



Monthly Newsletter

April 2023



SNAP News and Information for Everyone

Recently, the Federal Government passed the **Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023**. This recently signed federal act of 2023 required states to end the distribution of Emergency SNAP benefits after the February 2023 distributions. This means that Connecticut's SNAP-eligible households received their last extra payment in February 2023. As of the beginning of March 2023, SNAP recipients have not received a second SNAP deposit mid-month.



In addition, households receiving SNAP and Social Security benefits have seen a decrease in their SNAP benefits because of the significant cost of living increase to Social Security benefits that took effect on Jan. 1, 2023. However, **you may have noticed a "Cost-of-Living Adjustment."** SNAP benefits are adjusted annually based on the rate of inflation. The announced increase in payments for 2023 — which technically started Oct. 1, 2022, was 12.5%.

Higher Top Payouts: Starting Oct. 1, 2022, and running until Sept. 30, 2023, if you are a SNAP recipient, you have seen higher maximum benefit amounts. The values vary depending on the size of the qualifying household, as follows:

One-person: \$281 vs. \$250	Five-person: \$1,116 vs. \$992
Two-person: \$516 vs. \$459	Six-person: \$1,339 vs. \$1,190
Three-person: \$740 vs. \$658	Seven-person: \$1,480 vs. \$1,316
Four-person: \$939 vs. \$835	Eight-person: \$1,691 vs. \$1,504
Each additional person: \$211 vs. \$188	

About SNAP Benefits in Connecticut: The Connecticut Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) helps you afford food at grocery stores, certain farmers' markets, and supermarkets. Through this program, commonly known as food stamps, you receive funds each month on an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card. This money can be spent on a variety of approved food items. While SNAP benefits can help you afford groceries, they are not meant to cover your family's entire grocery budget for the month. In most cases, you should plan on spending some of your own money in addition to your benefits. The number of benefits you receive varies based on your circumstances. Knowing how much you will get and when your benefits will start helps you plan ahead for each shopping trip. Find out more about the SNAP program in CT below and discover how and where to use your benefits.

Food stamp benefits can be spent on a wide variety of items. SNAP assistance is accepted at many grocery stores, supermarkets, convenience stores and even farmers' markets. In most cases, participating stores will display a QUEST logo (example on right side-or something similar) in the window. This tells you that EBT cards are accepted at that location.



SNAP food benefits may be spent on **staple foods** or **accessory foods**. A **staple food item** is something that makes up the majority of your diet, such as:

1. **Protein items** like meat, fish, poultry, eggs, or plant-based protein like tofu
2. **Dairy products** and non-dairy alternatives include milk, almond milk, butter, cheese, or yogurt
3. **Fruits and vegetables** that are fresh, frozen or canned
4. **Grains** such as pasta, bread, cereal or oatmeal
5. **Seeds and plants** that you can use to grow fruits, veggies, or herbs at home

Event Calendar

Good Friday, 4/7/23
Office will be Closed.

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Board Meeting
4/19/23

Quarry Heights
Community Room

Main Office (860) 342-1688

Carol Diaz, ext. #110
Administrative Housing Assistant
cdiaz@portlandha.org

Susan Nellis, ext. #113
Administrative Housing
Coordinator
snellis@portlandha.org

Holly Kobayashi, ext. #115
Resident Service Coordinator
hkobayashi@portlandha.org

Dan Rafaniello, ext. #112
Staff Accountant
drafaniello@portlandha.org

Jeffrey Costa, ext. #114
Maintenance Staff
jcosta@portlandha.org

For Maintenance Emergencies
Call: 860-519-3251

Hours of Operation

Monday-Thursday
8:30-4:30 p.m.

Friday
8:30-1:30 p.m.

Please call before visiting

Resident Corner

Please beware of lease violations including curbing your dog, smoking, drugs, and residents living in a unit of which they are not on lease. These are lease violations. Offenders caught on surveillance camera or by a resident's phone camera will be cited and penalized.

SNAP News and Information for Everyone, continued

An **accessory food item**, on the other hand, usually does not count as a full meal on its own. For example, accessory items can include cooking ingredients like flour. With that in mind, SNAP benefits can be spent on all of the following items as well:

1. **Certain snacks** such as chips, cookies, candy, or crackers
2. **Beverages** such as soda, juice, coffee, tea, or sports drinks
3. **Condiments** such as ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, or hot sauce
4. **Seasonings** like salt, pepper, garlic powder, or allspice
5. **Ingredients** like flour, sugar, baking soda, vanilla extract, or cooking oil



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It is important to be aware that Connecticut food stamps can be used in any state. This makes it easier to shop in a bordering state or travel to visit family in another part of the country.
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Products You Cannot Buy Using Food Stamps in Connecticut: SNAP/food stamps also come with limitations that you must follow. In fact, there are certain places where you cannot use an EBT card. You are also not permitted to use food stamps in places such as casinos, liquor stores, or cruise ships. Even if you found an item that you would usually be able to buy, you would not be allowed to purchase it in one of these locations. This is because the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has not authorized these types of locations to accept benefits.

