

Food Stamp Benefits

The Food Stamp program is designed to raise nutritional levels, to expand buying power, and to safeguard the health and well-being of individuals in low-income households in Ohio. A household may consist of an individual or a group of individuals who live together and usually purchase, prepare, and eat their food together.

Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT)

Food stamp benefits are dispersed through the Electronic Benefits Transfer system. Information is encoded in a micro chip embedded in a plastic card resembling a credit card. At the grocery store check-out counter, the client enters a pin number and scans the card, the amount purchased is deducted electronically from the individual's or family's total monthly allotment of food stamp benefits.

Who can get food stamp benefits?

Households whose gross monthly income is within 130% of the federal poverty guidelines, whose monthly income after all allowable expenses (net adjusted income) is within 100% of the poverty level, and whose resources (cash, savings, stocks, etc.) do not exceed \$2000 (\$3000 if a person is at least 60 years old or disabled) may qualify for benefits. The income and resource limits do not apply if each person in the household assistance group receives income from any of the following programs: Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Ohio Works First (OWF), or Ohio's Disability Assistance program (DA). Resources of an SSI or OWF household member are excluded.

Who cannot get food stamp benefits?

Some individuals will be ineligible for food stamp benefits. For example, able-bodied adults without dependent children who are not employed or in a work program have time-limited eligibility. Individuals who have failed to comply with work requirements are ineligible.

What are allowable expenses?

Allowable expenses are: medical expenses for individuals 60 years of age or older or who are considered disabled; dependent care costs; legally-obligated child support; shelter costs (rent, mortgage, property taxes, gas, electric).

What needs to be verified?

At the time of application some items such as income and expenses will require verification. If the household has little or no income and resources the household may be eligible to receive benefits right away pending required verification, except identity. Normal processing requires that benefits be issued or the application denied within 30 days after the date the application is filed.

How often is your situation reviewed?

Depending on your household's situation, you will have a review (recertification) of your eligibility for food stamp benefits at least once every 12 months or more often if your household is experiencing a lot of changes or has earned income.

What can be bought with food stamp benefits?

Food stamp benefits can be used to buy food or food products intended for human consumption except alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and hot food and hot food products prepared to be eaten immediately. You can not: sell or trade food stamp benefits; buy non-food items; use food stamp benefits to buy food for someone who is not a member of the household.

Note: This is only basic information. An accurate determination of eligibility for food stamps requires an application be filed and an interview be conducted regarding each household's specific situation. Contact your local County Department of Job and Family Services.

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