

# IMMIGRANTS & FOOD ASSISTANCE IN NEW MEXICO

Updated February 13, 2026

**The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)** provides a monthly benefit on a card that can be used to buy groceries.

## IMMIGRANTS MAY QUALIFY FOR SNAP IF THEY ARE IN THE FOLLOWING IMMIGRATION STATUSES:

- Lawful permanent resident adults “green card holders” (some need to meet a 5-year waiting period)
- Lawful permanent resident children (no waiting period applies)
- Certain Cuban and Haitian Nationals (no waiting period applies)
- People residing under a Compact of Free Association (COFA) with Micronesia, Palau, or the Marshall Islands (no waiting period applies)

## THERE IS NO 5-YEAR WAITING PERIOD FOR GREEN CARD HOLDERS (LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS) WHO:

- 1 **Previously held any of the following immigration statuses:**
- Refugees
  - Individuals granted asylum
  - Individuals granted withholding of deportation/removal
  - Amerasians
  - Hmong or Highland Laotian Tribal Members
  - Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrants (SIV)
  - Certain Afghan Nationals granted parole between July 31, 2021, and Sept. 30, 2023
  - Certain Ukrainian Nationals granted parole between Feb. 24, 2022, and Sept. 30, 2024
  - Victims of severe trafficking
  - Certain Cuban or Haitian Nationals
  - Immigrants who were lawfully residing in the U.S. and were 65 or older on August 22, 1996

**OR**

- 2 **If one of the following applies:**
- Children under 18 years old
  - Immigrants with a U.S. military connection
  - Immigrants who are blind or disabled
  - Immigrants with 40 qualifying quarters of work
  - Certain American Indians born abroad

## Getting food benefits will not trigger a “public charge test.”

Participation in SNAP or other nutrition programs does not count in a public charge test that is used by the federal government to deny some immigrants admission to the U.S. or deny applications for lawful permanent residency.



SUNBUCKS or **Summer EBT** helps families with school aged children buy food to replace free and reduced school lunches during the summer months. Families are eligible for these benefits **regardless of immigration status**, so long as their income qualifies for free and reduced lunch or if the school offers free meals to all children. Families who do not already receive SNAP should apply through their local school district.

**Women Infants and Children Benefits (WIC)** is a food program that helps pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children up to the age of five buy nutritious foods. Families who meet the income and other program requirements for WIC can get benefits regardless of immigration status, including undocumented parents.