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There are also a variety of items you cannot buy with your benefits, even if you are shopping at an approved location. **Prohibited items include:**

1. Foods that are already hot or ready to eat
2. Alcoholic beverages, including beer, wine, and liquor
3. Cigarettes or any other tobacco product
4. Non-food items like pet food, cleaning supplies, cookware, or cosmetics
5. Vitamins, medicines, and anything with a “supplement facts” label



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Connecticut SNAP food benefits also cannot be withdrawn as cash. If you receive other types of cash assistance on your EBT card, these benefits may be withdrawn at an ATM or received as cashback with a purchase. However, the SNAP portion of your benefits cannot be taken off the card. Even if you are buying approved items at a grocery store, you cannot request cashback if you are paying with your SNAP balance.

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It is also important to be aware that the SNAP program does not work at most restaurants. In fact, there are very few restaurant establishments authorized to accept benefits. When a restaurant works with the food stamps program, it is usually only allowed to serve people who are unable to cook for themselves at home. This includes SNAP beneficiaries who are elderly, disabled, or homeless.

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How food stamp benefit amounts are calculated in Connecticut: Looking at a food stamp calculator can help you determine if you meet the eligibility requirements: [SNAP Eligibility Calculator - 50 State Food Stamp Prescreener \(snapscreener.com\)](https://snapscreener.com). However, the only way to know exactly how much assistance you will get each month is to apply. If approved, your benefit award letter will tell you the amount you will receive each month. It is important to understand that your amount of benefit may change over time as your financial or household circumstances change. For example, if your income increases, your benefit amount may decrease. Using a SNAP calculator can help you determine if you are still eligible after certain life changes.

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When you start receiving SNAP benefits after applying in Connecticut: If approved, you will receive SNAP food benefits no more than 30 days after you apply. If you have very limited income and resources, you can even get approved for benefits in 7 days or fewer. The Department of Social Services (DSS) will determine whether you are eligible for emergency SNAP assistance. In any case, your benefits will usually be dated back to the day you submitted your application. That means you can typically receive assistance for the month that you first applied. If you are unable to use all your benefits in one month, they will roll over to the next month.



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Learn everything else you need to know about receiving and using your benefits by [downloading our free guide](#).
For more information: [Food Assistance - SNAP \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/foodassistance) (Last Updated: September 26, 2022).



Chatham Court News



The Scholarship Workshop on 3/8/23 had a small but promising group of interested high school and college students. Those who attended, please reach out to Holly, RSC, so she can help you with the application process. For Housing residents who are already in college/technical school or graduating high school June 2023 or 2024, planning on applying to college or technical school, were unable to attend the workshop but are still interested in applying for scholarships to assist in financing your education, please reach out to Holly, RSC, for assistance.

Portland Schools

**Spring
Vacation
April 10-14
No School**



**2-Hour Delayed Opening
for Students
April 19, 2023**

Portland Public Library

Preschool Storytime



**Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.
April 4, 18, and 25
(no program April 11)
May 9, 16, and 23**

Join them in the Wagner Room for stories, songs, and rhymes that encourage literacy and social skills and help get your preschooler prepared for kindergarten. They offer a craft related to the weekly theme at the end of the program that can be done at the library or brought home.

Storytime for Toddlers and Tots: Mother Goose on the Loose

**Wednesdays at 10:15 a.m. or 11:15 a.m.
April 5, 19, and 26 (no program April 12)
May 3, 10, 17, and 24**

Mother Goose on the Loose, a fun-filled interactive session for our youngest patrons, uses rhymes, a story, songs, puppets, scarves, and more to stimulate the learning process of babies and toddlers. Two sessions will be offered each Wednesday to keep group sizes small and interactions personalized.

For details call:
860-342-6770



Great information for You and Your Children

In case you were unaware, the Portland School website is loaded with a wealth of information for parents:

[Student Services | Portland Schools \(portlandctschools.org\)](http://portlandctschools.org)



If you are a special needs parent, in the school systems website, they have the blog called: **The Wonder Moms Blog**. Check it out: <https://wondermoms.org>

One of the first things you learn as a "special needs parent" is that other families who have traveled this path ahead of you are your best sources of wisdom and support. Once you stop reeling from shock, get your bearings, and figure out a thing or two, then you get to pay it forward. Wonder Moms is a project by three moms to share real talk, helpful information, and practical advice with parents of kids who have intellectual disabilities, Down syndrome, autism, language and speech delays, deafness, chronic illness, and traumatic brain injury.

