Grants Pass Daily Courier

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Eligible RCC, SOU students can get SNAP food benefits

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Southern Oregon University and Rogue Community College students may qualify for benefits that help them buy groceries as they pursue their education.

With students returning to colleges and universities across the state this fall, the Oregon Department of Human Services is reminding students about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP.

Students ages 18-49 who attend an institute of higher education at least half time, as defined by their school, must meet at least one of the following conditions to be eligible for SNAP:

- Participate in a state or federally funded work-study program.
- Work for pay an average of at least 20 hours per week.
- Be responsible for the care of a young child or meet certain requirements as a parent attending school.
- Receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or unemployment benefits.
- Participate in certain employment and training programs, including SNAP Employment and Training or qualifying Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.
- Be enrolled in an undergraduate course of study intended to be completed in four years or less that leads to employment. This can include students beginning at a community college and planning to transfer to complete a bachelor's degree.

ODHS said other exemptions may also apply depending on the student's circumstances.

The agency said if a student was previously denied SNAP because they did not meet the higher education student eligibility requirements, they can reapply if their student status or circumstances have changed.

At RCC, students can contact the Advocacy & Resource Center at ARC@roguecc.edu or at 541-956-7369 for help with things like food, housing, healthcare and technology.

RCC has a program called STEP (which stands for SNAP Training & Employment Program) for students who receive SNAP benefits and are working toward education or training connected to a specific employment goal. Students who are receiving TANF benefits are not eligible.

The STEP program can be reached at step@roguecc.edu or by calling 541-956-7263.

At Southern Oregon University, students can visit the student food pantry once per week to take up to 10 non-perishable food items, occasional perishable items or add-ons if available, and an unlimited amount of personal hygiene products.

The pantry is located in room 312 of the Stevenson Union building and is generally open Mondays through Fridays fom 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Email foodpantry@sou.edu for more information.

More resources for SOU students are online at dos.sou.edu/basic-needs-resources/.

Students interested in SNAP can:

- Apply for or manage benefits online at benefits.oregon.gov.
- Call the ONE Customer Service Center, a state call center, at 800-699-9075.
- Learn more about benefits for students at OregonHunger.org/snap-for-students.

People can also visit an ODHS office in-person. Locations in Southern Oregon include:

- Cave Junction, at 535 E. River St.
- Grants Pass, at 2101 N.W. Hawthorne Ave.
- White City, at 3131 Avenue C.
- Medford, at 673 Market St. and a center for people who are aging or have disabilities at 2860 State St.

- Ashland, at 1658 Ashland St.