

Food Stamps

How Much Should I Get?

This flyer is meant to help you see if the county is giving you the correct amount of Food Stamps. It explains the Food Stamp terms and deductions, so you can check how the County figured your grant amount. *If your notices do not have the math listing how the county calculated your food stamps, ask your worker for the "food stamp budget."* There is a worksheet on the back to help you estimate of how much you should get.

NOTE: many households no longer have a resource (property) limit.

Households

- Food Stamps are issued to "households." A "household" for food stamps is anyone (related or not) who buys and makes their food together. There are some exceptions. For example, parents living with their children under 22 *must* be in one household; people who cannot buy or make their own food because of a disability *may be* in a separate household. *Ask your worker if you have questions.*
- Your Food Stamps Budget should say "HH" followed by a number. The number is how many people the county says you have in your household. For example, HH 03 means you have 3 people on the food stamps grant. *Too many? Too few? Tell your worker.*

Income deductions

These deductions help lower the income food stamps counts against your grant. The more deductions, the more benefits! Make sure you are getting all the deductions that apply to you:

- 20% off your **earned income** (from pre-tax pay)
- **Every household** gets a "standard deduction." The amounts depends on the size of the household: \$144 (1-3 people); \$147 (4); \$172 (5); \$197 (6 or more people)
- **Dependent care** costs (children or *who cannot be left alone*)
 - * Only if you need this care to work, look for work or do employment training or classes. *No limit.*
- **Medical expenses** (not paid for by insurance) for those *over 60 or disabled*, amounts over \$35/month
- **Child support** paid to someone outside your home
- A "**excess shelter**" deduction. (This is very complicated, but looks at the costs of your housing and utilities, and gives you an income deduction if you pay more than 1/2 your income for housing. Make sure you see a budget line for a **SUA** (standard utility allowance). (If you don't pay for utilities, make sure you have a budget line for labeled "**LUA**" if you pay for two other utilities, such as a phone and light bill.)
- \$143 if you are **homeless**.

*Certain income doesn't count (such as income of students under 18, federal student aid, etc.). Talk to your worker or a legal advocate to get the full list. You **must** report all income, even if it doesn't count.*

Food Stamps Terms

- Gross income: before tax pay
- Net income: how much money, from all sources, food stamps counts as available to you
- Thrifty Food Plan: the value given to the least expensive diet that meets nutrition standards
- Adjusted Food Stamp Income: 2/3's of your "net income"
 - * Food Stamps presumes you will use 1/3 of your "net income" to buy food. It compares the rest of your income against the "thrifty food plan" too see how much you need to help you buy food.
- Maximum Food Stamp Allotment: This is the most amount of food stamps you can get
 - * You get the maximum if your Adjusted Food Stamp Income is \$0
 - * You get the maximum minus your adjusted income if you have any income

To get help with problems with your Food Stamps, contact:



FOOD STAMPS ESTIMATED GRANT WORKSHEET

Don't worry. There are a lot of sections, but just do one step at a time. This is just to give you an estimate.

Figuring Your Gross Income

1. \$ _____ Total monthly **work income** (before tax)
2. x .80 Work expense deduction (20% off income)
3. = _____ Net work income (after deduction)
4. + _____ List the TOTAL any other (unearned) income (Ex: CalWORKs, GA, Social Security)
5. = _____ Gross Monthly Income

Figuring Your Deductions

6. _____ Write the number from line 5 above
 7. - _____ Subtract the **standard deduction** [\$141 (1-3 people), \$153 (4), \$179 (5), \$205 (6+)]
 8. - _____ Subtract your **dependent care costs**.
 9. - _____ Subtract court-ordered **child support payments** made to someone not in the household.
 10. - _____ Subtract the **monthly medical costs over \$35** of elderly/disabled household members.
- Total: _____ **This is your adjusted income** _____

Figuring Your Shelter Costs

11. _____ Write the amount of your **adjusted income** (from after Line 10).
 12. ÷ 2 Multiply by 2
- Total: _____ This is 1/2 your adjusted income; compare this number to your shelter costs.
13. _____ Write monthly amount you owe for rent/mortgage. *Write in \$143 if you are **homeless**.*
 14. + _____ Write \$287 if you pay for heating/cooling. Put \$0 if included in rent.
 15. + _____ Write \$88 for Limited Utilities **only** if you pay for *two other* utilities and heating/cooling is included in your rent. (Examples: phone and electric bill for lights). Put \$20 for **phone only**.
- Total: _____ **This is your monthly shelter cost**
16. - _____ Subtract 1/2 your adjusted income (the number after line 12)
- Total: _____ **This is your excess shelter cost** (If less than \$0, you have no deduction.)

If this amount is \$458 or more, just write \$458 (the maximum amount for shelter deduction) ~~unless you have someone over 60 or who is disabled in the food stamps household. Then you can get the full amount.~~

Figuring Your Net Income

17. _____ Write the amount of your **adjusted income** (from after Line 10).
 18. - _____ Subtract your **shelter deduction** (from after Line 16)
- Total: _____ **This is your monthly net income**

Figuring Your Grant

19. _____ Write your monthly net income (from after Line 18)
20. x .3 Multiply line 19 by .3 (30%) (This is the amount you are expected to use for food.)
21. _____ **This is your Food Stamp Adjusted Income**

Look at the chart to the right. _____
 Find your Food Stamp household size.
 Find your maximum allotment for the size.
 \$ _____ Maximum Allotment

Household Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Add \$150 ec. add'l person
Maximum Allotment	200	367	526	668	793	952	1052	1202	

- _____ Subtract the Food Stamp Adjusted Income from Line 21.

_____ = **Estimated food stamp grant**

Example: with a Household of 2 (\$323) and an adjusted income of \$150, the house would get \$308.)