they are ineligible because of assets. For most applicants, there is no asset limit on SNAP benefits, meaning that retirement accounts, cars, or houses, for example, will not be counted against you.

### Step 2- Find out where you should be applying.

- Check out <sup>2</sup> [this list](#) to find a Department of Public Health & Human Services (DPHHS) Office of Public Assistance (OPA) near your service site.

### Step 3- Get an application

- Applications are <sup>3</sup> [available online](#) or you can pick up an application at your county of service's OPA.

### Step 4- Filling out Application

- Be sure to follow the application instructions closely, this will expedite your process considerably.
- Some application forms combine SNAP, WIC and TANF on one form, so unless you want to apply for those programs too, make sure that you are filling out the portion of your application for SNAP only. Or fill out the SNAP only application <sup>4</sup> [provided online](#).
- The application will ask you information regarding your finances. **Have** documents on hand, such as:

**Bank statements** (checking, savings)  
**Investment statements** (stocks, bonds)  
**Retirement statements** (401K, IRA, CD)  
**Rental leases**  
**Utility expenses**  
**ID**  
**Paystub**  
**Social security number**

This will make your application much faster and easier for caseworkers to handle.

- Turn in application (in person, by mail, or by fax) to your <sup>5</sup> [county of service's OPA](#).
- Benefits are pro-rated from the time that you turn in your application (or signed front page), so apply earlier in the month if you want more benefits for that month. For example if you are

eligible for \$200/month and you turned in your application on June 15<sup>th</sup>, then for the month of June you will receive the pro-rated amount of \$100.

### **Step 5- Interview**

- An interview is required for enrollment in SNAP. You may request a phone interview (for example if you are applying from out of state prior to your term of service).
- Have the documentation listed Step 4 ready. You may have to fax in paperwork that you missed, thereby slowing down your process.
- In order to ensure that you are qualifying for the AmeriCorps State benefits/income exclusion, you need to also include a form letter addressed to SNAP benefits eligibility officers which is signed by the state grants officer. You can get this letter from your AmeriCorps State program director.

### **How to conduct yourself in the interview**

- Be patient and respectful. There are a large number of applicants. Your case will be processed on a first come first serve basis.
- Being well prepared with your supporting documentation in hand and completing the application ahead of your interview will go a long way in your relationship with a SNAP case worker.
- As an individual participating in a national service program, it is essential that you conduct yourself in a professional manner.

### **Additional Information**

- SNAP benefits roll over to the next month if you don't use them up within the current month.
- SNAP helps local economies ( every \$1 dollars of SNAP generates \$1.84 in local economic growth)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/contactus/humancommunityservices.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/snap/index.shtml>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/snap/index.shtml>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/contactus/humancommunityservices.shtml>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.americorps.gov/>