



Farmhand<> Forage: Merchant Onboarding Process

Before you can accept SNAP online, your store must first be authorized to accept SNAP in person at your brick & mortar location.

This authorization is issued directly by USDA's Food and Nutrition Administration (FNA, formerly FNS) and results in the FNS Number you'll need for Forage's online onboarding process. If you already have an FNS number, please proceed to the [online onboarding process](#).

Forage Contact Email: merchant-operations@joinforage.com;

There are 6 steps to complete your brick & mortar authorization:

1. Confirm your store is eligible and create a [Login.gov](#) account

Estimated Time to Completion: 10 minutes

- Confirm your store qualifies as a Retail Food Store or other approved designation. If you're unsure, call the SNAP Retailer Service Center at 1-877-823-4369 before applying.
- Create an account at login.gov using an email address, secure password, and a second authentication method (e.g., a mobile phone number)
- You'll use this Login.gov account to complete and track your SNAP application

2. Complete the SNAP Retailer Application (Form FNS-252) through FNA's STARS portal

Estimated Time to Completion: 15-20 minutes

- Access the application at stars.fns.usda.gov/osa using your Login.gov credentials
- Have the following ready before you start:
- Legal business name, physical store address, and business phone/email
- Full name, home address, date of birth, and Social Security Number for each owner, partner, and officer
- Your store's sales data
- You have 30 days to complete the application once started, or it will be automatically deleted
- Please reply to the Forage team with any questions you have about this step

3. Submit your required supporting documentation

Estimated Time to Completion: varies, plan for 1-2 hours to gather documents

- After you submit the application, FNA will provide instructions on exactly which documents to upload
- This typically includes photo ID, Social Security Number verification for all listed owners, and business sales records
- FNA's 45-day review window (see Step 4) does not begin until all requested documents have been received, so aim to submit everything together
- Please inform your Forage contact with any questions you have about this step



4. Wait for a decision from FNA

Estimated Time to Completion: up to 45 days after FNA receives all required documentation

- FNA will contact you directly if any further information is needed
- As part of the review, FNA may conduct an in-store site visit
- You can check your application status any time at fna.usda.gov/snap/retailer/application-status
- You cannot accept SNAP in your store until you are authorized by FNA

5. Receive your SNAP Permit and FNS Number

- Once approved, FNA will issue a SNAP Permit listing your store name, location, owner name(s), and your FNS Number
- Save this FNS Number – it's required to order and program your POS/EBT equipment, and it's also the number you'll list in Step 1 of Forage's online SNAP onboarding process

6. Set up your POS/EBT equipment and start accepting SNAP in-store!

- Program the EBT-capable POS equipment using your FNS Number
 - If you already have POS equipment, ask your current processor to program it to accept EBT
- Once your equipment is live, you're ready to accept SNAP benefits in-store – and can move forward with Forage's online SNAP onboarding
 - You'll need to transact at least twice monthly on an in-store POS device to keep your FNA number active.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to Forage at merchant-operations@joinforage.com for any support you need along the way!