



# Food Stamp Outreach Resource Guide

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Manna-Food Security Partners

Dear Community Partner,

Since the beginning of 2008, job losses have continued to mount and unemployment has hit a 25-year high. It is no surprise, then, that more people than ever are facing food insecurity. In November 2009, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reported that **more than 49.1 million Americans lived in households struggling against hunger in 2008**. *This was a jump of 13 million from 2007!* The 2008 number is the highest ever in the history of the survey that was started by the USDA in 1995. A federal study recently referenced in the New York Times Editorial entitled, "Hunger in the United States," showed that even before the recession began, more than two-thirds of families with children who were defined as "food insecure" under federal guidelines contained one or more full-time worker. This suggests that **millions of Americans were trapped in low-wage jobs before the economic downturn, making it difficult to provide their children with adequate nutrition.**

We realize that these grim numbers don't need to be stated for you to know the reality of the hardships faced by individuals in our community. Each day you come into contact with men and women that need help to move forward, feed their families, have adequate prenatal care, and a place to stay. **Food is often the first cost sacrificed when rent, utilities, and medical expenses need to be paid.**

**The Food Stamp Program, recently renamed the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), is considered the nation's primary safety net against hunger.** Physicians and medical researchers also identify the Food Stamp Program as one of America's "best medicines to prevent and treat childhood food insecurity." **One of Manna-Food Security Partners' primary goals is to improve access to food for low-income and vulnerable populations.** We recognize one way to do this is to increase the enrollment of many eligible families and individuals not currently participating in the Food Stamp Program.

**We ask that you join a coordinated effort to reach more potentially eligible individuals in our community.** For that reason, this Food Stamp Outreach Resource Guide has been compiled. It is our hope that the **Outreach Guide** will provide you a review of Food Stamp Program basics, and that the **Outreach Toolkit** will equip you with information that can easily be pulled out, photocopied, and distributed to the potentially eligible individuals you are already working with.

**In providing this manual, Manna-Food Security Partners commits to being a resource for you and keeping you informed.** We encourage you to join our e-mail listserv so we can send updated policy and procedure information and transmit electronic versions of needed documents to you. E-mail us at [Mannabz@comcast.net](mailto:Mannabz@comcast.net) to join.  
**Together we can organize around important policy changes to attack the root causes of hunger and food insecurity.**

Sincerely,  
Sarah Shubitowski

Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow 09-10  
Manna-Food Security Partners

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# **Food Stamp Outreach Guide**

- ◆ Goals of Food Stamp Outreach
- ◆ Frequently Asked Questions About Food Stamps
- ◆ Food Stamp Presentation Talking Points
- ◆ Basic Rules of Program Eligibility
- ◆ Pre-Screening Worksheet
- ◆ Cultural Sensitivity in Outreach Work
- ◆ Detailed Immigrant and Refugee Eligibility Information for Caseworkers

## **Goals of Food Stamp Outreach**

Food Stamp outreach is providing information or assistance to someone who might be eligible for the Food Stamp Program. **The goal of Food Stamp Outreach is to help someone make an informed decision whether to apply for the program, and ultimately to increase participation by eligible people.**<sup>1</sup>

There has long been a stigma in applying for food stamp benefits. For many years, the use of actual coupons drew unwanted attention, causing embarrassment in public settings. As the Food Stamp Program has moved to the use of an Electronic Benefits Card (EBT), there is less of a stigma. **It is important for those of us working with potentially eligible individuals to continue to reduce the stigma and dispel myths that discourage individuals from applying for food stamp benefits.**

**The Food Stamp Program is not welfare, but a nutrition program designed to help individuals stretch their food dollars and provide more healthy food for their families.** It is possible for elderly or disabled individuals to apply from their homes. Homeless individuals can verify their identity using proof other than a Driver's License. Children who are U.S. citizens are eligible for the Food Stamp Program even if their parents are not documented immigrants. **Getting the word out about accurate eligibility information will connect many more individuals and families to benefits they desperately need.**

**Food stamps not only help individuals and families when money's tight, but Tennessee and Nashville also benefit.** The average food stamp benefit per person is about \$94 per month (fiscal year 2006 data), which is spent in local grocery stores. In fact, every \$5 in new food stamp benefits generates a total of \$9.20 in community spending. Every additional dollar's worth of food stamp benefits generates 17 to 47 cents of new spending on food, and on average, \$1 billion of retail food demand by food stamp recipients generates 3,300 farm jobs.

**Manna-Food Security Partners is an organization that has been providing Food Stamp Program outreach to potentially eligible individuals for over 30 years.**

Manna-FSP works to determine who is unaware of the Food Stamp Program and target outreach to those individuals. This is done by increasing the regularity of visits to sites where outreach is being done and establishing new places to do outreach.

**Manna-FSP is working to develop partnerships with other organizations in the community that work with individuals who might be eligible for food stamp benefits.** Together we can increase the number of people receiving accurate information about the Food Stamp Program, prescreen for eligibility, and connect individuals and families to food stamp benefits.



<sup>1</sup> [http://www.fns.usda.gov/FSP/outreach/pdfs/toolkit/office/USDA\\_offices1.pdf#page=2](http://www.fns.usda.gov/FSP/outreach/pdfs/toolkit/office/USDA_offices1.pdf#page=2)

## An Introduction to the Federal Food Stamp Program

### FOOD STAMP PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS <sup>2</sup>

#### ***What is the Food Stamp Program/SNAP?***

The Food Stamp Program is a nutrition assistance program that helps low-income families and individuals purchase nutritious, healthy food. It is the cornerstone of the Nation's nutrition assistance safety net. The U.S. Department of Agriculture oversees the Food Stamp Program at the Federal level through its Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). State agencies administer the program at state and local levels. Their responsibilities include determining eligibility and distributing benefits.



#### ***Who is eligible to receive food stamp benefits?***

Anyone who meets the eligibility requirements can get food stamp benefits. Household income and other resources have to be under certain limits and are reviewed. The program allows for certain deductions like housing costs, child support, medical expenses, or child-care costs. A household may also have up to \$2000 in assets. Households with a member age 60 or older — or a disabled member — may have up to \$3000 in assets. Assets that **do not** count toward eligibility requirements include: a home, a vehicle, and the resources of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients.

