



Ohio Administrative Code

Rule 5101:4-2-01 Food assistance: initial application process.

Effective: October 1, 2023

(A) How does an individual apply for supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) benefits?

(1) The application process begins with a request for SNAP. Upon request to apply, the county agency shall provide the individual or authorized representative with all of the following forms:

(a) A JFS 07200, "Application for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Cash Assistance, Medical Assistance or Child Care Assistance"; and

(b) A JFS 07217 "Voter Registration Notice of Rights and Declination" and a voter registration form (for requirements and procedures of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 refer to rule 5101:1-2-15 of the Administrative Code).

(2) Assistance groups wishing to participate in the program shall file a complete application.

For purposes of division 5101:4 of the Administrative Code:

(a) An "application" is a JFS 07200 or its telephonic or electronic equivalent; and

(b) Except as outlined in paragraph (A)(2)(c) of this rule, a "complete application" is an application that includes, at a minimum, the name, address and signature of the person completing the application.

(c) A complete telephonic application includes, at a minimum:

(i) A name, and address;

(ii) A completed interview in accordance with rule 5101:4-2-07 of the Administrative Code; and



(iii) A telephonic signature of the person completing the application. A telephonic signature is an audio recording of the assistance group's verbal assent and a summary of the information to which the assistance group assents.

(3) The county agency shall assist an assistance group in the completion of its application and offer to provide a copy of a completed application to the assistance group. The county agency shall provide an electronic copy of the completed application when the applicant requests an electronic copy. When the application is signed with a telephonic signature the county agency is to provide the assistance group a written copy of the JFS 07008 "Benefit Application Summary" or its electronic equivalent of the information attested to during the interview.

(4) The county agency shall provide a means for the applicant to immediately begin the application process whether the process is paper, electronic, or telephonic.

(B) What are the methods for filing an application?

(1) An assistance group may submit an application to the county agency:

(a) In person;

(b) Through an authorized representative;

(c) By fax;

(d) By electronic transmission;

(e) By mail; or

(f) By telephone.

(2) Assistance groups shall have the right to apply for SNAP in writing. The county agency shall make the JFS 7200 readily accessible and available even if the county agency accepts applications using other means as described in paragraph (B)(1) of this rule.



(3) Pure supplemental security income (SSI) assistance groups, in which all members are applicants for or recipients of SSI, may apply at either the social security administration (SSA) district office or the county agency.

(4) Individuals scheduled for release from a public institution who are applying for SSI benefits will also be permitted to apply for SNAP in accordance with rule 5101:4-6-19 of the Administrative Code.

(C) Who shall sign the application?

(1) The application shall be signed by:

(a) A member of the assistance group;

(b) An authorized representative when the designation has been made in accordance to rule 5101:4-2-05 of the Administrative Code; or

(c) An unaccompanied homeless minor as defined in rule 5101:4-2-03 of the Administrative Code.

(2) The types of signatures include:

(a) Handwritten signatures (including handwritten signatures that are transmitted by facsimile or other electronic submission). When the signatory cannot sign with a name, an 'X' is a valid signature. The county agency may require a witness to attest to an 'X' signature. An employee of the county agency may serve as a witness.

(b) Electronic signatures which include the following:

(i) A digital signature;

(ii) A handwritten signature input on electronic signature pad or display screen; or



(iii) A digitized image of a handwritten signature that is attached to an electronic record or a typed name on an online application. This excludes telephonic signatures as described in paragraph (C)(2) of this rule.

(c) Telephonic signatures obtained in accordance with procedures approved by the Ohio department of job and family services (ODJFS).

(3) A handwritten signature shall not be required when there is an electronic or telephonic signature. Electronic and telephonic signatures shall have the same legal effect and are enforced in the same way as a handwritten signature.

(4) When an application is not signed by the necessary individuals then the application for benefits for that assistance group is considered incomplete. The county agency shall contact the individuals listed and attempt to obtain a valid signature. The county agency shall not certify an assistance group without a signed application.

(5) The signature on the application certifies, under penalty of perjury, the truth of the information contained on the application, including the information concerning citizenship and alien status of the members applying for benefits.

(D) When can an application be filed?

(1) An assistance group shall be advised of the right to file an application on the same day it contacts the county agency during office hours. The county agency:

(a) Shall encourage an assistance group to file an application the same day the assistance group or its representative contacts the county agency and expresses interest in obtaining SNAP or expresses concerns that indicate food insecurity.

(b) Shall post signs that explain the application processing standards and the right to file an application on the day of initial contact.

(c) Shall include information about same-day filing in outreach materials.



(2) Except for application filed telephonically, the assistance group shall also be advised that it does not have to be interviewed before filing an application and that it may file an application as long as the application contains the applicant's name, address, and the signature of the appropriate individuals as defined in paragraph (C)(1) of this rule.

(E) Where shall an application be filed?

An application shall be filed with the county agency that serves the county in which an applicant resides.

(1) When an application is filed with a county agency that does not serve the county where an applicant resides, the following shall occur:

(a) When the application is filed in person, the county agency shall provide the applicant with the address and telephone number of the county agency that serves the county in which the applicant resides and shall offer to forward the application to the county agency that same day. The county agency shall forward the application on the same day or forward it the next day by any means that ensures the application arrives at the county agency the same day it is forwarded.

(b) When the application is filed by mail or electronically, the county agency shall mail, fax or electronically send the application to the appropriate county agency on the same day or forward it the next day by any means that ensures the application arrives at the county agency the same day it is forwarded.

(2) When an individual contacts a county agency and declines to go to the county agency to file an application that same day and instead prefers to receive an application by mail, the county agency shall mail an application on the same day the request is received. The county agency shall include with the application the name and address of the county agency where the application shall be filed (when known) and remind the applicant eligibility for benefits is based on the date the application is received.

