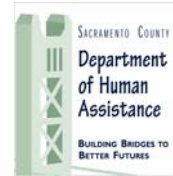




County of Sacramento  
Department of Human Assistance



# Food Stamp Program Fact Sheet

*Food Stamp Program  
October 2009*

## **GOALS OF THE PROGRAM**

The goals of the program are to prevent hunger and improve nutrition and health. The program helps low-income households buy the food they need for a nutritionally adequate diet.

## **WHO QUALIFIES FOR FOOD STAMPS?**

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

## **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 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 basically by two things:

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

## **RESOURCES**

The resource limit for Food Stamps is \$2000 for most households. \$3000 is allowed for households with at least one person who is disabled or age 60 or older. All tax-preferred education amounts (e.g., 529s) and retirement accounts (e.g., IRAs), are excluded as countable resources in determining eligibility.



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## RESOURCES NOT COUNTED WHEN DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY

- Your home and 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

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

<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>MAXIMUM GROSS MONTHLY INCOME</b>	<b>\$1174</b>	<b>\$1579</b>	<b>\$1984</b>	<b>\$2389</b>	<b>\$2794</b>	<b>\$3200</b>	<b>\$3605</b>	<b>\$4010</b>

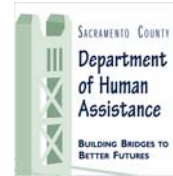
*Add \$406 for each additional member.*

## ALLOWABLE DEDUCTIONS

- 20% of gross monthly earned income
- Standard deduction of **\$141, \$153, \$179 or \$205**, 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 must 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 up to **\$459** 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 **\$88** is allowed for households that do not have heating or cooling expense, but have at least two other utility bills, such as garbage, water, or phone. A **Telephone Utility Allowance** of **\$20** is allowed for households that have a phone bill only.



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### **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

### **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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 or do workfare. If these requirements are not met, eligibility will be limited to 3 months of Food Stamps out of a 36-month period. There are some exceptions to this work requirement.

### **OTHER REQUIREMENTS**

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



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**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.

**HOW MUCH FOOD STAMPS CAN YOU GET**

The size of your household and your monthly income determine how much you get each month. The less monthly income you have, the more Food Stamps you will receive. Below are the maximum food stamp allotments:

<b>HOUSEHOLD SIZE</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>MAXIMUM AMOUNT</b>	<b>\$200</b>	<b>\$367</b>	<b>\$526</b>	<b>\$668</b>	<b>\$793</b>	<b>\$952</b>	<b>\$1052</b>	<b>\$1202</b>
<b>(Eff. 10/2009)</b>								

*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 that they then use to make purchases from stores that accept Food Stamp benefits. The stores will have machines, called POS (point of sale) machines, through which the customers will swipe their EBT cards. The amount of the purchase will be automatically deducted from the Food Stamp EBT account.

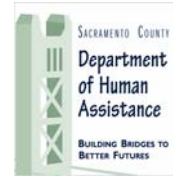
**PROGRAM COST & PARTICIPATION**

The United States Department of Agriculture pays all of the costs of the Food Stamps 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 August 2009, there were 69,332 certified households in Sacramento County for the Food Stamp Program; 166,834 individuals were aided during that month.



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## **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  
S. SACRAMENTO (916) 875-8100

If you cannot get to the 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) and then one of the above phone numbers.