

SNAP and Cash Assistance Benefit Skimming Replacement FAQ

If your SNAP or Cash benefits have been electronically stolen, you can now submit a claim for replacement of these stolen benefits. Your benefits may be partially or entirely replaced.

What is electronic benefit theft (also known as “skimming” “phishing” or “card cloning”)?

Skimming is a type of theft. Thieves put an overlay on a store’s card-swiping machine to copy EBT, credit, and debit card information. The thieves use the information to make fake cards (called “clones”) and use them to steal money from accounts. Skimming can happen anywhere you swipe your EBT card. Your benefits can be stolen through skimming even if you always have possession of your EBT card.

Phishing is a different type of scheme where thieves trick people into clicking on a link (usually sent through text or email) that allows them to access your account information.

What should I do if my benefits were stolen?

It can be frustrating and frightening to have your benefits stolen. But there are steps you can take to reduce your exposure and submit a claim for replacement benefits.

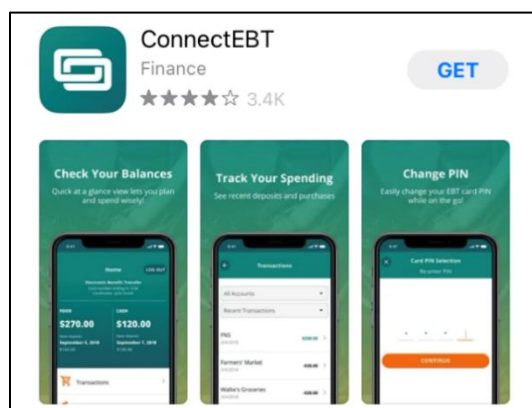
Step 1. Report your card as stolen. If you realize your benefits have been stolen, you must report your EBT card as stolen. To report your card stolen, request a new card, and change your PIN, please go to <https://www.connectebt.com/> or call EBT Customer Service at 888-328-6399. You will not receive any replacement benefits if you have not reported that your EBT card was stolen. **Note:** at this time, connectebt.com is only available in English and Spanish. The EBT Customer Service line requires you to enter the last four digits of your EBT card number – after that, service is available in Arabic, Mandarin, English, Haitian-Creole, Italian, Korean, Russian, and Spanish.

Step 2. Obtain your EBT Transaction history. To submit a claim for replacement benefits, you must report the date, location, and amount of each individual transaction that was fraudulent. These are the transactions which you yourself did not make, but rather were made by whoever stole your card’s information.

How to get your EBT History:

There are several ways to obtain the history of your EBT transactions. Choose whichever is easiest for you:

- **Option 1:** Checking your EBT history at connectebt.com/ or by downloading the ConnectEBT mobile app (available for download in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store); or
- **Option 2:** Calling the toll-free EBT Customer Service line at 1-888-328-6399. You may use the helpline to Hear your last ten transactions on the automated menu or Request a printed two-month statement of your account history from the automated menu or from a customer service representative. You can also



review your transactions with a live customer service representative. For transactions which were more than 15 months ago, you will need to speak to a representative.

Your EBT history will include mostly transactions that you remember making – such as trips to your regular grocery store. But you may see transactions which look strange – stores you’ve never shopped at, maybe even in cities you’ve never visited. These kinds of transactions may indicate electronic benefit theft (fraud). You will need to report the date, location, and amount of each of these fraudulent transactions to submit a claim for replacement benefits.

Step 3. Submit a claim for Replacement Benefits.

Once you have identified which transactions were fraudulent, you are ready to submit a claim for replacement benefits.

There are several ways to submit a claim:

1. Online: visit nyc.gov/hra

Submitting a claim **online is the fastest, easiest method! DSS Strongly recommends applicants submit a claim online if possible.**

2. Mail: To obtain a paper claim form, you can:

- Print a claim form available at nyc.gov/hra or
- Call Infoline [718-557-1399] and request a form be mailed to you.
- Visit your local Center

You can mail a completed paper claim form to:

Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 02-9121
Brooklyn GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202

Submitting a paper claim form, especially requesting a form be mailed to you, is the slowest method, and it may take longer for DSS to receive your claim and issue any replacement benefits.