#### ***Where can I go to find out if I'm eligible to receive food stamp benefits?***

If you have access to a computer, you can quickly find out if you might qualify for food stamp benefits through the prescreening tool available on the USDA web site, [www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov](http://www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov). You can also call Manna-Food Security Partners at 615-385-2286 and an outreach worker is able to prescreen you over the phone. The local food stamp office (615-532-4000 in Davidson Co.) can provide information about eligibility, and the USDA operates a toll-free number (1-800-221-5689) for people to call if they want to receive information about the Food Stamp Program by mail.

#### ***If I receive food stamps, does that mean I am taking them away from someone else who might need them more than I do?***

No, when you receive food stamp benefits, you are not taking benefits away from another person. Everyone who applies and is determined to be eligible by the state/local eligibility worker will get food stamp benefits.

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<sup>2</sup> Information taken from the USDA's *How to Milk This Toolkit for All It's Worth*  
[http://www.fns.usda.gov/FSP/outreach/pdfs/toolkit/office/USDA\\_offices1.pdf#page=13](http://www.fns.usda.gov/FSP/outreach/pdfs/toolkit/office/USDA_offices1.pdf#page=13)

## Food Stamp Presentation Talking Points

One way that Manna-Food Security Partners does Food Stamp Outreach is by doing presentations to groups of potentially eligible individuals. Below are talking points that are used to structure presentations. Feel free to modify our talking points for your presentation needs!



- **We have all been in the situation where we've had to sacrifice buying something because we had to pay for something else.** Since food stamp benefits help defray the costs of buying healthy foods, you're less likely to have to make hard choices between eating right and paying for other essentials like rent or utilities.
- **Food stamps are not welfare.** The Food Stamp Program, also known as SNAP, is a nutrition assistance program designed to help individuals that are only making a small amount of income to buy nutritious foods they might not be able to afford. The program was designed to help you stretch your food dollars.
- **If you apply and receive Food Stamps, you are not taking them from someone else who might need them.** Because the Food Stamp Program is an entitlement program, every person who meets the eligibility requirements has a right to these benefits.
- **Food Stamps come on a card called the Electronic Benefits Transfer card, or EBT.** Other people won't even know you have Food Stamps because you slide your card through the machine at grocery stores just like a debit or credit card.
- **The EBT card can be used at most major groceries and stores that sell food.** They can be used at some farmers markets, including at some specific vendors at the Nashville Farmers Market. Food Stamps cannot be used to purchase household items, like toilet paper or detergent. They also cannot be used to purchase items like cigarettes or alcohol.
- **Food stamp eligibility depends on income.** If you or your family have no income, you can qualify for food stamps more quickly than if you have income. If DHS thinks you have enough income to pay for your basic needs, and you are eligible for food stamps, you will receive food stamps within 30 days. If you do not have any income, you should receive food stamps within 7 days.
- **The process for applying for food stamps begins by filling out an application.** You can pick one up at the Department of Human Services (DHS), which is located at 1000 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave. North in Nashville/Davidson County. There are other ways to get an application as well, including accessing them on the internet. Just look up Tennessee Department of Human Services and look for the link that says "forms" on the left hand side. You can also obtain an application by mail, either from DHS or by calling Manna-Food Security Partners.
- **After filling out an application, DHS will schedule an interview with you.** You will receive a letter telling you the date and time of your interview. It is possible to get a phone interview if you are elderly, disabled, or have transportation issues.

- **DHS will want to see copies of verification information about your identification as well as any income you have as well as certain expenses.** You can send copies of your verification through the mail or fax. You can also drop them off at the DHS office.
- **Recertification happens every 6 months and you can also do this over the phone.**
- **You will have a case worker at DHS who can answer your questions and who will monitor your case.** Make sure to update your caseworker – let him or her know – any time there is a change in your income or expenses. Sometimes it is difficult to contact your case worker. Contacting him or her may require you to be “persistent” – calling 2-3 times a day, leaving messages and calling every day until you reach him or her. You can call Manna-Food Security Partners if you have questions regarding food stamps, or disagree with a decision DHS has made about your case.
- **Know that food stamps not only help individuals and families when money is tight, but your State and local community also benefit.** The average food stamp benefit per person is about \$94 per month (fiscal year 2006 data), which is spent in local grocery stores. In fact, every \$5 in new food stamp benefits generates a total of \$9.20 in community spending. Every additional dollar’s worth of food stamp benefits generates 17 to 47 cents of new spending on food, and on average, \$1 billion of retail food demand by food stamp recipients generates 3,300 farm jobs.

Thank you very much!

## **Basic Rules of Food Stamp Eligibility**

Food Stamp Program eligibility is based on a household's monthly gross income. The Department of Human Services (DHS) also looks at assets, utilities, and shelter costs.

### **What is a Household?**

It is the number of people who buy and prepare food together.

- Check out the income eligibility chart below that is also based on how many people are in your household. This chart lists the **maximum gross income** you can make each month. Gross income is money someone makes before taxes or other things are deducted. Use the chart to see if someone might qualify.

1.....	\$1,174
2.....	\$1,579
3.....	\$1,984
4.....	\$2,389
5.....	\$2,794
6.....	\$3,200
7.....	\$3,605
8.....	\$4,010

**NOTE: IF SOMEONE IN THE HOUSEHOLD IS OVER 60 OR DISABLED, THEY MAY BE ABLE TO GET FOOD STAMPS EVEN IF THEIR INCOME IS HIGHER.**

### **■ Assets**

- A household may also have up to \$2000 in assets. Households with a member age 60 or older—or a disabled member—may have up to \$3000 in assets. Assets that **do not count** toward eligibility requirements include: a home, vehicles, and the resources of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients.

There are deductions for utilities so be sure to do a prescreening if you think someone might be eligible!

If you have access to a computer, you can quickly find out if someone might qualify for food stamp benefits through the prescreening tool available on the USDA web site, [www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov](http://www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov). Another option is to use the prescreening worksheet on the following page.

