

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ohio urges SNAP recipients to protect themselves from potential fraud ODJFS taking anti-fraud measures and offering resources to protect recipients

COLUMBUS, OHIO – Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Director Matt Damschroder reminds Ohioans receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to be extra cautious following ongoing warnings by officials with the [U.S. Food and Nutrition Service](#), indicating that criminals are targeting states for [SNAP benefit theft](#).

“ODJFS takes fraud very seriously, and we are committed to identifying and eliminating fraud in the SNAP program,” Damschroder said. “From increased fraud monitoring efforts to helping SNAP cardholders lock their cards, we’re aggressively working to reduce fraud.”

Criminals have increasingly used a process called skimming to steal account numbers. This involves placing a device over a point-of-sale card reader to copy payment card information. A report from the FICO credit scoring agency shows that card skimming grew 368% from 2021 to 2022.

Recent stories from [WEWS](#) and [USA Today](#) provide more context on the impact of this issue locally and nationally.

ODJFS takes a number of measures to prevent and detect fraud, including:

- **PIN reminders** – ODJFS provides multiple reminders to SNAP recipients – via robocalls, text messages, and on-hold messages – to protect their PINs and EBT cards.
- **External partner communications** – ODJFS provides partners such as the Ohio Grocers Association with fraud prevention tip sheets to help them identify and stop fraudulent activity.
- **County Fraud Control and Prevention Plans** – ODJFS works with county JFS agencies to address fraud prevention efforts and educate communities about what fraud is, how to prevent it, and its consequences.
- **Strategic partnerships** – ODJFS provides information on suspicious SNAP retailer activity to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Office of Inspector General, the U.S. Food and Nutrition Service, and the Ohio Department of Public Safety. These are the main entities charged with identifying and investigating SNAP retailer fraud in Ohio.
- **Data analytics** – ODJFS utilizes a variety of anti-fraud tools to analyze data and detect fraud, including daily monitoring of SNAP retailer transactions for suspicious activity. The agency also checks numerous state and national databases to ensure recipients are who they say they are and are eligible for benefits.



The best way to keep from being a victim is to be vigilant. Here are some tips for SNAP recipients:

- Manage your benefits through the secure ConnectEBT app on your mobile phone or tablet.
 - Users should take advantage of the card lock option, which allows the individual to lock the card from being used at a retailer location and unlock the card to provide access to benefits only while the individual makes a purchase.
 - Users are able to block out-of-state transactions to in-person only.
- Create a PIN for your card that is unique and difficult to guess.
- Change your PIN monthly, before each scheduled deposit.
- Never share your card number or PIN. ODJFS will never ask for these numbers.
- Carefully examine point-of-sale card readers before using them to check for skimming devices.
- When using your card, cover the keypad with your body or hand to stop others from seeing your PIN.

ODJFS takes a variety of actions to prevent SNAP fraud and recover funds fraudulently obtained. Those whose benefits were stolen electronically can request reimbursement. Since Oct. 1, 2022, ODJFS has issued more than \$1.4 million in reimbursements to approximately 3,400 Ohioans.

Individuals who have had their benefits stolen electronically can seek reimbursement by contacting their local County Department of Job and Family Services.

For more information about how Ohioans can protect their accounts, visit jfs.ohio.gov/cash-food-and-refugee-assistance/Protect+Against+Fraud.

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The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services manages vital programs that strengthen Ohio families. These include job training and employment services, unemployment insurance, cash and food assistance, child care, child and adult protective services, adoption, and child support services.