Many children have different diagnoses and different challenges, but like a recent book and movie noted, they are wonders. They amaze us every day. The moms who founded the **Wonder Moms Blog** don't pretend to have all the answers, but among their three families, there aren't many issues they haven't faced!

Great opportunities to work for the Town of Portland. There are also summer jobs for your children to help keep them busy and with money in their pockets! Remember though, any new job needs to be reported to Housing within 10 days of hire. If your child is a full-time student and takes on a part-time or just a summer job, even though Housing does not count it as income the job/pay stubs must still be reported to Housing within 10 days.



WE ARE HIRING

JOB POSITIONS :

- LAND USE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
- POLICE OFFICER
- PARKS & REC SUMMER POSITIONS
- LIBRARY DIRECTOR



APPLY!
www.portlandct.org/employment-opportunities

[Employment Opportunities | Town of Portland \(portlandct.org\)](http://portlandct.org)

8-Hour Boating Course at Parks and Recreation:

P O R T L A N D
PARKS & RECREATION



Taught by qualified members of the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. Completion certificate will provide you with knowledge to obtain boater's license or certification in



many states. April courses are as follows: 4/18 and 4/19 from 6:30-9:00 p.m. and 4/25 and 4/26 from 6:30-9:00 p.m. All classes held by Zoom and cost is \$65/course. If funding for your youth is a problem, see Holly, RSC.

Quarry Heights News

From the Portland Senior Center



Free Grab-and-Go Meals

The Senior Center is offering Waverly Senior Center members who reside in Portland only, one free grab-and-go meal (started in February). You must be able to pick up the meal yourself

@11:45 a.m. in the Mary Rice room of the Waverly Senior Center. Please do not arrive before 11:30 a.m. as there are programs in that room.

Note: you are not eligible if you are already receiving Meals-on-Wheels. You must register one week in advance for a grab-and-go meal. For more information, or to sign up, call: (860) 342-6761.

From the Portland Senior Center, continued



Don't Forget about the Connecticut Renter's Rebate Program 2022

Appointments start April 11, 2023. Call Lynn Tracey at the Senior Center: (860) 342-6760 to book your appointment. If you have questions on what information you need to compile and bring to your appointment, check with Holly, RSC.

Goings On

On Tuesday, 4/4/23 @10:30 a.m. in the QH Community Room, we will play Fraud Bingo, an interactive way to learn to avoid banking scams, identity theft, and fraud. Come join in the fun.



Resident "Stuff"



QH resident Kevin Russell was caught on camera after his recent visit to Burger King.

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Reminder: If you would like to share a photo, brag about a triumph or accomplishment, tell a personal success story, or send a photo of your pride and joy family member or support animal, please reach out to Holly, RSC. She loves to post resident news and information in the monthly newsletter.

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Cynthia Hamlin, nurse practitioner at Acorn Family and Primary Care in Cromwell, came to visit with QH residents and talked of her new practice to the QH residents in March. We enjoyed her presentation. It was interesting and enlightening.



A Few Tips When Preparing Documents for Annual Recertification:

1. ShopRite and Walgreens provide duplicate receipts. If you have other locations you need to collect from, you may want to ask if they provide the same. You never know until you ask (thank you for sharing Marlene).
2. Van ride, uber, bus, or auto travel to medical appointments are a medical expense so you can use them for a possible deduction in your rent if out-of-pocket expenses reach your threshold. Don't forget to ask for your receipt or record mileage and date (thank you for sharing Marlene).
3. Support animal vet and special animal expenses may also be deducted if you reach your threshold. Ask your certification specialist what your threshold is.

Rumors:

In last month's newsletter, in the Noise Pollution Section, it was mentioned, "use of expletives that are generally considered insulting, racial epithets, or other language, written or oral, that is customarily used to insult or intimidate, may be cause for termination or denial." Recently, several residents have been spreading rumors about other residents that are inappropriate, unacceptable, and frankly false. Did you know that **slander** (a false and defamatory oral statement about a person) **is illegal**? It is unlawful to intentionally make false and untrue statements about someone and cause them harm. A slanderer may be taken to court if their words have caused reputational damage or financial loss to the subject of statements. Additionally, making false complaints without the facts may cause one resident to file a complaint against another resident for harassment. Please, please, if you don't have anything nice to say (and you don't have the facts), best not to say anything. Thank you.

