

Food Stamp Eligibility Standards

To give you a better idea on whether you may be eligible to Food Stamps, here are some guidelines. These are not all the rules so we recommend you consult the county eligibility staff for an actual determination.

WHO CAN APPLY

A "household" can be someone who lives alone or is living with others and buys and prepares his/her food separately, OR a group of people living together who buy and prepare their food together. Any adult 22 years of age and younger who lives with his/her parents must apply with the parents even if buying and preparing food separately.

People in some circumstances *cannot* receive food stamps. *You should consult an eligibility worker if you fall into one of these areas as there are often more details to consider or we may be able to refer you to other services.* In general, people who are not eligible include (but are not limited to):

- A person who is a fleeing felon (fleeing to avoid prosecution, custody or confinement after conviction of a felony crime and a warrant for arrest exists)
- In California, a person who receives SSI/SSP
- A person in violation of probation or parole imposed under a federal or state law
- A convicted drug felon
- Boarders
- Residents of institutions
- Certain legal noncitizens
- Persons who are neither U.S. citizens nor legal residents

Most households must pass maximum income and property (asset) tests to be eligible.

INCOME

There are limits to the amount of money you can have coming to you and still receive food stamps. These limits change.

We look at both earned and unearned income. *Some income may not be considered and is exempt* when determining if you can receive food stamps. An eligibility worker can explain what income does not get used.

For most households, a **Gross Income Test** is done using all gross income that is not exempt. There are limits based on the number of persons in the household. Your worker can tell you the current limit for your household. If the household passes this test, or was not required to pass this test, then the **Adjusted Net Income Test** is done. Certain work expenses, unearned income, and other allowable deductions are subtracted from your gross income. The result of the subtraction is your Adjusted Net Income, and is used to determine the amount of Food Stamps you can get each month.

PROPERTY

Property (asset or resource) that is considered when you apply for Food Stamps includes:

- cash on hand or in a bank account
 - stocks, savings bonds, trust deeds, notes
 - Lump-sum payments, such as back social security payments or insurance settlements
 - Buildings, land, personal property
- (We don't look at the value of vehicles and the home you live in)

There are additional rules, exemptions, exclusions and deductions causing some property to be exempt and not considered. An eligibility worker can explain what property does not get used.

The total value of the property cannot exceed \$2,000 for a household, but if the household includes someone who is age 60 or older or disabled, the limit is \$3,000.

Modified Categorical Eligibility (MCE) allows applicant households with children under 18 who would otherwise be eligible for FS, except for excess resources, and who have received Publication 275, a Family Planning brochure, to now qualify to receive FS benefits.

CITIZENSHIP AND RESIDENCY

Only U.S. citizens and legal residents may get Food Stamps. This means that:

- If there are citizens, legal residents, and non-legal residents in the household that purchase and prepare their food together, only the citizens and legal residents may receive Food Stamps. ALL household income, including that for the non-legal residents, will be considered, but the income will be prorated by the number of eligible people in the home.
- A non-legal resident with a citizen or legal resident children may apply for his/her children, but only the citizen/s and legal resident/s in the household may get Food Stamps.