

The Orange County Government Gazette

Serving Orange County Residents since 1752

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November SNAP (FNS) Benefits Delayed, Reduced

Because of the federal government shutdown, as of Nov. 1. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits — also known as Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits — will be delayed and/or reduced until federal funding is restored.

Despite ongoing uncertainty about SNAP/FNS benefits, it's expected that some recipients would face delays even if the federal government issued the funds today.

In North Carolina, food benefits are loaded every other day on EBT cards from the 3rd to the 21st of the month depending on the last digit of recipients' social security numbers. Some Orange County residents began experiencing benefit disruptions on Monday, Nov. 3, and more families will be impacted as the month progresses.

What Recipients Should Know

- November benefits have been delayed and/or reduced.

What Recipients Can Do

- Check your balance:** Use your October benefits carefully and prioritize essential grocery items. Use the *ebtEDGE* app or call the number on your EBT card.
- Stay informed:** Visit orangecountync.gov/DSS or follow us on social media.
- Need food now?** Find resources at go.ncsu.edu/feedororangecounty.



Contact us: (919) 245-2800 or dssinfo@orangecountync.gov

What Orange County is Doing

- Orange County DSS is:
- Working with state and federal partners to monitor SNAP funding.
- Coordinating with local food banks and community organizations to prepare for increased need.

Orange County Department of Social Services
(919) 245-2800
orangecountync.gov/DSS
More info: ncdhs.gov/fns

Orange County Board of Commissioners Select Design for Future Crisis Diversion Facility

During their Oct. 21 business meeting, the Orange County Board of Commissioners selected a design for the county's future crisis diversion facility. The chosen design—the original scheme with simplified architectural features—includes all the components recommended by the Crisis Diversion Facility Subcommittee while saving the county approximately \$1 million.

The 19,825-square-foot facility is estimated to cost \$27.2 million and will include the following features:

- 12-bay Behavioral Health Urgent Care (BHUC) unit for individuals ages 4 and older with short-term triage, stabilization, assessment, and observation needs
- 16-bed Facility-Based Crisis (FBC) unit for adults requiring longer-term (more than 23 hours) care
- Community wing featuring a peer living room and resource center to support discharge and connect individuals with treatment and supportive services

Gilbane Building Company, the Construction Manager at Risk, provided a preliminary construction budget estimate of \$25.7 million for the facility in July 2025. When additional costs for furniture, fixtures, and equipment (FFE), owner's contingency, and commissioning services were added, the total budget estimate for the project increased to \$28.2 million. To address the budget



gap, the county asked CPL Architecture and Gilbane to identify options to reduce the facility's scope while maintaining core functionality.

In April 2025, the Board of Commissioners approved the purchase and sale agreement for a five-acre parcel off Waterstone Drive in Hillsborough for \$1.35 million to serve as the site for the new facility. Once complete, the crisis diversion facility will provide a supportive, therapeutic environment for individuals experiencing behavioral health crises — diverting them from emergency rooms and the criminal justice system.

Planning and design for the facility will be finalized later this year, with public engagement opportunities to follow. Groundbreaking is anticipated in 2026, and the facility is slated to open in 2027.

Orange County Network Cable Project Underway

Orange County recently began installing communication lines in parts of Hillsborough. To support this initiative, Duke Energy workers have been trimming trees and upgrading utility poles to taller structures. This work will occur in the following locations in Hillsborough through November (weather permitting):

- Cornelius Street
- Lakeshore Drive
- N. Nash Street
- N. Occaneechee Street
- N. Hasell Street
- S. Wake Street

Duke Energy has mailed informational postcards to residents who live in the areas of Hillsborough where the work will be done.



Orange County plans to complete its portion of the project in January 2026 (weather permitting). Please be mindful of crews and equipment.

For more information about the project contact Orange County Community Relations Director Wil Glenn, wglenn@orangecountync.gov; 919-245-2302.

Help Make the Holidays Brighter for Local Families

The Orange County Department of Social Services (DSS) is calling on residents, businesses, schools, faith communities and civic groups to help brighten the holidays for local children through The Toy Chest, the County's annual toy distribution program for eligible families.

As the number of children in need grows each year, DSS is hosting a family-friendly donation event: Take a Picture with St. Nick. Community members who bring a new, unwrapped toy in original packaging or donate to The Toy Chest will receive a free photo with Santa.

Event Details

- What: Take a Picture with St. Nick — Toy donation and free Santa photos
- When: Saturday, Nov. 22, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
- Where: Walmart, 501 Hampton Pointe B, Hillsborough, NC
- Learn more / donate online: orangecountync.gov/654/Donate-Toys

"The success of these programs is made possible, in large part, to the local donations and community volunteers," said Sharron Hinton, Human Services Manager at Orange County DSS.

