



3SquaresVT Program

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Program Overview

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal program administered by the States. In Vermont, the program is called 3SquaresVT.

3SquaresVT is governed by laws and rules established by the federal government.

Benefits are 100% federally funded. Program administration is 50/50 federal/state funds.

3SquaresVT Information

Caseload and other information is available on the
Economic Services Division website
<https://dcf.vermont.gov/esd/resources/data>

**39,288 households in the program, with 65,525 individuals,
just over 10% of VT's population**

- 19,714 children
- 17,486 adults 60 years +
- 19,510 individuals living with a disability

**Between \$12 and \$13 million in 3SquaresVT benefits are
issued every month to eligible households for grocery food
purchases**

3SquaresVT Eligibility

General rule: Households with gross income at or below 185% FPL, net income equal to or less than 100% FPL

Household Size	Expanded Gross Monthly Income (185% of FPL)	Maximum Net Monthly Income (100% of FPL)
1	\$2,322	\$1,255
2	\$3,152	\$1,704
3	\$3,981	\$2,152
4	\$4,810	\$2,600
5	\$5,640	\$3,049
6	\$6,469	\$3,497

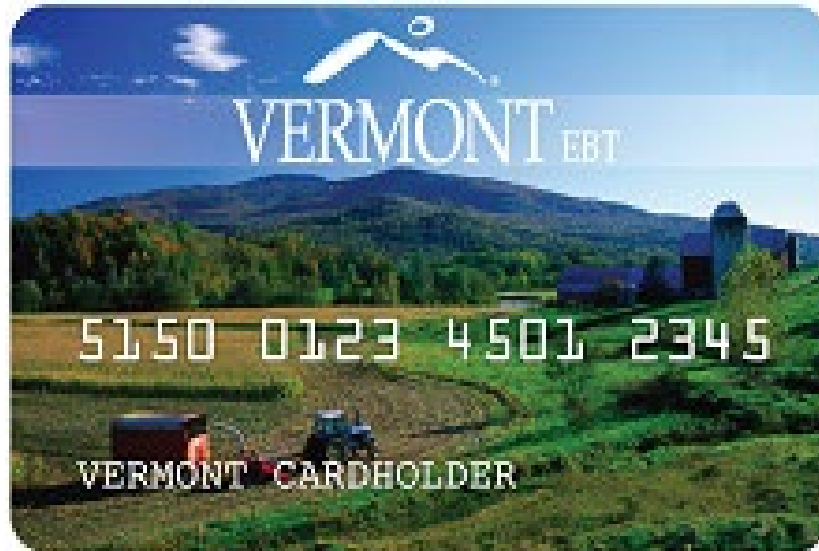
Max benefit amounts set by federal rule and based on household size

Household Size	Thrifty Food Plan Max Benefit Amt
1	\$292
2	\$536
3	\$768
4	\$975
5	\$1,158
6	\$1,390
7	\$1,536
Each additional person	+ \$220

3SquaresVT Benefit Calculations

- **Eligibility staff follow these steps:**
 - Determine net income (gross income – allowable deductions ex. shelter expenses, medical expenses, dependent care costs)
 - Multiply net income * 30%
 - Subtract the 30% net income amount from maximum Thrifty Food Plan amount for the household size
- **The federal SNAP program is a supplemental program. The expectation is that families spend 30% of their own net income on food**

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Cards



What items are eligible for purchase?

Staple, non-taxable grocery items including:

- fruits and vegetables
- meat, poultry and fish
- milk, cheese, yogurt and other dairy products
- bread, pasta, cereals, grains
- shelf-stable food items
- seeds and plants that produce food for the household to eat

Households can shop at any federally approved EBT retailer including grocery stores, convenience stores, delis and farmers' markets and farm stands

Ineligible Items for Purchase

Alcohol or tobacco products

Vitamins, medicines and supplements

Live animals

Hot or prepared foods

Pet food

Nonfood items such as cleaning supplies, paper products, hygiene supplies

3SquaresVT in a SNAP

Demonstration project launched October 1, 2020

Goal is to increase participation of older Vermonters and those with disabilities

Shorter, easier application with a longer certification period of 3 years (regular app is 15 pages and 45 questions while the 3SNP app is 4 pages and 15 questions)

Eligible households are those where everyone is at 60 years old or receiving disability benefits and no one has earned income from a job or self-employment

These households have a dedicated caseworker and access to their direct line

Currently 43% of the 3SVT population is 3SquaresVT in a SNAP

3SquaresVT Cash Out Option

Vermont is one of only 5 states that issues 3SVT benefits to certain households like cash either directly deposited into their regular checking account, sent via check or loaded onto an EBT card as cash

Cash-out option is only available to households where everyone is 65 or older and/or receives SSI (little to no income or resources and living with a disability or blind)

Goal is to promote food security, greater access to the program and reduce stigma

Almost half of the current 3SquaresVT households are eligible for and receive their benefits as cash.

