

February SNAP Benefits to Distribute Early; New Applications Due Sooner

U.S. households eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program ([SNAP](#)) funds will receive their February disbursement in late January.

The early release of funds is due to the partial government shutdown, and it means any new applications for SNAP are due sooner, as well.

Applicants would typically have until the end of the month to submit their requests for assistance in the following month.

However, the application deadline has been moved up by state agencies out of necessity so that they can disburse the February SNAP funds by the Jan. 20 deadline [set by](#) the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The earlier application deadlines vary by state (and, in at least one instance, between counties within a state).

For example, the deadline for [Tennessee](#) was Monday, Jan. 14. For other states, including [Kentucky](#), [Virginia](#) and [Nebraska](#), the deadline is today, Jan. 15.

Not every agency within a given state has set a uniform timeframe for the updated application deadline.

For example, two neighboring counties in southern Colorado have different deadlines, according to a [report](#) from an NBC affiliate in southern Colorado.

El Paso County has a 3 p.m. deadline today, while Pueblo County's deadline was at 5 p.m. (MST) on Monday, Jan. 14.

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In [Minnesota](#), some county agencies offered weekend hours on Jan. 12-13 to help people submit their applications and documentation in time to be considered for February SNAP funds.

In Oklahoma, the regional food bank [announced](#) that it would provide food assistance to anyone impacted by the shutdown and encouraged its partner organizations across the state to do the same.

Texas Department of Health and Human Services didn't publish a revised application deadline in a Jan. 13 [press release](#), but new applicants were encouraged to submit their information and supporting documents as quickly as possible.

Louisiana offered similar guidance in a Jan. 14 [press release](#).

Applications for SNAP can still be submitted to state agencies, but any SNAP disbursements beyond the February funds (to be released by Jan. 20) are uncertain until either the partial shutdown ends or Congress acts to appropriate funding for the USDA SNAP program.

"Texas will continue to accept and process applications," the Texas DHHS press release said. "However, any benefits approved after federal funding runs out will be in a suspended status until states receive more information from the federal government about the shutdown's impact on program funding."

The outlook for SNAP funding in March and beyond is uncertain and dependent on the shutdown's duration, according to an [analysis](#) published in early January by the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities ([CBPP](#)).

"If the shutdown continues and USDA determines it does not have the authority to extend SNAP in March without congressional action, many low-income households would be at risk of serious hunger and hardship," CBPP stated.

The USDA [website](#) currently states that its site "will not be actively updated" until funding resumes.