Ohio | Department of Job and Family Services
Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Matt Damschroder, Interim Director

News Release

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College Students' Access to SNAP Expanded During Pandemic

COLUMBUS, OHIO – The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) issued a reminder today that recent federal legislation expanded access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for college students during the pandemic.

The temporary exemptions added in the 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act apply to students eligible to participate in a state or federally financed work study program or students whose families cannot contribute any money toward their costs of attending college. Students who qualify under one of the exemptions must still meet all other SNAP eligibility criteria before they can be approved.

"The pandemic has impacted food security for far too many Ohioans," said ODJFS Interim Director Matt Damschroder. "We want to ensure that Ohio college students know about this temporary change because it could help them put food on the table."

The federal government also temporarily increased the amount of the SNAP benefit – for an individual who purchases and prepares meals alone (and is not residing in a dorm and receiving all or a majority of their meals through a meal plan with the school) – to a maximum of $234 per month for a single adult.

The new, temporary student exemptions shall be in effect for initial SNAP applications until 30 days after the COVID-19 federal public health emergency is lifted, according to guidance issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

Individuals may qualify for SNAP if their household's gross monthly income is at or under 130% of the federal poverty guidelines. Ohioans can apply for SNAP at benefits.ohio.gov. SNAP can be used to buy most food products, with the exception of alcoholic beverages, vitamins and/or medicines, and hot food made to be eaten immediately, including prepared food from grocery stores and restaurants.

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The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.