**You can also call Manna-Food Security Partners (615-385-2286) and an Outreach Worker will use a prescreening tool to screen someone over the phone.**

### **■ NOTE: There is a work requirement for able-bodied adults**

- An able-bodied non-working adult is eligible for food stamps for three months during a 36-month period of time.
- The work requirement does not apply to an able-bodied adult with a child 6 years of age or younger.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> To see all specifics of Food Stamp Program eligibility, take a look at the Food Stamp Manual:  
<http://www.tennessee.gov/humanserv/adfam/fs-man-1.pdf>

## Food Stamp Benefits Prescreening Worksheet

**\*\*If you have computer access, you can use the following website for prescreening:**  
<https://fabenefits.dhs.tn.gov/vip/website/signupservlet?pagename=homepage>

A. Gross Monthly Earned Income

	<A>
	<B>

B. Add Other Income <TANF, SSI, GA, social security, etc.>

+ 

--

C. Gross Monthly Income

= 

<C>
-----

HH Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Max Gross Income	1174	1579	1984	2389	2794	3200	3605	4010

D. Gross Monthly Earned Income <A>

	<A>
	<E>

E. Subtract Work Expense Deduction <20% of A if Employed>

- 

--

**Net Earned Income <A -**

F. <E>

= 

<F>
-----

G. Add Other Income <TANF, SSI, GA, social security, etc.>

+ 

--

= 

<G>
-----

H. Subtract Standard Deduction

(\$141 HH size 1-3, \$153 HH size 4, \$179 HH-5, \$205 HH  
6+)

- 

--

= 

<H>
-----

I. Subtract Medical Expenses over \$35

tot.exp	-\$35.00	net exp

<ONLY FOR ELDERLY OR DISABLED PERSONS>

- 

--

= 

<I>
-----

J. Subtract Dependent Care Costs

Dependent Care Costs include day care expenses

- 

--

= 

<J>
-----

K. Subtract Child Support Payments

- 

--

= 

--

**Adjusted Net Income**

= 

<K>
-----

L. Find Total Shelter Costs

1. Rent or Mortgage
2. Fire Insurance on Home
3. Property Tax
4. Telephone <no more than \$25>
5. Utilities <see chart below>


**Total Shelter Costs**

= 

--

If person is homeless and paying to stay in a shelter,  
enter standard deduction of \$143 for shelter costs.

HH Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

FS Standard Utility Allowance	314	326	338	350	360	372	384	396	408
----------------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

If actual costs of utilities (including \$25 max for phone) can be proven to be greater than SUA, that amount may be used instead.

A Basic Utility Allowance of \$126 may be used if heating and cooling expenses are included in rent and the person pays only water, sewage, and phone OR if the person rents a separate apartment within a larger residence and contributes to a common utility bill.

M. Subtract 1/2 of Adjusted Income  $<1/2 \times K>$  -    $<M>$

N. EXCESS SHELTER COSTS  $<L-M>$  =    $<N>$

O. Take the Figure for Adjusted Income    $<K>$

Subtract Excess Shelter Costs up to \$446 cap OR full amount found in step N if figuring food stamps for a household with at least one elderly or disabled member. -    $<N>$

**MONTHLY NET INCOME**  
 $<K-N>$  =    $<O>$

P. Compare Monthly Net Income to Chart <If monthly net income is higher than figure on the chart, household is ineligible.>

HH Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Max Net Income	903	1215	1526	1838	2150	2461	2773	3085	3397

Q. Multiply the Household's Net Income  $<O>$  by 0.3 and round up to next dollar.  $\times$     $<O>$   
0.30

**Adjusted Food Stamp Income** =    $<Q>$

R. Subtract Adjusted Food Stamp Income  $<Q>$  from the figures in the chart below.

HH Size	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Max FS Allotment	200	367	526	668	793	952	1052	1202	1352

**Maximum Food Stamp Allotment**  
**Adjusted Food Stamp Income** -    $<Q>$

S. **MONTHLY FOOD STAMP ALLOTMENT**<sup>4</sup> =    $<S>$

NOTE: The minimum FS Allotment is \$16/month even if the figure shown is negative. The first month's amount might be less depending on the day of the month the food stamps begin.

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<sup>4</sup> This is the form that Manna-Food Security Partners uses for pre-screening.

## Cultural Sensitivity in Outreach Work

### **What Is Cultural Competence?**

Cultural competence refers to how well people understand and interact with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Diversity means not only people of different nationalities, ethnic groups, and religious backgrounds, but also includes gender and age, people living with disabilities, as well as the extent to which immigrants have integrated into mainstream American culture.



### **Steps for Being Culturally Sensitive in the Application Process**

- Support and obtain professional development and training for frontline and outreach staff on diversity and cultural and linguistic competence. Share articles and other materials that will help in this effort.
- Emphasize customer service and courtesy. Accurate information should be provided in a respectful and timely manner.
- Ensure that everyone is aware of outside resources that may exist, and how and when it is appropriate to access those resources.
- Develop written guidelines for handling situations that are procedural in nature, such as accessing TTY or language-line services and interpreters.

### **Quick Tips for Communicating With Clients and Families**

At the heart of cultural competence is learning to communicate effectively with individuals and their families. Here are a few tried and true suggestions:

- When working with people different from yourself, it's important to put your own personal biases aside. Keep an open mind and don't jump to conclusions. Because a person speaks with an accent does not mean they are not a native-born citizen. Take time to learn about the person you are speaking with, which demonstrates respect and an understanding of cultural competency.
- Establish rapport. In many cultures, it is important to establish some type of relationship before discussing business. Taking a few extra moments to ask questions and learn more about an individual and his/her family often makes an enormous difference in the long run.
- While developing rapport, refrain from discussing topics, such as personal relationships, or behaviors that may be misinterpreted. As a practice, avoid making jokes or displaying questionable posters or artwork in your office or workspace.
- If you don't know what their native language is, use the "I Speak" document available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/translations.htm>, which lists, in 34 different languages, the words "I Speak." Give this document to your clients so they can point out for you which language they speak when they spot it.
- Respect personal space. When you first meet with potential clients, ask them to sit where they feel the most comfortable. This will allow people to choose the personal

distance that makes them most comfortable. Similarly, refrain from casually tapping or touching someone, which in some cultures can be perceived as being too familiar.

