

# As soldiers struggle to afford necessities, the Army suggests applying for food stamps

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By Roy Batty

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The U.S. army has suggested that soldiers apply for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, which are more commonly known as food stamps, to help cover their rising costs from inflation.

The U.S. Army has cited higher prices on a variety of products because of inflation in its recently released official guidance.

“With inflation affecting everything from gas prices to groceries to rent, some Soldiers and their families are finding it harder to get by on the budgets they’ve set and used before,” the guidance written by Sergeant Major Michael A. Grinston reads. “Soldiers of all ranks can seek guidance, assistance, and advice through the Army’s Financial Readiness Program.”

Soldiers have had prior issues affording food; however, a turbulent economy has plunged more military families into poverty. The Pentagon have said that “24% of enlisted personnel” are currently struggling to afford groceries.

The Financial Readiness Program is helping soldiers make ends meet, but Mackenzie Eaglen, who is an analyst at the American Enterprise Institute believes the U.S. Army should take more action and tackle the root cause of the issue.

“While food stamps are a Band-Aid, they’re also an admission that basic pay for enlisted troops and their families is too low – further exacerbated by unyielding inflation causing paychecks to shrink more,” she said. “A better solution is to abandon rosy inflation assumptions, boost basic pay, and request a defense topline above inflation each year so forces and families have predictability and stability.”

Financial Frontline is another program which offers a “one-stop shop” with resources such as educational videos for dealing with debt, tax resources, financial literacy training, and more. The Financial Readiness Program also provides free financial counseling.

The guidance also referred soldiers to the government’s Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program for those who are eligible.

“If you join the military and have a government student loan, the U.S. government will pay it off in 10 years through the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program,” it said.