

USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP) Awards and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The information below is for the farmers and ranchers who applied for and received a one-time, lump-sum award from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) under the USDA Discrimination Financial Assistance Program (DFAP). DFAP was created to address the consequences of prior discrimination by USDA in USDA farm lending. This general information will help people who receive these USDA DFAP awards understand the potential impact of the money on SNAP benefits.

The USDA DFAP Award may affect your SNAP eligibility. Everyone's situation is different. Be sure to consult an attorney or advocate knowledgeable about SNAP in your state for advice.

See below for a list of resources.

What are SNAP benefits?

SNAP is a federal program that provides benefits to low-income households to help pay for food at local grocery stores. SNAP benefits in Illinois are administered by the Department of Human Services. SNAP eligibility and program rules differ in each state.

How could my USDA DFAP award affect my SNAP benefits?

Generally, your eligibility for SNAP depends on your household's income and assets/resources. The lump-sum award you receive from the USDA DFAP **is not counted as in income**. In Illinois, almost no one getting SNAP has a resource limit. This means that your DFAP award will not affect your eligibility for SNAP or **the amount** of SNAP you receive monthly. (See below for information on who has a resource limit for SNAP in Illinois.)

When is my USDA DFAP award considered “income” for SNAP?

Never. A one-time, lump-sum payment by the government, like the USDA DFAP award, is never considered income for SNAP purposes.

Do I need to report the USDA DFAP award to the human services agency in my state?

Best practice is to report all significant income changes within 10 days of the change. In this case, the income does not count for SNAP and when you report, you should tell the caseworker that the income is excludable under [Illinois DHS Policy Manual 07-04-01](#).

When is my USDA DFAP award considered a “resource?”

In Illinois, **almost no SNAP recipients** have a resource limit.

SNAP resource limits **do apply** to households in which:

- A member is disqualified for an Intentional Program Violation (fraud); or
- A member is sanctioned for failure to comply with a Work Provision; or
- The gross monthly income for the SNAP household exceeds the 200 percent FPL (see Gross Monthly Income Standard for the household size [WAG 13-01-01-a])
- The first time the unit reapplies after losing eligibility due to lottery or gambling winnings (see PM 07-04-21).

In Illinois, SNAP resource limits can be found in [Illinois DHS Policy Manual 07-04-01](#).

If you are among the few SNAP households with a resource limit, any of the USDA DFAP award left over after the month you receive it is a resource. If your USDA DFAP award will increase your resources above the limit, you can avoid its impact on your SNAP benefits by spending it in the month you receive it. It is a good idea to save receipts or other documentation of how you spent it, just in case your state agency has questions. **DO NOT GIVE THE MONEY AWAY.** Giving away the money could make you ineligible for the SNAP program for up to one year.

How do I get information about my SNAP benefits?

Contact the Illinois Department of Human services at: 1-800-843-6154 or 1-866-324-5553 TTY. You can also access your own benefits case through Manage My Case at <https://abe.illinois.gov/abe/access/>.

Where can I find more resources related to the impact of the USDA DFAP award on my SNAP benefits?

In Illinois, you can call the Legal Council for Health Justice at 312-427-8990 for free advice.

Many USDA DFAP award recipients can request brief legal advice through the ABA Free Legal Answers platform at <https://abafreelegalanswers.org/>. You will need to select the state where you live and provide income and asset information to determine eligibility for free legal advice, which is generally available to people with household income below 250 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. When answering questions about your assets, do not include your USDA DFAP award. Once you are approved, you can create an account to ask a question and get advice from a volunteer attorney.

You can also contact the Legal Aid office that serves your community. Not all Legal Aid programs can assist with these kinds of questions, and they only serve people who meet financial and other eligibility requirements. You can look up your local Legal Aid at <https://www.lsc.gov/about-lsc/what-legal-aid/i-need-legal-help>.

Additional resources and information are available at <https://www.nlada.org/USDA-DFAP/award-recipients>.

For general questions about your DFAP award, contact the DFAP Call Center at 1-800-721-0970.