- Identify the decision maker. Find out who the influential parties are and how they make decisions. It may be important to ask, "Do you want to discuss the Food Stamp Program with other members of your family?" Send a message through children but do not use children as interpreters.
- For many parents who don't speak English well, their children often serve as conduits for information. They can take home what they received in school--for instance, information on summer programs or the Food Stamp Program. However, some caution must be taken if a parent brings a child to a meeting to serve as an interpreter. Children may be able to informally convey casual conversation points. However, eligibility for a government program is different. Children may not understand the meaning of technical words such as income and resources. Also, parents may not feel comfortable discussing certain information such as household income in front of their children.
- Ask questions and listen to the answers. Asking questions shows that you really are interested in what a person has to say and his or her perspectives. But pay attention. Do not interrupt your client or try to put words in his or her mouth.
- Check for understanding. In some cultures, people are reluctant to ask questions of authority figures. Explain that asking for clarification is acceptable, and then ask follow up questions to determine whether they correctly understood you. Ask open-ended questions to ensure the information has been adequately understood.
- Learn greetings and titles of respect in other languages that you commonly encounter.
- Write numbers down. People easily confuse numbers spoken in a new language.

### **Eight Common Mistakes to Avoid**

1. Disrupting home and work schedules when conducting education and outreach activities.
2. Dismissing cultural preferences, customs, and traditions when discussing health and nutrition.
3. Assuming others perceive things the same way you do.
4. Getting "right down to business." In many cultures, socializing is an important first step before discussing business or personal matters.
5. Conducting interviews or discussing personal information in an open setting. Receiving assistance from outside agencies is an embarrassment in some cultures, and may be better discussed behind closed doors.
6. Misreading silence for confusion or lack of knowledge. Allow for a short period of silence or reflection. Rather than asking if the person understood what was discussed, ask open-ended questions as you probe for understanding.

7. Ignoring the importance of such factors as age, gender, or position in family when asking for decisions.

8. Making assumptions based on stereotypes.

**Examples:**

Ms. L. has a Hispanic surname and speaks with an accent. She arrives for a community-sponsored workshop on how to apply for food stamps. When she approaches the sign-in table and gives her name to the staff person, she is promptly asked to step to the side and wait a moment. The staff person speaks slowly and in a loud voice. Ms. L immediately knows that the staff person assumes she cannot speak English, and has gone to get someone who is bilingual to help out. Although she is pleased that they are making the effort to provide translators for individuals who require this level of language assistance, she wishes they had asked about her specific needs.

Ms. T is African-American. She stops by the Food Stamp Program booth at a citywide festival and asks where in her community she can find out more about applying for food stamps. She notices that instead of asking where she lives, the outreach worker assumes she lives in a predominately African-American section of town and immediately refers her to a location in that area. This infuriates Ms. T because she does not live in that area and must point that out before receiving the correct information.

**When Doing Outreach With Communities of Color, Elderly Individuals, or People Living With Disabilities, Ask These Questions:**

- Are there other organizations that have similar goals and might be willing to work with us to address this need?
- How could my local food stamp office be of assistance?
- What resources (staff, in-language support, materials) do we have but may not be fully using?
- Has any research been conducted that highlights effective ways of reaching the target population within the community? Can we rely on other work to give us insights and answers?<sup>5</sup>



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<sup>5</sup> Taken from the USDA's *Cultural Competency, A Dash of Diversity, A Medley of Outreach Ideas*  
[http://www.fns.usda.gov/FSP/outreach/pdfs/toolkit/office/USDA\\_offices3.pdf#page=2](http://www.fns.usda.gov/FSP/outreach/pdfs/toolkit/office/USDA_offices3.pdf#page=2)

## **Detailed Eligibility Information for Outreach With Immigrants and Refugees**

### **Food Stamp Policy on Immigrants**

A person must be a U.S. citizen, a member of a small group of certain non-citizens, or an eligible non-citizen to qualify for food stamps.

### **Non-citizens who qualify outright**

There are some immigrants who are immediately eligible for food stamps without having to meet other immigrant requirements, as long as they meet the normal food stamp requirements:

- Non-citizen nationals (people born in American Samoa or Swain's Island)
- American Indians born in Canada
- Members (born outside the U.S.) of Indian tribes under Section 450b(e) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act
- Members of Hmong or Highland Laotian tribes that helped the U.S. military during the Vietnam era, and who are legally living in the U.S., and their spouses or surviving spouses and dependent children

### **Qualified individuals eligible without a waiting period**

If a person is not a citizen, or one of the other groups above, he or she has to fit one of the following criteria to be eligible with no waiting period:

- Granted asylum under Section 208 of the Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA)
- Refugee admitted under section 207 of INA
- Deportation withheld under 243(h) or 241(b)(3) of INA
- Cuban or Haitian entrant as defined in 501(e) of the Refugee Education Assistance Act of 1980
- Amerasian immigrant under 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Program Appropriations Act
- Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) with a military connection (veteran, on active duty, or spouse or child of a veteran or active duty service member)

### **Qualified individuals eligible after a waiting period**

A qualified individual who does not belong to one of the groups above can get food stamps if he/she is otherwise eligible, and is:

- A Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) is who has earned, or can be credited with, 40 quarters of work
- A qualified individual in one of the following groups who has been in qualified status for 5 years:

- An LPR who has earned, or can be credited with, less than 40 quarters of work
- Paroled for at least one year under section 212(d)(5) of INA
- Granted conditional entry under 203(a)(7) of INA in effect prior to 4/1/80
- Battered spouse, battered child or parent or child of a battered person with a petition pending under 204(a)(1)(A) or (B) or 244(a)(3) of INA.

As of Oct. 1, 2003, members of these groups under 18 are eligible without a waiting period. (Continuing eligibility will be reviewed once the individual reaches age 18.)

### **Special eligibility conditions**

The following individuals, as defined above, are also eligible without a waiting period:

- Lawfully in the U.S. on Aug. 22, 1996, and currently under age 18.  
(Continuing eligibility will be reviewed once the person reaches age 18.)
- Lawfully in U.S. and 65 or older as of Aug. 22, 1996
- Lawfully in the U.S. and receiving government payments for disability or blindness<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Information provided from the Food Stamp Outreach Project:  
<http://www.foodstampshelp.org/facts/immigration.aspx>

# **Food Stamp Outreach Toolkit**

## **Remove and Copy for Outreach**

- ◆ Food Stamp Program Flyer in English
- ◆ Food Stamp Program Flyer in Spanish
- ◆ Applying as an Immigrant or Refugee Flyer in English
- ◆ Applying as an Immigrant or Refugee Flyer in Spanish
- ◆ Guide to Public Charge and Receiving Public Benefits in English
- ◆ Guide to Public Charge and Receiving Public Benefits in Spanish
- ◆ A Letter from USCIS to Food Stamp Program Applicants in Spanish
- ◆ Applying with a Disability Flyer
- ◆ Applying for Food Stamps as a Senior Citizen Flyer
- ◆ Applying for Food Stamps When Homeless Flyer
- ◆ Applying for Food Stamps as a Working Person Flyer
- ◆ Special Situations of Food Stamp Program Eligibility



## Looking for a way to stretch your food dollars?

## Find out if you are eligible for the Food Stamp Program!

Food Stamp Program eligibility is based on your household's gross monthly income. A household is the number of people who buy and prepare food together.

