



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DES Announces New Simplified Process for Older Adults Applying for Nutrition Assistance

PHOENIX - (July 1, 2022) The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) announced today the new Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) for older adults in need of Nutrition Assistance (NA) benefits. By simplifying the application, interview and verification process, more individuals ages 60 years and older will be able to receive critical assistance more easily.

"We've now made it easier for this population to access critical nutrition assistance so they can remain healthy within their own homes and communities," said DES Director Michael Wisehart. "I am grateful for our community partners for their collaboration in serving older adults facing food insecurity, and helping to remove barriers to proper nutrition."

The project provides ESAP households with many additional special considerations, such as:

- A shorter and simpler application
- A longer approval period of 36 months during which they will receive Nutrition Assistance
- No required contact with DES halfway through the approval period (known as the Mid-Approval Contact)
- An interview may not be required to renew benefits
- Fewer changes that are required to be reported

Arizona joins nine other states approved by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service to provide ESAP to qualifying older adults. [According to the USDA](#), approximately a third of the eligible elderly population has participated in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) historically. In Arizona, approximately 70,000 households each month receive NA benefits and include a member who fits the eligibility criteria for ESAP.

Households may be eligible for ESAP when all members applying are:

- Age 60 years old or older
- Have no earned or self-employment income

Exception: Working in exchange for something other than money, such as meals, housing, clothing, or other needs, is not considered countable income.

For more information about ESAP and how to apply, visit des.az.gov/ESAP.

###