(F) What is the date of application?



(1) The date of application is the date the agency receives the completed application. For telephonic applications, the date of application is the date the telephonic application process is completed.

When the completed application is received after business hours, the date of the application shall be the next business day. When an assistance group is determined eligible, benefits shall be provided from the date of application to the end of the month.

(2) County agencies shall document the date the application was received by recording the date of receipt on the application.

(3) The filing date of the application to be recorded by the county agency is the date of release of the applicant from the institution when a resident of an institution is applying for SNAP benefits prior to leaving the institution. When a resident of an institution is jointly applying for SSI and SNAP benefits prior to leaving the institution, the date of release of the applicant from the institution will be considered the date of application.

(G) How many applications can be filed by a household?

(1) One application can be submitted for all assistance groups within a household when the individual signing the application has been designated as an authorized representative for all assistance groups.

(2) When more than one assistance group resides in a household, each assistance group is to complete its own separate application with a signature as described in paragraph (C) of this rule. Rule 5101:4-2-03 of the Administrative Code shall be followed to determine the composition of assistance groups within the residence.

(3) The household shall not be required to complete more than one application when it is indicated that the household is applying for medicaid, cash and/or SNAP simultaneously.

(H) What happens when an assistance group refuses to cooperate with the application process?

(1) When the assistance group refuses to cooperate with the county agency in completing any part of



the application process, the application shall be denied at the time of refusal. For a determination of refusal to be made, the assistance group must be able to cooperate, but clearly demonstrate it will not take the actions required to complete the application process. For example, to be denied for refusal to cooperate, an assistance group must refuse to be interviewed, not merely fail to appear for the interview.

(2) When there is any question as to whether the assistance group has merely failed to cooperate, as opposed to refused to cooperate, the assistance group shall not be denied, and the agency shall provide assistance in obtaining required verification.

(3) The assistance group shall also be determined ineligible when it refuses to cooperate in any subsequent review of eligibility, including reviews generated by reported changes and recertifications.

(4) Once denied or terminated for refusal to cooperate, the assistance group may reapply but shall not be determined eligible until it cooperates with the county agency.

(5) The county agency shall not determine the assistance group ineligible when a person outside the assistance group fails to cooperate with a request for verification. The county agency shall not consider individuals identified as non-assistance group members under rule 5101:4-2-03 of the Administrative Code as individuals outside the assistance group.

(I) How are assistance groups handled when they reapply after refusing to cooperate with a quality control review?

(1) When the assistance group refused to cooperate with a state quality control reviewer and reapplies within one hundred twenty-five days after the annual review period ended, the assistance group shall cooperate with the quality control reviewer before being determined eligible.

(2) When the assistance group refused to cooperate with a state quality control reviewer and reapplies after one hundred twenty-five days of the annual review period, the assistance group shall provide verification as required in rule 5101:4-2-09 of the Administrative Code prior to being determined eligible to participate.



(3) When the assistance group refused to cooperate with a federal quality control reviewer and reapplies within nine months after the annual review period, the assistance group shall cooperate with the quality control reviewer before being determined eligible.

(4) When the assistance group refused to cooperate with a federal quality control reviewer and reapplies after nine months of the annual review period, the assistance group shall provide verification as mandated in rule 5101:4-2-09 of the Administrative Code prior to being determined eligible to participate.

(J) What is the time limit for processing an application?

(1) The assistance group shall be given an opportunity to participate no later than thirty days after the application is filed. Expedited service shall be available to assistance groups in immediate need in accordance with rule 5101:4-6-09 of the Administrative Code.

(2) The county agency shall determine the eligibility and benefit amount within the first thirty days based on the circumstances for the entire month. Even when the application is filed late in the month, the assistance group's circumstances for the entire month shall be considered.

(K) How is a voluntary withdrawal of an application processed?

An assistance group may voluntarily withdraw the application at any time before the county agency determines it to be eligible. "Voluntary withdrawal" means the assistance group, on its own initiative, has contacted the county agency, either orally or in writing, and requested that the application not be processed any further. The county agency shall document in the case file the reason for withdrawal, if given, and that contact was made with the assistance group to confirm the withdrawal. The county agency shall advise the assistance group of its right to reapply at any time and shall notify the assistance group via a statewide automated eligibility system generated notice of the denial of benefits due to voluntary withdrawal.

(L) How is an application for SNAP processed when the assistance group is applying for other benefits?



(1) All SNAP applications, regardless of whether they are joint applications or separate applications, shall be processed in accordance with SNAP procedural timeliness standards, notice requirements, and fair hearing requirements specified in Chapters 5101:4-2, 5101:4-5, 5101:4-6, and 5101:6-2 of the Administrative Code. No assistance group shall have SNAP benefits denied solely on the basis that an application to participate in another program has been denied or benefits under another program have been terminated without a separate determination that the assistance group failed to satisfy a SNAP eligibility requirement.

(2) An assistance group that simultaneously requests SNAP and another program and is denied benefits for the other program shall not be required to resubmit another application for SNAP but shall have SNAP eligibility determined in accordance with the SNAP processing time frames from the date the joint application was initially accepted by the county agency.

(3) To facilitate participation in the program, the county agency shall notify assistance groups in which members are applying for other types of assistance that they may file a separate application for SNAP benefits independent of the application for benefits for any other program.

(M) When is an application considered an inquiry?

(1) An application is considered an inquiry when it is signed by one assistance group containing multiple potential assistance groups and the individual signing the application is not the authorized representative for all assistance groups; or

(2) A telephonic application is considered an inquiry when the telephonic process is not complete as outlined in paragraph (A)(2)(c) of this rule.