This chart below lists the **maximum gross income** you can make each month for the number of people in your household. Gross income is money you make before taxes or other things are deducted. Use the chart to see if you might qualify.

1.....	\$1,174
2.....	\$1,579
3.....	\$1,984
4.....	\$2,389
5.....	\$2,794
6.....	\$3,200
7.....	\$3,605
8.....	\$4,010

**NOTE: IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOME IS OVER 60 OR DISABLED, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO GET FOOD STAMPS EVEN IF YOUR INCOME IS HIGHER.**

### Assets are also taken into account.

A household may also have up to \$2000 in assets. Households with a member age 60 or older—or a disabled member—may have up to \$3000 in assets. Assets that **do not count toward eligibility** include: a home, a vehicle, and the resources of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients.



**If you have access to a computer, you can quickly find out if you might qualify for food stamp benefits through the prescreening tool available on the USDA web site, [www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov](http://www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov).**

**You can also call Manna-Food Security Partners at (615-385-2286) and an Outreach Worker will prescreen you over the phone and send you an application!**



# Podría yo recibir estampillas para comidas

Usted puede ser elegible para recibir estampillas de comida si usted contesta las siguientes preguntas.

1. ¿Es usted residente del condado de Davidson?  SI
2. ¿Es usted **o su(s) niños(s)** ciudadanos o residente(s) permanente(s) legal(es) de los Estados Unidos?  SI
3. ¿Es la suma total de dinero de su familia menos de o igual a \$2000 \* (incluyendo dinero en efectivo, cuentas bancarias, cuentas de jubilación, acciones, bonos, etc.)? \* **\$3000 si usted o un miembro de su familia tiene 60 años o más o está incapacitado permanentemente.**  SI
4. ¿Son los ingresos brutos mensuales de usted/su familia\* (antes de deducciones) entre los límites siguientes?  SI

\*(si usted o un miembro de su familia tiene 60 años o más que está incapacitado permanentemente es posible que sea elegible para estampillas para comida aunque los ingresos brutos excedan los límites)

Personas en El Hogar	Ingresos Mensuales
1	\$1174
2	\$1579
3	\$1984
4	\$2389
5	\$2794

Personas en El Hogar	Ingresos Mensuales
6	\$3200
7	\$3605
8	\$4010
9	\$4415
10	\$4820

Llame a Manna-Food Security Partners al (615) 385-2286 con preguntas acerca de los beneficios, elegibilidad, o para conseguir una aplicación.



# Applying for Food Stamps as an Immigrant or Refugee

## YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- If you are a legal immigrant and you get food stamps, it will not hurt your chances of becoming a citizen.
- Undocumented people can't get food stamps, but citizens and some legal immigrants who live with them can get food stamps, including children.
- Children of undocumented immigrants can get food stamps if they are citizens (born in the U.S.) or legal permanent residents.
- If you are an undocumented immigrant applying for your children born in the United States, you do not have to put your social security number or immigration status on the food stamp application. Food stamp information is confidential and you cannot be held a "public charge."
- A sponsor's income and resources are generally counted when you apply for food stamps, but there are some exceptions so you should ask the local food stamp office.

## An immigrant is eligible to apply for food stamp benefits if he/she:

- Has been in the US as a legal resident for five years.
- Has earned, or can be credited with, 40 quarters of work.
- Is a refugee or asylee.
- Has a military connection.
- Is a member of certain Indian tribes.

**\*\*Check with your outreach worker or with your local Department of Human Services Office for more eligibility information.**



## You can apply for food stamps even if you do not speak English.

- Local food stamp offices have applications in many languages.
- Food stamp workers can find interpreters to help you. Or a friend or family member who speaks English can apply for you. You do not have to bring your own interpreter to the food stamp office.

**Call Manna-Food Security  
Partners at 615-385-2286 to  
be prescreened or to have an  
application mailed to  
your home.**

# Los Beneficios de Cupones para Inmigrantes

## INFORMACIÓN IMPORTANTE

- Si Ud. es inmigrante legal obtener los beneficios de cupones para alimentos no le impedirá a que consiga a su green card o ciudadanía estadounidense.
- Si sus hijos son ciudadanos estadounidenses, Ud. puede aplicar para los beneficios de su parte aunque Ud. no es elegible por razones de inmigración.
- Si Ud. no tiene número de Seguridad Social, no incluya uno. El Departamento de Servicios Humanos sabrá que Ud. no está aplicando para beneficios para sí mismo.
- Los ingresos y recursos de un patrocinador generalmente se computan cuando solicita los cupones para alimentos. Pero existen ciertas excepciones. Pregunte en la oficina local de cupones para alimentos. Si recibe los beneficios, el resto de los integrantes de su hogar pueden llegar a cumplir con los requisitos.



**Llame a Manna-Food Security  
Partners al (615) 385-2286  
con preguntas acerca de los  
beneficios, elegibilidad, o  
para conseguir una  
aplicación.**

## ¿Quiénes pueden ser elegibles?

- Inmigrantes legales documentados quienes han estado en E.E.U.U. por 5 años.
- Niños inmigrantes documentados.
- Inmigrantes incapacitados quienes reciben beneficios de incapacidad.
- Refugiados y asilados, aun si llegan a ser residentes permanentes legales.

**\*\*Es importante averiguar con el Departamento de Servicios Humanos para información de elegibilidad específica.**

## Puede solicitar cupones para alimentos si no habla inglés.

- Cualquier persona puede solicitar los cupones para alimentos. Las oficinas locales de cupones para alimentos pueden buscar intérpretes en varios idiomas. Los trabajadores de cupones para alimentos pueden buscar intérpretes que lo ayuden. O un amigo o miembro de familia que habla inglés puede solicitarlos en su representación.
- Hay formularios en Español para solicitar para cupones para alimentos.