Why it matters

The Toy Chest provides holiday gifts, books, clothing and food supports for children ages 12 and under from low-income families in Orange County (household income at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines).

The sponsorship program pairs donors with families being served by DSS, including foster children, vulnerable adults, seniors, and young parents.

How to help

- Bring a toy or gift card by Dec. 9, 2025:
1. Collect or purchase new, unopened toys or gift cards (see Gift Ideas PDF on the Toy Chest page).
2. Drop off at either Orange County DSS office



during business hours by Dec. 9. Hillsborough Commons is located at 113 Mayo Street, Hillsborough. Southern Human Services is located at 2501 Homestead Road, Chapel Hill. Please hand gift cards directly to staff, or use listed Toys for Tots drop-off locations.

3. Leave your name and address if you'd like a receipt. All donations are tax-deductible.

Host a toy drive:

Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops, classrooms, Sunday Schools, neighborhood groups and businesses are encouraged to organize toy drives, set up collection boxes, or host "bring-a-gift" parties—great for team morale and community impact.

Give online or by mail (tax-deductible):

- Online: hillsborough-nc.toysfortots.org
- By mail:
- Orange County Department of Social Services, PO Box 8181, Hillsborough, NC 27278

Please designate "Toy Chest" in the memo.

Who qualifies

The Toy Chest serves low-income families not in the Sponsorship Program with children ages 0–12 residing in Orange County. Food supports (including gift cards and "Food Lion Feeds" boxes) help families with school-aged children who rely on free/reduced-price school meals during the year.

Media & Program Contacts

- Media inquiries: Wil Glenn, Orange County Community Relations Director wglenn@orangecountync.gov or 919-245-2302
- Sponsor a family or individual: Serena McPherson
- smcpherson@orangecountync.gov, 919-245-2871
- Toy Chest / volunteers / donations: Holidayprogram@orangecountync.gov, 919-245-2931

Orange County Food Resource List

This list contains locations and contacts for food pantries and food distributions to help people who are facing food insecurity.



Scan or go to go.ncsu.edu/FeedOrangeCounty

For more information, contact N.C. Cooperative Extension- Orange County Center 1020 US Hwy 70 W, Suite 130, Hillsborough, NC, (919) 245-2050 Visit orange.ces.ncsu.edu for more resources!

List maintained by the



Mary Saved \$500 on her Medicare Costs. How Much Can You Save?



Medicare's Open Enrollment Period is October 15 to December 7.

During that time, you can make plan changes that can lower your Medicare costs. SHIP offers **FREE** help to compare plans and enroll.

Meet with a Certified Counselor for **FREE and unbiased** assistance. Appointments available at the Passmore Center in Hillsborough, the Seymore Center in Chapel Hill, or using Zoom Video Chat.

Medicare Open Enrollment: **October 15-December 7**



Schedule an appointment at orangecountync.gov/Medicare or 919-245-4274.



Orange County Veterans Day Ceremony

Guest speaker: Brigadier General Vivek Kshetrapal, Deputy Commanding General of 81st Readiness Division of the US Army Reserve

Tuesday, Nov. 11, 2025
11am

Orange County Veterans Memorial
2501 Homestead Drive, Chapel Hill, NC

ocveteransmemorial.com



HOW YOU CAN HELP

We need supplies for Cold Weather Shelters and Street Outreach programs.

- Twin sized blankets & comforters
- Sleeping bags, tents & ponchos
- Hand warmers & flashlights
- Individual servings of ramen (no shrimp), oatmeal & grits
- Individual bags of chips and snacks
- Breakfast, granola, & protein bars
- Gatorade & vitamin water
- Single serve instant coffee, tea bags & hot cocoa packets
- Sugar packets & powdered creamer
- Hand soap and hand sanitizer
- Personal hygiene kits (travel-sized shampoo, conditioner, soap, toothpaste, toothbrush, and mouthwash)
- Laundry detergent
- Clorox wipes and spray
- 30-gallon trash bags
- Quarters (for laundry)
- Toilet paper and paper towels



Drop off items Monday-Friday 8am-5pm at either location:

OC Housing Department, 300 W Tryon St, Hillsborough, NC
Attn: Darielys Dukas Serrano

OC Housing Department, 2501 Homestead Rd, Chapel Hill, NC
Attn: Stephanie Figueroa



For more info, call 919-245-2490, or go to orangecountync.gov/OCPEH

Fall is the BEST time to get flu, RSV, and COVID-19 vaccines.

The Health Department can help you make an informed decision.



Scan code, Visit OrangeCountyNC.Gov/FallVaccines, or Call (919) 245-2400



WE ARE HIRING!

To learn more about job opportunities available in Orange County Government, please visit www.orangecountync.gov/Careers or contact the Human Resources Recruitment Manager at (919) 245-2557