



**Island Harvest Offers Free Consultation for SNAP Assistance and other resources to all Long Islanders Impacted by COVID-19 health and financial crisis**

**LONG ISLAND, NY – March 26, 2020** - During this unprecedented health crisis, Long Island's Island Harvest is working hard to provide necessities and resources for those who are most susceptible and vulnerable during this emergency. Island Harvest provides **free referral and free consultation and assistance** for SNAP benefits over the phone, and you do not have to go to the Department of Social Services. Island Harvest can walk you through the online application by telephone or complete a short intake and submit the online application for you.

For example, working families/individuals who are now finding themselves underemployed or unemployed. Seniors and people with disabilities, who find themselves with limited resources due to the financial crisis. Call Island Harvest even if you think you do not qualify. ***Taisha Freeman, SNAP and Community Resource Supervisor, taisha@islandharvest.org or 631-873-4775 Extension (207)***. A prolonged period without a paycheck can often mean the difference between choosing to eat, or pay other obligations such as rent, mortgage, utilities, or even medicine. **Call now free assistance.**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, SNAP, formerly known as food stamps, is an entitlement program that provides people with the money they need for food. Eligibility for SNAP is based on income, however Island Harvest SNAP Coordinators are able to screen, as a complimentary service, all prospects and clients to help determine what services are available to you during this critical time.

Island Harvest SNAP Coordinators are available to speak with clients over the phone at their convenience. They are able to help clients in English, Spanish or Creole. Once completed, all SNAP applications are then submitted to the local offices at the Department of Social Services, who review the applications to ensure the information is accurate and a representative will call each client for a phone interview. This process can take 30 days from start to finish.

SNAP is only one of the many services the Island Harvest team is able to connect clients to. Often clients have additional concerns outside of food. During each free referral screening, Island Harvest will be able to provide referrals to clients to local food pantries and other community resources (housing, furniture, employment, education, etc) that are available across Long Island. **For further information about this program, please contact Taisha Freeman, SNAP and Community Resource Supervisor, taisha@islandharvest.org or 631-873-4775 x 207.**

### **What is SNAP?**

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) issues electronic benefits that can be used like cash to purchase food. SNAP helps low-income working people, senior citizens, the disabled and others feed their families.

### **What can I purchase with SNAP?**

Only Food Items can be purchased with SNAP benefits, such as:

- breads and cereals
- fruits and vegetables
- meats, fish and poultry
- dairy products
- You can also purchase seeds and plants, which produce food for your household to eat.

### **Where to use SNAP:**

- Most Supermarkets
- Grocery Stores
- Local Stores
- Farmers' Markets

### **What can't I purchase with SNAP?**

- beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco
- any nonfood items, such as:
- pet food
- soap, paper products
- household supplies
- vitamins and medicine
- food that will be eaten in the store
- hot foods

### **Who is eligible to receive SNAP benefits?**

If your gross income, based on family size, is at or below the amounts in the following charts, you may be eligible for SNAP benefits. But, the only way to determine if your household is eligible for SNAP benefits is to apply. You may qualify if your household's gross income is less than...

1 Person Household	\$2023 Monthly/\$24276 Annually
2 Person Household	\$2743 Monthly/\$32916 Annually
3 Person Household	\$3463 Monthly/\$41556 Annually
4 Person Household	\$4183 Monthly/\$50196 Annually

### **How To Apply for SNAP benefits?**

Contact Taisha Freeman, SNAP and Community Resource Supervisor at Island Harvest, [taisha@islandharvest.org](mailto:taisha@islandharvest.org) or 631-873-4775. Island Harvest will walk you through the step-by-step process to apply for SNAP by guiding you on which documents you will need, asking a series of questions about your household, and by helping, you submit your application.

### **About Island Harvest Food Bank**

Island Harvest Food Bank is a leading hunger-relief organization that provides food and other resources to people in need. Always treating those we help with dignity and respect, our mission is “to end hunger and reduce food waste on Long Island” through efficient food collection and distribution; enhanced hunger-awareness and nutrition-education programs; job training; and direct services targeted at children, seniors, veterans, and others at risk of food insecurity.

As a result of Island Harvest Food Bank’s dynamic business model, more than 94% of expended resources go directly to programs and services that support more than 300,000 Long Islanders facing hunger. Island Harvest Food Bank is a lead agency in the region’s emergency response preparedness for food and product distribution and is a member of Feeding America®, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief charity. For five consecutive years, Island Harvest Food Bank has earned a four-star rating from Charity Navigator, an independent nonprofit watchdog organization. Island Harvest Food Bank is among just 9% of the non-profits rated by Charity Navigator to merit the four-star designation. More information about our programs and services, and how you can help, is at [www.islandharvest.org](http://www.islandharvest.org)