

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Fact Sheet for New Retailers



How do people use SNAP benefits to buy food in my store?

SNAP households get an **EBT card**, which operates like a debit card, to buy eligible food at stores authorized to take SNAP benefits.

The customer swipes the card in a **Point of Sale device (POS)** at the store and enters a four-digit **Personal Identification Number (PIN)**. The clerk enters the exact amount of the food purchase on the POS. This amount is deducted from the household's EBT SNAP account and credited within two banking days to the retailer's bank account.

All transactions are electronically processed and recorded. The US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has access to records of all transactions, including the date, time, and dollar amount, on all terminals.

How do I get POS equipment for my store?

First, you (the retailer) must be authorized by USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) to take SNAP benefits. Once your location is authorized under your ownership, you may:

Use existing or commercially available credit/debit card POS equipment that allows stores to process both EBT and commercial debit/credit transactions on the same device. The EBT Processor for your State can provide more information on where to obtain equipment and services. If you already have equipment, talk to your current processor about programming your current equipment and to obtain cost information.

OR

Use a special POS device that only processes EBT transactions. The EBT Processor for your State will let you know whether they offer such equipment to all types of retailers. Be aware that most retailers are required to pay for their EBT equipment and services, whether they obtain it from their State Processor or a third party. Some stores are exempt from this requirement and are eligible for free State-supplied POS equipment. **Exempt retailers include farmers' markets, direct marketing farmers, military commissaries, non-profit food buying cooperatives and community meal services and programs.** You must sign an agreement to cover the use of the equipment and supply banking information to the company that handles the processing for this equipment before you can receive the device.

If I am eligible and choose the State-supplied POS device, when will I get my equipment?

Usually **within two weeks** after you get your SNAP Permit from FNS and sign and return the completed agreement to the processor. The FNS office that approved your application or the processor will give you more information about this.

Who can I call if I have other questions?

For questions about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, contact us at 1-877-823-4369 or visit our website at www.fns.usda.gov/snap and click on "Retail Merchants" for more information.

For questions about using the POS and processing transactions, call the Retailer Help line number provided by your processor.