

# SNAP Work Incentives

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Pre-Screening Eligibility Tool-Calculator: <http://www.snap-step1.usda.gov/fns/>

The [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP, formerly Food Stamp Program\)](#) includes several provisions that are intended to help participants prepare for employment and become employed or self-employed. They are designed to help you enter or reenter the workforce. You are encouraged to work or to seek education or training for future employment. Work Incentives are intended to give you some of the support you need while you try to move from benefit dependency to increased self-sufficiency.

- [Dependent Care Deduction](#): Households may deduct all (before 10/01/2008 there was a maximum amount or cap) of the cost of caring for dependent children or adults if that care is needed to prepare for employment or to be employed or self-employed. (Not more than \$200 for each [child under age 2](#) and not more than \$175 for each [other dependent](#);) )
- [Earned Income Deduction](#): When calculating the Food Stamps benefit, 20% of gross earned countable income is deducted.

The Earned Income Deduction is used to calculate your household's [net income](#), and in fact, it reduces your household's net income. By reducing the amount of net income that is counted when determining whether a household meets the [net income test](#) or when calculating the [level of benefits](#) for a household, this deduction allows households to have higher incomes and still qualify for benefits. In addition, it allows a household to receive higher benefits. Moreover, the Earned Income Deduction can reduce the extent to which benefits are reduced as earnings increase, thereby providing an incentive for households to increase their earnings.

- [Medical expenses for elderly or disabled members](#) which are more than \$35 for the month if they are not paid by insurance or someone else;
- Legally owed [child support payments](#); and
- [Excess shelter costs](#) that are more than half of the household's income after the other deductions. Allowable costs include the cost of fuel to heat and cook with, electricity, water, the basic fee for one telephone, rent or mortgage payments and taxes on the home. (Some States allow a set amount for utility costs instead of actual costs.) The amount of the shelter deduction cannot be more than prescribed limits unless at least one person in the household is elderly or **disabled** (in which case the dollar limit does not apply).