



## **HOW TO USE YOUR SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) BENEFITS**

SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency. Households must meet certain requirements to be eligible for SNAP and receive benefits.

The amount of SNAP benefits you receive depends on the number of people in your household, your household's countable income, and where in Alaska you live. Amounts are based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture Thrifty Food Plan, which is an estimate of what it costs to provide nutritious, inexpensive meals. You can use SNAP benefits in most grocery stores, and at participating farmer's markets.

### **WHAT CAN SNAP BUY?**

Any food for the household, such as:

- Fruits and vegetables;
- Meat, poultry, and fish;
- Dairy products;
- Breads and cereals;
- Other foods such as snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages; and
- Seeds and plants, which produce food for the household to eat.

### **WHAT SNAP BENEFITS CANNOT BUY:**

- Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes, or tobacco;
- Vitamins, medicines, and supplements. If an item has a Supplement Facts label, it is considered a supplement and is not eligible for SNAP purchase.
- Live animals (except shellfish, fish removed from water, and animals slaughtered prior to pick-up from the store);
- Prepared foods fit for immediate consumption;
- Hot foods;
- Any nonfood items such as:
  - Pet foods
  - Cleaning supplies, paper products, and other household supplies
  - Hygiene items, cosmetics

## **BASIC RULES WHEN USING SNAP BENEFITS TO BUY GROCERIES:**

- Always bring your Alaska Quest card when you go shopping. You cannot purchase groceries with SNAP benefits without having the card with you.
- Know your Alaska Quest card balance before you go shopping.
- You will not receive change back. The total value of the purchase, including cents, will be deducted from your SNAP account on your Alaska Quest card.
- SNAP benefits may not be used to pay for credit or charge accounts. SNAP benefits can be used only at the time of a food purchase.
- You cannot be charged sales tax on SNAP purchases.

## **HELPFUL HINTS**

- As you put groceries in your cart, keep the food items that can be purchased with SNAP benefits separate from items that you must purchase with cash. By doing this, you may be able to get through the checkout counter faster.
- Buying food products in larger quantities may help stretch your SNAP dollar.
- You may use manufacturer's discount coupons, if your grocer accepts them.

## **SPECIAL SUBSISTENCE HUNTING AND FISHING RULES**

If you live in a community which access to retail stores is difficult and you rely on hunting and fishing for subsistence, you may be able to purchase hunting and fishing equipment with SNAP benefits. Eligible households are given a specially marked identification card.

Equipment that is okay to purchase are items necessary for attaining food including but not limited to: nets, lines, hooks, fishing rods, harpoons, knives, ice augers and other equipment. Equipment such as items used for purpose of transportation, clothing, shelter, firearms, ammunition and explosives are not eligible for purchase.

Even though some subsistence hunting and fishing items may be expensive, they cannot be purchased on credit and paid for later with SNAP benefits. Nor can they be paid for before the item is delivered.