3. In-Person: You can visit your Benefits Access Center, SNAP Center, or HASA Center. You can find SNAP and BAC Centers on nyc.gov/hra (under the ‘Locations’ tab).

What information will I need to submit a claim?

You will need:

1. Your Client Identification Number (CIN) and Case number.
2. Your Current Mailing Address
3. The date, location, and amount of each fraudulent transaction.

If you have had both SNAP and Cash benefits stolen, you must report them on the same claim form. There will be separate sections of the form so the transactions will not get mixed up.

What is my client identification number (CIN)?

Your client identification number is an 8-character code which is a mix of letters and numbers. You can find your CIN on your EBT Card, as shown below. It is labeled “ID Number”. Each person on a case has their own CIN – but you MUST use the CIN listed on your EBT card for the application to be processed, even if that CIN belongs to someone else on your case.



How do I find my Case Number?

Your case number has ten characters. The first nine characters are numbers, and the final character is a letter. Your case number is not listed on your EBT card, but you can find your case number on any notices HRA has sent you about your case, and also find it by logging in to ACCESSHRA. If you have trouble finding your case number, you can also call Infoline [718-557-1399] or visit your Center.

Why do I have to confirm that I reported my card as lost or stolen?

HRA wants to ensure that your account is no longer at risk, and that any replacement benefits that are placed on our card are not stolen again. The instructions above, and the instructions on the claim form, can guide you through the process of reporting your card stolen.

How do I complete the rest of the claim form?

There are a few summary fields to fill out before you list your individual stolen transactions.

Cash Benefits: The first section is about stolen Cash benefits. If you did not have any Cash Assistance benefits stolen, please leave this section blank. Below is a list of the questions and instructions.

- **Date I Realized my Cash benefits were stolen:** This is the date when you became aware that your benefits had been stolen. This might not be the date of the actual theft. This date should not be *before* the date of the fraudulent transactions. **If you do not know the exact date, you should leave this field blank.** Leaving this field blank will not cause your claim to be rejected.

- **First Date Cash benefits were stolen:** This is the earliest date in your transaction history where you see a fraudulent transaction. For example, if you see fraudulent Cash transactions on April 3rd 2023 and April 4th 2023 then you should list April 3rd 2023 here. If you only see fraudulent transactions on one date, list that date here. Please note that Cash Assistance transactions from before January 1, 2022 are ineligible for replacement, and should not be listed.
- **Last Date Cash benefits were stolen:** This is the most *recent* date in your transaction history where you see a fraudulent transaction. For example, if you see fraudulent Cash transactions on May 5th 2023 and May 6th 2023, then you should list May 6th 2023 here. If you only see fraudulent transactions on one date, list that date here. If you only see fraudulent transactions on one date, your “first date” and “last date” will be the same – that is OK.
- **Total Cash Benefits that were stolen:** This is the total dollar amount of Cash Assistance Benefits which were stolen. This should be the total (sum) of all the Fraudulent Cash Assistance transactions. For example, if you are reporting one fraudulent cash transaction of \$300, and another fraudulent Cash transaction of \$200, then your Total listed here should be \$500. It is very important that you fill out this “Total” field correctly.

SNAP Benefits: The next section asks about SNAP benefits. If you did not have any SNAP benefits stolen, please leave this section blank. The instructions here are identical to the Cash Assistance portion above, but it’s for SNAP instead of Cash.

- **Date I Realized my SNAP benefits were stolen:** This is the date when you became aware that your SNAP benefits had been stolen. This might not be the date of the actual theft. This date should not be *before* the date of the fraudulent SNAP transactions. **If you do not know the exact date, you should leave this field blank.** Leaving this field blank will not cause your claim to be rejected.
- **First Date SNAP benefits were stolen:** This is the earliest date in your transaction history where you see a fraudulent SNAP transaction. For example, if you see fraudulent SNAP transactions on April 3rd 2023 and April 4th 2023 then you should list April 3rd 2023 here. If you only see fraudulent SNAP transactions on only one date, list that date here. Please note that SNAP transactions before October 1, 2022 are ineligible for replacement, and should not be listed.
- **Last Date SNAP benefits were stolen:** This is the most *recent* date in your transaction history where you see a fraudulent SNAP transaction. For example, if you see fraudulent SNAP transactions on May 5th 2023 and May 6th 2023, then you should list May 6th 2023 here. If you only see fraudulent SNAP transactions on one date, list that date here. If you only see fraudulent SNAP transactions on one date, your “first date” and “last date” will be the same – that is OK.
- **Total SNAP Benefits that were stolen:** This is the total dollar amount of SNAP Assistance Benefits which were stolen. This should be the total (sum) of all the Fraudulent SNAP Assistance transactions. For example, if you are reporting one fraudulent SNAP transaction