3SquaresVT Work Requirements

General work requirement for people ages 16 to 59:

- Accept suitable job offers
- Not quit a job unless there's a good reason

Many exemptions available including working 30+ hours/week (4,638), medical reasons (11,728), under 18 and/or attending school (20,178), caring for a child under 6 (1,158) or someone else (243), on unemployment (444), Reach Up (3,363) and participating in drug or alcohol treatment (737)

3SquaresVT Work Requirements – Time Limits

Individuals between the ages of 18 and 54 who are considered able to work (4,701) have a work requirement known as the time limited benefit work requirement

These individuals are required to work or participate in a job training program 80 hours/month, or volunteer a certain number of hours/month (94 people currently) or be exempt

Exemptions include children in the household (2,477) pregnancy (95), experiencing homelessness (1,564), being a veteran (6), being a former foster child (5), personal obstacle or barrier (35)

3SquaresVT benefits end for people who don't comply, or are not exempt, after 3 months (currently 425 people in this category with 1 or more months)

New website <https://dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/3SquaresVT/WorkRules>

Payment Accuracy

States are evaluated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on the accuracy of their eligibility and benefit determinations (both overpayments and underpayments)

	National Avg	Vermont	National Ranking
FFY24	10.83%	5.17%	Unofficial numbers
FFY23	11.68%	3.45%	3 rd
FFY22	11.54%	4.57%	3 rd
FFY19	7.36%	3.01%	4 th

Timeliness and Other Outcome Measures

In addition to ensuring accuracy of benefits amounts, timely eligibility decisions with optimal customer service is a priority for USDA and Vermont to ensure that eligible households have access to nutrition assistance

Vermont's current timeliness rate is 94.55%, #16 in the country

This is an area we are seeking to improve – goal is to consistently maintain greater than 95% each quarter

Vermont is also regularly audited by USDA on topics that include program access, compliance with all aspects of federal policies (eligibility, work rules, quality control, format and content of notices and other documents and many other topics)

3SquaresVT is more than just food benefits

The Food & Nutrition Team runs
several related programs



3SVT Nutrition Education Program

Evidence-based program that helps people live healthy, active lives (100% federally funded)

Teaches people how to make their 3SquaresVT dollars stretch, shop for and cook healthy meals and stay physically active

SNAP-Ed partners include:

- Vermont Dept of Health
- Vermont Foodbank and local food pantries
- Come Alive Outside
- Vermont Community Garden Network
- University of Vermont Extension Program
- Abenaki Tribal Nation
- People's Farm Stand

3SVT Employment & Training Program

Individual Career Advancement Network (ICAN) provides:

- Job search and job search training services
- Education
- Job retention services after someone reaches their employment goal
- Participant reimbursements

Partners include Employee Assistance Program, VT Dept of Labor, VT Association of Business Industry and Rehabilitation, VT Foodbank's Community Kitchen Academy, Working Fields

Other Facts:

- Average age is 44
- Average participant reimbursement \$208
- Total of 326 participants since 10/1/2024

3SVT Outreach Program

Less than half of income-eligible Vermont households participate in 3SquaresVT

Outreach program is partnership with Community Action Agencies, Area Agencies of Aging, the Vermont Foodbank, Hunger Free Vermont and others to:

- Outreach
- Educate and
- Assist Vermonters in accessing the program

Farm to Family Program

Seasonal program to help income-eligible Vermonters buy locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets and farm stands

July – end of October every year

Eligible households receive a \$30 book of coupons and Senior households receive a \$48 booklet

2024 season had 43 farmers' markets and 20 farm stands participating with \$95,040 in coupon redemption

Summer EBT

New summer food program to help families buy groceries when children are out of school and home during the summer – benefit is \$120/child

Not SNAP – has its own separate set of federal rules

Most children participating are found automatically eligible because they are already participating in 3SVT, Reach Up, Medicaid, foster program and school meals program

Applications: <https://summerebt.vermont.gov/>

In 2024, Vermont distributed \$4,650,120 to 23,247 households with 38,751 children

Questions?

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Accessibility Requests

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