

OCEAN COUNTY PRESS RELEASE

12/19/2025 - OCEAN COUNTY OFFICIALS WARN SNAP RECIPIENTS ABOUT RISING FRAUD THREATS

OCEAN COUNTY officials are urging residents who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to take proactive steps to protect their Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards from fraud, as scams targeting these benefits continue to rise across New Jersey.

"SNAP is a vital lifeline for many Ocean County residents, especially seniors and individuals with disabilities," said Ocean County Commissioner Robert S. Arace, who serves as liaison to the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs and the Office of Senior Services. "We want to ensure that these benefits are protected and that our residents are informed about the risks and how to avoid them."

Scammers are increasingly targeting EBT "Families First" cards using skimming devices and deceptive tactics. Ocean County officials recommend the following steps to safeguard benefits:


- Secure your EBT card and PIN – Treat your card like a bank card. Never share your PIN or card information.
- Use the EBT Lock/Unlock feature – This tool allows you to control access to your card and prevent unauthorized use.
- Change your PIN regularly and monitor your balance – Use the app, website, or customer service number to check for suspicious activity.
- Be cautious at stores – Avoid using card readers that appear loose or damaged.
- Stay away from "benefit helpers" – Anyone offering to increase your benefits or speed up your case in exchange for card information is a scammer.

With skimming devices being a big concern in New Jersey, the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs recently enhanced its consumer protection efforts by acquiring two advanced skimming device detectors. These tools are designed to safeguard residents and visitors from credit card fraud at gas pumps and retail registers.

In addition, the Ocean County Office of Senior Services is available to assist older adults and individuals with disabilities in applying for SNAP benefits and answering questions about the program. Staff provides free guidance and support throughout the application process.

"Our departments of Consumer Affairs and Senior Services are doing outstanding work to protect and support Ocean County residents," added Commissioner Arace. "Whether it's preventing fraud or helping someone apply for benefits, these teams are here to serve the public with dedication and care."

Residents can apply for SNAP or check their benefit status by calling the Ocean County Board of Social Services at 732-349-1500. Adults over 60 or those with disabilities may also contact the Ocean County Office of Senior Services at 732-929-2091. Lastly, any suspected fraud should be reported to the Ocean County Department of Consumer Affairs at 732-929-2105.

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