

Cherokee Nation Emergency Cash Assistance Program & Food Distribution Program FAQ

Updated Nov. 5, 2025

Q: Is Cherokee Nation replacing my entire SNAP Payment for November?

No. Cherokee Nation is replacing up to \$185 of November SNAP payment for Cherokee Nation citizens except what local, state or federal governments may pay. As of November 4th some amount of partial federal payments will be made, lowering Cherokee Nation's replacement payments. Cherokee Nation will determine the lowered payment level soon. Lowering payments allows Cherokee Nation to save funds for a future crisis.

Q: Why is Cherokee Nation providing an emergency cash assistance program?

Cherokee Nation Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. and Deputy Chief Bryan Warner, with support from the Council of the Cherokee Nation, created the emergency cash assistance program to assist Cherokee Nation citizens on SNAP nationwide who faced a potential loss or reduction of their SNAP benefits due to the federal government's closure. Because most states' responses have not been adequate to protect Cherokee citizens, the emergency funding to eligible Cherokee citizens is provided to temporarily help fill the gap for families impacted by the government shutdown.

Q: Is the emergency cash assistance program a one-time payment? And how much will I receive?

The emergency cash assistance program is available as a one-time payment to help fill the gap caused by a loss or reduction in November 2025 SNAP benefits. The Cherokee Nation's direct cash assistance is a maximum of \$185 per approved applicant and will be reduced or possibly eliminated based on actions by federal leaders to reopen the government and restore SNAP benefits. The tribe may adjust or eliminate cash assistance amounts as the USDA, or particular states where the applicant lives, pays partial benefits or provides new guidance. This will allow Cherokee Nation to save the funding resources to assist with future emergencies impacting Cherokee citizens.

Q: Who is eligible for this emergency cash assistance?

Cherokee Nation citizens who are an active participant in SNAP and who are not able to receive their SNAP benefits after Nov. 1, 2025, due to the federal government shutdown are eligible for the one-time payment per person in their household for the purpose of food security. Participants must have been active SNAP recipients in October 2025 and will be required to provide proof of SNAP certification. Payments may be lowered or even eliminated if federal leaders restore partial or full SNAP benefits.

Q: When is the deadline to apply for the emergency cash assistance program?

The deadline to apply on the Gadugi Portal is Nov. 14, 2025.

Q: Are At-Large citizens eligible?

Yes, the Cherokee Nation emergency cash assistance program is available to all Cherokee Nation citizens on SNAP nationwide.

Q: Where do I go to apply for Cherokee Nation's emergency cash assistance program and what do I need to provide?

Applications are available using your [Gadugi Portal](#) account. The Gadugi Portal application form will provide a list of eligibility and required documents for applying. Applicants will be required to upload proof of SNAP participation. Payments may be lowered or even eliminated if federal leaders restore partial or full SNAP benefits.

Q: How long will it take to receive my cash assistance?

Cherokee Nation will review and approve eligible applications within three days of receiving an application. Processing of the one-time cash assistance payment is expected to complete within seven days of an application being approved. Payments may be lowered or even eliminated if federal leaders restore partial or full SNAP benefits.

Q: Is this emergency cash assistance available for all Native Americans?

The Cherokee Nation emergency cash assistance program is available to Cherokee Nation citizens only. Payments may be lowered or even eliminated if federal leaders restore partial or full SNAP benefits.

Q: I am not currently receiving SNAP but could qualify. Can I apply for the Cherokee Nation emergency cash assistance program?

Eligible Cherokees must be an existing SNAP participant. Cherokee citizens or citizens of other federally recognized tribes who live within the Cherokee Nation Reservation and who need assistance with food security, but who are *not* SNAP participants, may visit the Cherokee Nation Food Distribution Program to apply. A list of Food Distribution Program eligibility requirements and documentation needed, along with a list of Food Distribution Program locations throughout the Reservation, is available at [this link](#). Payments may be lowered or even eliminated if federal leaders restore partial or full SNAP benefits.

Q: Where can non-Cherokee citizens receive assistance at this time?

Cherokee Nation will be contributing \$1.25 million to qualified food security non-profits within the reservation and contiguous (bordering) counties. These organizations will continue to serve their communities without citizenship requirements.

Q: Can At-Large citizens apply for Cherokee Nation's Food Distribution Program?

The Cherokee Nation Food Distribution Program is dedicated to distributing nutritious foods to eligible Native American families residing within the jurisdictional boundaries of the Cherokee Nation.

Q: Can I receive both the Cherokee Nation Food Distribution Program and the emergency cash assistance payment?

No, applicants who qualify for the Cherokee Nation Food Distribution Program may not apply for the emergency cash assistance program.

Q: What is Cherokee Nation doing to help furloughed federal workers?

Our \$1.25 million in assistance to regional food banks and food pantries are a source of help for anyone impacted by the federal shutdown, including furloughed federal workers. Chief Hoskin's emergency declaration instructed Cherokee Nation Human Services to assist Cherokee Nation citizens who are furloughed federal workers through existing safety net programs for which they may qualify and to provide them with detailed information about our partner food banks and food pantries. There is no direct cash assistance available for furloughed federal workers at this time.