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

# Summary

October 18, 1999

## A QUICK GUIDE TO 'PUBLIC CHARGE' AND RECEIPT TO PUBLIC BENEFITS

This guide provides a summary of how receiving public benefits in the United States may or may not affect an alien under the "public charge" provisions of the immigration laws.

- Aliens applying to become Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) (who do not yet have a "green card") –
  - An alien will not be considered a "public charge" for using:
    - **HEALTH CARE BENEFITS**, including programs such as Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), prenatal care, or other free or low-cost medical care at clinics, health centers, or other settings (other than long-term care in a nursing home or similar institution)
    - **FOOD PROGRAMS**, such as Food Stamps, WIC (the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), school meals, or other food assistance
    - **OTHER PROGRAMS THAT DO NOT GIVE CASH**, such as public housing, child care, energy assistance, disaster relief, Head Start, or job training or counseling
  - INS may consider an alien's use of the following in deciding whether to issue a "green card."
    - **CASH WELFARE**, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), cash Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and state General Assistance

- INSTITUTIONALIZATION for long-term care, such as residing in a nursing home or mental health facility at government expense

**Note:** INS will not consider **CASH WELFARE** or **NON-CASH PROGRAMS** received by an alien's children or other family members for public charge purposes, unless the cash welfare is the family's only means of support.

- Aliens who are LPRs (who already have a "green card") –
  - LPRs **cannot** lose their status (have their "green card" revoked) if they, their children, or other family members use:
    - **HEALTH CARE, FOOD PROGRAMS, or other NON-CASH PROGRAMS**
    - **CASH WELFARE** (\* see note below for exception)
    - **LONG-TERM CARE** (\* see note below for exception)

**Notes:**

\* LPRs who leave the country for more than 6 months at a time can be questioned about whether they are "public charges" when they return, and the use of cash welfare or long-term care may be considered.

\* In very rare circumstances, LPRs who use cash welfare or long-term care within their first 5 years in the United States for reasons (such as an illness or disability) that existed before their entry to the United States could be considered deportable as a public charge.

- REFUGEES AND PEOPLE GRANTED ASYLUM can use any public benefits, including cash welfare, health care, food programs, and other non-cash programs without hurting their chances of getting a "green card."
- SPONSORING RELATIVES – Using benefits, including cash welfare, health care, food programs, and other non-cash benefits, does not prevent citizens and LPRs from sponsoring relatives. However, sponsors must submit an Affidavit of Support showing that they have enough money (alone or with a co-sponsor) to support their relatives at 125 percent of the poverty level.
- BECOMING A NATURALIZED U.S. CITIZEN – LPRs (who already have a "green card") cannot be turned down for U.S. citizenship for lawfully receiving any public benefits for which they are eligible.

### Need More Information?

For more information about "public charge" –

- Please see the INS Web site at [www.uscis.gov/graphics/publicaffairs/presinfo4.htm#PublicCharge](http://www.uscis.gov/graphics/publicaffairs/presinfo4.htm#PublicCharge) for a fact sheet and questions and answers. Information is available in several languages under Public Affairs.

**For more information about how to enroll in benefit programs –**

- Please contact the appropriate federal, state or local service agency. Helpful contacts include:

**For CHIP: 1-877-543-7669 (calls are free)**

**For Food Stamps: 1-800-221-5689 (calls are free)**

**For Medicaid or TANF: [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)**

**For WIC: [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)**



# Summary

Octubre 18 de 1999

## GUIA BREVE RELATIVA A LA NOCION DE 'CARGA PUBLICA' Y AL RECIBO DE BENEFICIOS PUBLICOS

La presente guía explica resumidamente cómo el recibo de beneficios públicos en los Estados Unidos puede o no afectar a los extranjeros según las disposiciones de "carga pública" que figuran en las leyes de inmigración.

- **Extranjeros que solicitan la Residencia Permanente Lícita; es decir que todavía no tienen una *Green Card* (tarjeta verde)**
  - Un extranjero no será considerado como "carga pública" por recibir:
    - **LOS BENEFICIOS DE ATENCION DE SALUD**, incluido el programa de *Medicaid*, el CHIP (Programa de Seguro de Salud para los Niños), la atención prenatal u otro tipo de atención médica gratuita o barata, en consultorios, centros de salud u otras instituciones (que no sea la atención a largo plazo en un hogar de ancianos u otra institución de esa índole).
    - **LOS PROGRAMAS DE ALIMENTOS**, por ejemplo *Food Stamps* (sellos para la compra de alimentos), el WIC (Programa Especial de Nutrición Suplementaria para Mujeres, Recién Nacidos y Niños), comidas escolares u otro tipo de asistencia alimenticia.
    - **OTROS PROGRAMAS NO MONETARIOS**, por ejemplo vivienda pública, servicios de guardería, ayuda en materia de energía, socorro en caso de desastre, el programa preescolar educativo y cultural *Head Start*, ni asesoramiento o capacitación en el trabajo.
  - El INS, al expedir la tarjeta verde podrá considerar si el extranjero recibe los siguientes beneficios:

- **ASISTENCIA SOCIAL MONETARIA**, por ejemplo el *Supplemental Security Income* (Ingreso de Seguridad Suplementario), el TANF (Asistencia Temporal Monetaria para las Familias Necesitadas) y la asistencia general del Estado.
- **INSTITUCIONALIZACIÓN** para la atención a largo plazo, por ejemplo la residencia en un hogar de ancianos o institución de salud mental por cuenta del gobierno.

**Nota:** El INS no considerará los programas de **ASISTENCIA SOCIAL MONETARIA** ni los **PROGRAMAS NO MONETARIOS** recibidos por los hijos u otros familiares del extranjero para fines de carga pública, a menos que la asistencia social monetaria sea la única forma de subsistencia familiar.

- Los extranjeros que sean residentes permanentes lícitos (que ya tengan una tarjeta verde)
  - Los residentes permanentes lícitos no podrán perder su condición como tales (revocación de la tarjeta verde) si ellos, sus hijos u otros familiares se benefician de:
    - **ATENCION DE SALUD, PROGRAMAS DE ALIMENTOS** u otros **PROGRAMAS NO MONETARIOS**
    - **ATENCION SOCIAL MONETARIA** (\*Véase a continuación la nota de la excepción.)
    - **ATENCION A LARGO PLAZO** (\*Véase a continuación la nota de la excepción.)

