

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE FAQ FOR INDIVIDUALS AGES 16 THROUGH 20

In addition to the regular eligibility requirements of Cash Assistance (CA) and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formally known as food stamps, please review the following “Frequently Asked Questions” for additional information on eligibility criteria for individuals 16 through 20 years of age.

Q. If I am under 21 years of age, may I apply for benefits?

A. If you are under 21 years of age, you may apply for temporary Cash Assistance. Examples of Cash Assistance benefits include a cash grant for shelter, energy assistance grants, and additional money to assist with other expenses. You may also apply for food assistance through the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP).

Q. How can I apply for Cash Assistance benefits?

*A. You may apply by visiting an HRA Job Center in your area. Find out more information on **our website** [link to <http://www.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/cash-assistance.page>]*

Q. How can I apply for SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamp) benefits?

A. If you apply for Cash Assistance, you may indicate on your application that you want your eligibility for SNAP benefits determined at the same time.

*If you are interested in only applying for SNAP benefits, you may submit a completed SNAP application with required documentation to your local SNAP Center. You can easily submit an application by mail or fax and can **apply online**. [LINK TO: <http://www.nyc.gov/site/hra/help/snap-benefits-food-program.page>] You may also call 311 to obtain an application as well as the name and location of a participating community-based organization where you can submit your application and required documentation.*

Q. If I am under 21 years of age, am I eligible for SNAP benefits?

A. Yes. There is no age requirement of 21. However, your living situation will determine whether or not you are eligible to have your own case or be part of a larger SNAP household. In general, if you are under 22 years of age and live with your parents then you must be part of their SNAP case. Also, in general, if you are under age 18 and live with a legal guardian other than your parent, you must be part of their SNAP case.

If you live alone or with an adult other than your parent/legal guardian, there are circumstances where you may be able to have your own case. The determination on whether or not you have your own case will depend on both financial and other circumstances that should be discussed with a SNAP worker.

Q. If I am on my parent’s SNAP case but no longer live with them, can I get my own SNAP case?

A. It is possible to have your own SNAP case if you meet the eligibility criteria. Your parents must report that you are no longer part of their household. If your parents have not yet notified HRA of this change, and you are still included in your parent’s case, the agency will notify them that you will no longer be part of their case and their SNAP benefits will be adjusted accordingly. You cannot, however, receive SNAP benefits on two cases at the same time.

Q. I am presently attending a four-year college, can I receive SNAP benefits?

A. In general, according to federal law, most able-bodied students who are enrolled in college or other institutions of higher education at least half-time are not eligible for SNAP benefits. However, there are some instances where students may be able to get benefits if otherwise eligible, such as if you are receiving federally-funded Cash Assistance, working at least an average of 20 hours a week, or meeting certain other criteria. You need to discuss your specific circumstances with a SNAP worker to see if you meet the eligibility criteria to receive SNAP benefits while attending an institution of higher education.

Q. Can I get my own Cash Assistance case if I live with my parents/legal guardian?

A. There are differences in policy based on your age: If you are 18 through 20 years of age, you may apply on your own but the income and resources of your parents will need to be documented and will be used in determining your eligibility for CA until you reach the age of 21. In general, if you are under the age of 18 and living with your parents, they must apply on your behalf. As a condition for eligibility for federally-funded Cash Assistance, unmarried minor parents/pregnant minors under 18 years of age who live with and provide care for a dependent child, must reside with a parent, legal guardian, an adult relative or live in an adult supervised setting.

Q. Can I get my own Cash Assistance case if I do not live with my parents/legal guardian?

A. Yes, if eligible.

If you are 18 years of age and older, you may apply for and receive Cash Assistance on your own regardless of whether or not you live with a parent.

If you are under 18 years of age and live alone because there are certain conditions that make your parent's or legal guardian's home an inappropriate or unsafe environment, following further assessments, including possible referral to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), the agency may exempt you from the requirement that you reside with an adult. Under such circumstances, you would be eligible for Cash Assistance on your own.

Please note that if you are under age of 18 and an unmarried pregnant or parenting teen, the law requires that you reside with a parent, legal guardian, adult relative or in an adult supervised environment such as supportive housing, unless further assessments, including possible referral to ACS, determine your current living arrangement is appropriate.

Q. If I am under 21 and have my own Cash Assistance case, will my parents have to pay child support?

A. Under New York State law, parents are required to financially support their children up to the age of 21. If you are under the age of 21 and do not live with your parents, then you must cooperate with the Office of Child Support Enforcement in seeking financial support from your parents unless you have a valid reason as to why compliance would not be possible, such as the death of the absent parents or if a domestic violence liaison has determined that compliance may put your safety at risk .

Q. If I am in high school or a full-time GED program, do I have to comply with the Cash Assistance employment requirements?

A. If you are under 20 and currently enrolled in high school or a full-time GED program on a full-time basis, you are deemed as having satisfied your work requirements.

Q. If I graduated from high school (or received a GED) and am on Cash Assistance, can I go into a training/education program?

A. Potentially, assuming that HRA's assessment shows that the school has agency approval and the program you are enrolled in is short-term and consistent with your employment plan. If you are going to school full-time and maintain satisfactory grades you can go as your primary activity for up to 12 months in your lifetime. After that year, training would need to be in combination with work activities.

Q. Are there any differences in “work” requirements based on my age and if I did not finish high school?

A. Individuals 16 and 17 years of age are subject to educational requirements and must be enrolled in school to obtain a high school diploma or GED. If there is an indication that satisfactory progress cannot be made, you must participate in another educational activity, training program, or approved HRA employment program.

If you are 18 or 19 years old and you drop out of school and are not already enrolled in or interested in enrolling in an approved training or GED program, you are required to meet other work requirements.

If you are under 25 years old, you may attend an approved training or GED program as your primary activity for up to 12 months. After that year, any training or education would need to be in combination with work activities.