

Could you or a friend use more money to put nourishing food on the table?

# 3SquaresVT can help and is here for all of us when we need it.

## What is 3SquaresVT?

3SquaresVT is a federal nutrition program that gives eligible Vermonters money each month to purchase food at grocery and convenience stores, farmers markets, and co-ops.

## How do I use 3SquaresVT?

Monthly benefits come on a card that works the same way as a regular debit card, so a trip to the grocery store with 3SquaresVT benefits looks like any shopper's experience. If everyone in your household is 65+ or receives SSI, benefits can be deposited into your bank account.

## How do I qualify for 3SquaresVT?

Many of us may not know we qualify for 3SquaresVT! Individuals, families, older Vermonters, people who are working, and people with disabilities can qualify. Benefits are based on household size, income, and expenses such as rent and childcare.

## When we use 3SquaresVT, we help the whole community.

Receiving 3SquaresVT benefits does not take away from anyone else. We all pay into programs like 3SquaresVT, so we've earned these benefits when we need them. And when we buy groceries with 3SquaresVT benefits, we bring millions of federal dollars into our local economies to help local farmers and businesses every month!



You may be eligible for 3SquaresVT if your gross monthly income is at or below the following income limit:

Household size	Gross monthly income limit
1	\$2,096
2	\$2,823
3	\$3,552
4	\$4,279
5	\$5,006
6	\$5,735

For each additional member add \$729

*\*Income limits are based on 185% Federal Poverty Level. These limits are for October 1, 2022- September 30, 2023.*

## Find out if you are eligible for 3SquaresVT!

Visit [www.vermontfoodhelp.com](http://www.vermontfoodhelp.com) to learn more, request a paper application, or apply online. Or, call **1-800-479-6151** to speak with a Benefits Specialist or to request an application. Help is available! To get help applying dial **2-1-1** or text **'VFBSNAP'** to **855-11**. If you are 60 or older, call the Helpline at **1-800-642-5119** for personalized assistance.

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***What are 3SquaresVT Emergency Maximum Allotments?***

Emergency maximum allotments are extra SNAP (3SquaresVT) benefits authorized by the federal government through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to help households through the pandemic. Emergency maximum allotment benefits are supplemental benefits to bring households up to the maximum benefit allowed for their household size based on federal law. To date, since March 2020, Vermont has issued over \$175 million in emergency maximum allotments (approximately \$6.5 million each month currently).

***Why and when are they ending?***

The federal 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act ends emergency maximum allotments with the February 2023 benefit month. In Vermont, we pay emergency maximum allotments mid-month, following each benefit month. The last emergency maximum allotment benefit for February 2023 will be paid on March 15, 2023. Beginning in April, households will not receive any extra mid-month payments. They will only receive their regular 1<sup>st</sup> of the month 3SquaresVT benefit payment.

***How much are households losing in addition to their regular payment because of this change in federal law?***

Emergency maximum allotment benefit amounts range from the minimum amount of \$95/household to over \$2,000 each month. Because 3SquaresVT benefits are calculated based on a federal formula that factors in income and deductions, the impact of the loss varies greatly depending on individual household circumstances. The average loss per person is \$93/month. From the December payment, the following data is available:

- 29,667 out of 41,314 households (72%) received the minimum \$95 emergency maximum allotment payment. These households will see a \$95 reduction beginning in April.
- 11,647 (28%) out of 41,314 households received anywhere from \$96 to \$2,055 (one HH of 11 people received \$2055). Please see the following average emergency maximum allotment payments for this group of 11,647 households:
  - Average for HH size of 1 = \$176
  - Average for HH of 2 = \$292
  - Average for HH of 4 = \$443
  - Average for HH of 5 = \$528
  - Average for HH of 7 = \$641

These households will lose this amount going forward starting in April.

***What is Economic Services Division doing to communicate this change?***

In order to implement this change in federal law, DCF's Economic Services Division is:

- Issuing a mass mailing to customers in January informing them of this change and providing information about how to contact the Economic Services Division if any household has a change in circumstances that could increase their regular monthly 3SquaresVT benefit amount (such as decrease in income or increase in out of pocket expenses like medical expenses or childcare), as well as information about other food resources that may be available and other ESD programs that could help to cover household expenses
- Issuing a press release explaining these changes
- Recording a message on our 1-800 call center phone line explaining this change
- Informing community partners of the change to help with messaging and support of 3SquaresVT households