**Notas:**

- A los residentes permanentes lícitos que **abandonen el país por más de 6 meses seguidos** se les podrá preguntar si reciben beneficios públicos cuando regresen a los EE.UU. y se podrán tener en cuenta los beneficios de la asistencia social monetaria o de atención a largo plazo.
- En muy raras circunstancias, los residentes permanentes lícitos que se beneficien de la asistencia social monetaria o la atención a largo plazo en sus **primeros cinco años** en los EE.UU por ciertas razones (por ejemplo, enfermedad o discapacidad) que existían antes de su entrada en los Estados Unidos se podrían considerar deportables como carga pública.
- **LOS REFUGIADOS Y LOS ASILADOS** podrán recibir cualquier beneficio público, incluidos la atención social monetaria, la asistencia de salud, los programas de alimentos y otros programas no monetarios, sin perjuicio de sus posibilidades de obtener la tarjeta verde.
- **FAMILIARES PATROCINADORES.** El recibo de beneficios, incluidos la asistencia social monetaria, la atención de salud, los programas de alimentos y otros beneficios no monetarios, no impide que los ciudadanos y los residentes permanentes legales patrocinen a familiares. Sin embargo, los patrocinadores deben presentar una Declaración Jurada de Sustento en la que indiquen que tienen suficiente dinero (sólos o con un copatrocinador) para sostener a sus familiares a un 125 por ciento del nivel de pobreza.
- **CIUDADANIA ESTADOUNIDENSE POR NATURALIZACION.** A los residentes permanentes legales (que ya tienen una tarjeta verde) no se les puede negar la ciudadanía estadounidense por el hecho de recibir lícitamente cualesquiera beneficios públicos a los que tengan derecho.

¿Necesita Más Información?

**Si necesita más información sobre "carga pública"**

- Visite el sitio del INS en la Web [www.ins.usdoj.gov](http://www.ins.usdoj.gov) para consultar la hoja de datos y la sección de preguntas y respuestas. La información está disponible en varios idiomas bajo *Public Affairs* (Asuntos Públicos).

**Si desea más información sobre cómo inscribirse en los programas de beneficios**

- Póngase en contacto con el organismo de servicios pertinente a nivel federal, estatal o local. La siguiente información le será de utilidad:

**Para CHIP:** 1-877-543-7669 (las llamadas son gratuitas)

**Para Food Stamps:** 1-800-221-5689 (las llamadas son gratuitas)

**Para Medicaid o TANF:** [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov)

**Para WIC:** [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov)

**The following letter is from USCIS to Food Stamp Program Applicants explaining that the Food Stamp Program will not affect their immigration status or cause them to be a “public charge.”**

*Office of the District Director*  
**U.S. Department of Homeland Security**  
300 North Los Angeles Street  
Los Angeles, CA 90012



**U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services**

March 2, 2004

Atención: Inmigrantes de Bajos Ingresos  
Tema: Las Estampillas de Comida No Afectarán Su Estado Migratorio

Estimado Aplicante:

El Gobierno De los Estados Unidos quiere asegurarse que UD. reciba la asistencia de comida si UD. es elegible bajo del programa de Estampillas de Comida. Este programa de nutrición del Departamento de Agricultura del Estados Unidos es para asegurar la salud y el bienestar de UD. y su familia.

Muchos inmigrantes tienen miedo de aplicar para el programa porque no saben que servicios como las Estampillas de Comida no afectan su estado de inmigración.

Como Directora del Distrito de Servicios de Ciudadanía y Inmigración de los Estados Unidos (el USCIS-anteriormente conocido como el INS) quiero asegurarle que si usted aplica para o recibe Estampillas de Comida esto no va afectar su:

- ❖ aplicación para hacerse residente permanente de los Estados Unidos
- ❖ o aplicación para hacerse ciudadano.

Agentes del USCIS no le preguntaran si usted recibe beneficios de programas como Estampillas de Comida, WIC, Comidas Escolares, Beneficios de Salud y otros programas en los cuales usted no recibe asistencia monetaria. (La unica vez que el USCIS puede preguntar a un inmigrante sobre si obtiene estampillas para alimentos es cuando el oficial sospecha que los beneficios han sido utilizados o adquiridos ilegalmente).

Cuando usted esta aplicando para hacerse residente permanente, usted no es considerado un “cargo publico” para el estado si usted usa estos programas que no ofrecen dinero.

Queremos animarlos a que tome ventaja de las Estampillas de Comida y otros programas de asistencia para los cuales usted pudiera ser elegible sin miedo que esto le vaya afectar su estado migratorio.

Sinceramente,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane E. Arellano".

Jane E. Arellano  
Directora del Distrito  
USCIS

# Applying for Food Stamps with a Disability

- If you are living with a disability, you can get food stamps even if you get SSI, disability-related Medicaid, or other disability or insurance benefits.
- You can get food stamp benefits and still receive Meals-on-Wheels. You can use food stamp benefits to pay for home-delivered meals like Meals on Wheels and meals served at certain locations.



## YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- If you are living with a disability, you can have a telephone interview for your application interview *and* recertification.
- Medical expenses, including prescription expenses that exceed \$35/month, may be deducted unless an insurance company or someone who is not a household member pays for them. Only the amount over \$35 can be deducted.
- Disabled people don't have to look for a job or register for work to get food stamp benefits. They can't be denied food stamp benefits for not working.

**Myth:** Food Stamps are not worth applying for since you only get \$10.

**Fact:** While the amount of food stamp benefits are based on family size, income, and certain expenses, households with a disabled person receive, on average, about \$126 in food stamp benefits per month.

**Myth:** Food Stamps are welfare.

**Fact:** The Food Stamp Program is a nutrition assistance program. It helps people with low incomes buy nutritious food. It is not welfare.

The resource limit for disabled households is \$3,000. **A house and car don't count as resources.** Other personal items such as jewelry, furniture, appliances, most pension funds, and insurance policies also don't count.

