

A Program of
Center for Food Action



How To Get Food Assistance During Coronavirus Crisis

The state and federal government are implementing various changes to federal nutrition programs to help assure assistance is available to all who need it during the Coronavirus crisis. Here is information about the various programs and how to assess them. Changes are occurring on a daily basis so always check with the appropriate agency for the latest information.

Feeding Kids During School Closures

A new state law requires school districts to provide meals to students eligible for free or reduced-price school meals during school closings. Under A-3840/S-2281, districts must set up



easily accessible meal distribution points and deliver meals to students who aren't within walking distance of a site.

If a district can't meet these requirements, it would have to supply food vouchers that families can trade in at retail stores. While districts will likely be able to receive federal reimbursements for certain meals, the state will cover any unreimbursed costs, under the new law.

In addition, new federal legislation known as [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) provides several rule waivers to make it easier for schools, local government and community organizations to feed children and receive federal reimbursements.

Many New Jersey districts are providing meals to children through distribution points and delivery. Check with your local district for details.

SNAP Assistance

With county welfare offices largely closed to the public, the New Jersey Department of Human Services is encouraging residents in need to apply for SNAP food assistance or cash assistance online at NJHelps.org. This site can also be used to apply for Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) and General Assistance.

Any needed documentation (i.e. pay stubs) or other paperwork can be mailed or faxed. Some county welfare agencies are providing drop boxes outside the offices where applicants can leave documentation. SNAP provides monthly benefits through Electronic Debt Transfers (EBTs) for recipients to buy food at grocery stores and other retail outlets. For more info, visit NJSNAP.org.

WIC Assistance

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance for Women Infants and Children, commonly known as WIC, is also working to implement flexibilities to help pregnant women, mothers of young children, infants and toddlers receive assistance. This includes waiving requirements that people physically come to the office for initial approvals and re-certifications, according to state health officials.



Learn more at state.nj.us/health/fhs/wic.

Emergency Food Assistance

Food banks and pantries throughout New Jersey continue to provide assistance in a variety of ways. Center for Food Action, HFNJ's parent organization, provides food and other assistance to Northern New Jersey residents. Learn more at cfanj.org. For links to New Jersey's major food banks and more information on nutrition programs, visit hungerfreenj.org/food-assistance.

Remember to visit hungerfreenj.org for the latest info on efforts to address hunger during this time.