



County of Sacramento
Department of Human Assistance



Food Stamp Program Fact Sheet

*Food Stamp Program
April 2009*

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

To prevent hunger and improve the nutritional health for low-income households.

WHO QUALIFIES FOR FOOD STAMPS?

Most households qualify for Food Stamps if their income and resources are low.

HOUSEHOLDS MAY BE ANY OF THESE

- An individual living alone.
- An individual living with others but who buys food and cooks meals separately.
- A group of individuals living together who buy food and cook meals together.
- Parents living with their children 21 years old or younger (married or unmarried, with their own children or not).
- Adult children (22 years or older) living with their parents can have a separate household as long as they buy and cook their meals apart from the parents
- Siblings living together (and separate from their parents) can have separate households as long as they are 18 years or older and they buy and cook meals apart from each other.
- A woman or a woman with children living temporarily in a battered woman's shelter.

HOW TO QUALIFY FOR FOOD STAMPS

Eligibility is determined based on several things, two of which are:

- The amount of your household's income, and
- the amount of your household's resources.

RESOURCES

The resource limit for most Food Stamps is \$2000. Households with at least one person who is disabled or age 60 or older are allowed \$3000.

All tax-preferred education amounts (e.g., 529s) and retirement accounts (e.g., IRAs), are excluded as countable resources in determining eligibility.

RESOURCES NOT COUNTED WHEN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

- Your home and its surrounding lot
- Vehicles
- Cash surrender value of life insurance policies
- Cash value of certain pension funds
- Household goods and personal property
- Work-related tools and equipment



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To be eligible, your monthly gross income (before payroll deductions) must be the same or below the amount listed in the chart, for your household size.

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
MAXIMUM GROSS MONTHLY INCOME	\$1127	\$1517	\$1907	\$2297	\$2687	\$3077	\$3467	\$3857

Add \$377 for each additional member.

ALLOWABLE DEDUCTIONS

- 20% of gross monthly earned income
- Standard deduction of **\$144, \$147, \$172 or \$197**, depending on household size.
- **Dependent care** cap on the deduction for dependent care expenses has been eliminated. Families eligible for the deduction will be allowed to deduct the entire amount of dependent care expenses when calculating eligibility and benefit levels. This expense may be necessary for the person to work, look for work, or prepare for work through training or schooling
- If housing costs are more than 50% of income after all other allowable deductions are considered, an excess shelter deduction of **\$446** is allowed. **Homeless** households that incur shelter costs are allowed a standard deduction of **\$143**.
- Households may be allowed a **Standard Utility Allowance** of **\$287** if heating or cooling bills are paid separately from rent/mortgage. A **Limited Utility Allowance** of **\$83** is allowed for households that do not have heating or cooling, but have at least two other utility bills, such as garbage, water, phone. A **Telephone Utility Allowance** of **\$20** is allowed for households that have a phone bill only.

COLLEGE STUDENTS

- To qualify for Food Stamps, students (age 18 to 49) enrolled half-time or more must meet other criteria on the date of the Food Stamp interview, among which are:
- Working at least 20 hours per week
- Approved for State or Federally funded work study for the current term
- Have parental responsibility for a child under age 6
- Be a recipient of CalWORKs



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EXPEDITED SERVICES

You may get Expedited Services if you are otherwise eligible, and meet any of the following criteria:

- Your **combined** gross monthly income **and** liquid resources are less than your total rent/mortgage **and** utilities; OR
- Your gross monthly income is **less** than \$150, **and** your total household liquid resources are \$100 or less; OR
- You are a migrant or seasonal farm worker who is destitute and have liquid resources of \$100 or less.

Proof of identification prior to receiving Expedited Services is required. Expedited Service requires that benefits be available to you by the 3rd calendar day following the date your application is filed.

WORK REQUIREMENTS

All able-bodied persons (ages 18-49) without dependents must work 20 hrs per week (monthly average of 80 hrs) or participate 20 hrs per week in an approved work activity.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

State law requires adult Food Stamp recipients to be fingerprinted. Your eligibility worker will tell you more about this.

ELIGIBILITY FOR AGED & DISABLED HOUSEHOLDS

If you are age 60 or over, or you are receiving Social Security Disability (not SSI/SSP), or Medi-Cal due to a disability, or a full VA pension: you may be eligible even though your income is over the gross income limits, if you pay very high rent and utilities and/or have medical expenses well over \$35 per month. This must be computed on a case-by-case basis.

Call our information number, (916) 874-2072, for more information.



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THE AMOUNT OF FOOD STAMPS CAN YOU GET

The size of your household and amount of monthly income determine the benefit amounts. Below are the maximum Food Stamp allotments:

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
MAXIMUM AMOUNT	\$200	\$367	\$526	\$668	\$793	\$952	\$1052	\$1202

Add \$150 for each additional member.

HOW TO TRANSACT FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

Customers are issued a plastic card called an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card. An EBT card is used to make purchases from stores that accept Food Stamp benefits. Eligible purchases are automatically deducted from the available balance on the Food Stamp EBT account.

PROGRAM COST & PARTICIPATION

The United States Department of Agriculture pays all of the costs of the Food Stamp benefits issued, and one-half of the administrative costs of the program. The state and county share the other half of the administrative costs.

During June, 2008, there were 49,280 certified households in Sacramento County for the Food Stamp Program; 124,702 individuals were aided during that month.

COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN ASSISTANCE RESPONSIBILITY

Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance is responsible for certifying eligible households and determining their monthly Food Stamp benefit amount. The Department of Human Assistance administers the program under the supervision of the California Department of Social Services.

WHERE TO APPLY

Persons living in Sacramento County should call one of the numbers listed below to find out where to apply for Food Stamp benefits:

SACRAMENTO (916) 874-2072 **GALT** (209) 745-3484 **ELK GROVE** (916) 685-9273

If you cannot get to an office, someone who knows your circumstances, and is authorized by you, can apply and be interviewed for you. If you are disabled and cannot get someone to apply for you, you may be able to apply by mail.

Call our Information Number: 916-874-2072

For hearing and speech impaired, dial (916) 874-2599 or 711 (California Relay Service) then one of the above phone number.