of \$400, and another fraudulent SNAP transaction of \$300, then your Total listed here should be \$700. It is very important that you fill out this “Total” field correctly.

Note: You should not add SNAP and Cash benefits together into one “TOTAL”. For example, if you had \$400 of Cash benefits stolen, and \$500 of SNAP benefits stolen, your “TOTAL” should be \$400 Cash in the Cash Assistance Section and \$500 of SNAP in the SNAP section – not \$900 in either section.

Do I have to complete the attestation part in the last section?

Yes – your claim will not be accepted if you do not check the box attesting to the accuracy and truthfulness of your claim.

What if my case has closed?

You do not need to have an active SNAP or Cash Assistance case to be eligible to receive a replacement benefit. If it has been determined that your benefits were stolen through electronic means such as EBT card skimming, cloning, third party misrepresentation, or other similar fraudulent methods like phishing, you may be eligible for replacement benefit even if your case has closed. If you are found eligible for replacement benefits, these will be available for use on your EBT card even if your case is closed. You do not have to re-apply for SNAP or Cash Assistance in order to access the replacement benefit.

Will all of my stolen benefits be replaced?

It depends. For both benefit types, the replacement benefit you are eligible to receive is either the amount of SNAP or cash benefits that were stolen, or an amount equal to two (2) times the SNAP or cash benefits you received in the most recent complete month during which you received SNAP or Cash before your benefits were stolen, **whichever is less**.

How long will it take to get my benefits after I submit a claim?

Processing time will vary. If you are accepted for replacement benefits, please allow up to 4 weeks for replacement benefits to be put on your card and to receive a notice in the mail notifying you of our decision. You do not need to submit another claim while your claim is being processed – submitting another claim will not help us process your claim more quickly.

How long do I have to submit a claim for replacement benefits after I discover the theft?

For both SNAP and Cash, you must submit a claim for replacement benefits within 30 days of discovering that your benefits were stolen. This means that if the “date of discovery” you list on your claim is more than 30 days ago, your claim will be rejected. However – if you do not know your exact date of discovery, you can leave this field blank. Leaving this field blank will not cause your claim to be rejected.

There is one exception to the 30 day rule: reporting fraudulent transactions from prior to August 21, 2023. For SNAP retroactive claims with dates of theft from October 1, 2022 and Cash Assistance retroactive claims with dates of theft from January 1, 2022 up to August 21, 2023, households must complete and submit the replacement application to the district by December 31, 2023, or within thirty (30) days from the date they discovered the theft, whichever is later.

How far back can we report stolen benefits?

There are separate rules for Cash and SNAP.

For Cash: replacement Cash benefits are limited to fraudulent transactions on or after **January 1, 2022**.

For SNAP: replacement SNAP benefits are limited to fraudulent transactions on or after **October 1, 2022**.

What if I've had my benefits stolen more than once? Are there limit on how many times I can submit a claim?

There are separate rules for Cash and SNAP.

For Cash: Households may not receive more than two (2) replacement Cash benefits for the time period from January 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022. Thereafter, households may not receive more than two (2) replacement Cash benefits in a single federal fiscal year (October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023, and October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024). After September 30, 2024, households will only be eligible to receive one (1) replacement Cash benefit in a single federal fiscal year.

For SNAP: Households may not receive more than two (2) replacement SNAP benefits in a single federal fiscal year (October 1, 2022 through September 30, 2023, and October 1, 2023 through September 30, 2024).