**Call Manna-Food Security  
Partners at 615-385-2286  
to be prescreened or to  
have an application mailed  
to your home.**

# Applying for Food Stamps and Over 60

**Myth:** Elderly people must go to the food stamp office for an interview.

**Fact:** If an elderly person is not able to go to DHS, he or she may request a telephone interview. The person may also ask a relative, pastor, neighbor, etc. to attend the interview as an authorized representative.

## YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- Medical expenses, including prescription expenses that exceed \$35/month, may be deducted unless an insurance company or someone who is not a household member pays for them. Only the amount over \$35 can be deducted.
- Applicants over 60 don't have to look for a job or register for work to get food stamp benefits. They can't be denied food stamp benefits for not working.
- Owning a home is not counted as a resource in the Food Stamp Program. Therefore, an elderly person can own a home and still get food stamps.

- Applicants for and recipients of SSI may also apply for food stamp benefits at the Social Security Office.
- The limit for elderly households or households containing one elderly person is up to \$3000.
- Elderly households who receive food stamps can also get Meals on Wheels.

**Myth:** Other people need food stamps more than elderly individuals. If an elderly individual receives food stamps, he or she will be taking them away from someone who might need them more.

**Fact:** The Food Stamp Program is an Entitlement Program. In other words, everyone who applies and is determined eligible will get food stamp benefits.



**Call Manna-Food Security Partners at  
615-385-2286 to be prescreened or to have an  
application mailed to your home.**

# Applying for Food Stamps When Homeless

## **\*\*IMPORTANT\*\***

If you are homeless, like all able-bodied adults without dependents, you do not need to have a job or look for a job to apply for food stamp benefits. You are entitled to three months of food stamps within a 36 month period. After that, you must register for work and take part in eligible job activities to keep food stamp benefits. This rule does not apply to people with children 6 years old or younger; people with disabilities; and in certain areas of some states with high levels of unemployment.

**MYTH:** You must have housing and a mailing address to get food stamps.

**FACT:** You can get food stamp benefits even if you live on the streets and do not have a mailing address. If you live in a shelter, bring a letter from a shelter employee that says you live there when you apply.



## **YOU SHOULD KNOW**

- You can get food stamp benefits even if you live in a shelter with meals.
- You can't be turned down for food stamp benefits even if you don't have a kitchen or place to cook.

**MYTH:** You need a photo ID to get food stamps.

**FACT:** You don't need a photo ID to get food stamps, but a proof of identity. A photo ID is only one way to prove identity. You can't be turned down for food stamp benefits because you don't have a photo ID. You can use another ID like a work or school badge, a health benefits card, an ID from another social service, a pay stub, a birth certificate, or a voter registration card. The food stamp worker can also check your identity by calling shelter workers or employees.

**Call Manna-Food Security Partners at  
615-385-2286 to be prescreened or  
to have an application  
mailed to you.**

# Applying for Food Stamps as a Working Person

## YOU SHOULD KNOW

You do not have to be unemployed to get food stamps. Most people who work low wage jobs are eligible. Many working people use food stamps to make ends meet.

Your household may have up to \$2000 in assets. Some assets like your home and car do not count. Getting food stamp benefits also depends on your household size, income and some expenses, like child support, housing and childcare costs. You can have a savings account, and even stocks and bonds, and still be eligible for food stamps.



**MYTH:** Food Stamps are welfare.

**FACT:** The Food Stamp Program is a nutrition assistance program. It helps low income people buy nutritious foods. It is not welfare.

If you receive unemployment, you may still qualify for food stamps.

**MYTH:** Food stamps are not worth applying for because you'll only get \$10.

**FACT:** The amount of food stamp benefits depends on household size, income, and certain expenses. A mother with two children who works full time at \$7 per hour and pays \$350 in rent could receive \$180 in food stamp benefits per month.

Call Manna-Food Security  
Partners at 615-385-2286  
to be prescreened or to  
have an application  
mailed to your home.

## **Special Food Stamp Program Eligibility Situations<sup>7</sup>**

### **■ Individual with a drug charge**

- You are **not eligible** for food stamps if you have been convicted of a drug felony for conduct on or after August 22, 1996 unless you have gone through a drug treatment or recovery program. Even if years have passed since the conviction, it's not too late to sign-up for a treatment program.

### **■ Young Adults**

- Parents and their children under age 22 who live together cannot be separate households, even if they do not buy or cook food together.

### **■ Students**

- A student is eligible for food stamps if he or she is enrolled at least half-time in college and is working 20 hours per week or is getting federal work-study money.
- Other situations a student might be eligible would be if they are getting cash assistance (Families First) or taking care of a small child.

### **■ Unemployed Able-bodied Adult**

- An able-bodied non-working adult is only eligible for food stamps for three months during a 36-month period of time.
- The work requirement does not apply to an able-bodied adult with a child 6 years of age or younger.<sup>8</sup>

### **■ Persons with very little or no income**

- If you have very little or no income and resources and qualify for food stamps, the food stamp office must get you your food stamps within seven calendar days of the date you apply. This is called "expedited service." If the person you pre-screen or help to apply for food stamps qualifies for expedited food stamps, you should tell them to make this very clear to the person they talk to at the Department of Human Services.

#### **You can get expedited service if:**

- (1) you have \$100 or less in liquid resources (cash) and less than \$150 in gross monthly income; or
- (2) your shelter costs are more than the total of your gross income and liquid resources; or
- (3) you are a migrant farmer with \$100 or less in liquid resources and you got all of your income for the month before you applied for food stamps from a job that is still not paying you and you do not expect to get more than \$25 from any new source of income for at least the next ten days.

<sup>7</sup> See the Food Stamp Manual for more special situations: <http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/fs-man-2.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> To see all specifics of Food Stamp Program eligibility, take a look at the Food Stamp Manual: <http://www.state.tn.us/humanserv/adfam/fs-man-1.pdf>

# **Intro to Federal and State Assistance Programs**

- ◆ Nutrition Programs
  - WIC
  - School Nutrition Programs
  - Meals on Wheels
  - Second Harvest Food Distribution Sites
- ◆ Health Insurance Programs
  - Medicare
  - Medicaid
  - Medicare Savings Program
  - TennCare
- ◆ Utilities Assistance Program
  - LIHEAP
- ◆ Family Cash Assistance Program
  - Families First/TANF
- ◆ Programs for Elderly/Disabled
  - Supplemental Security Income
  - Social Security

## **Other Nutrition Assistance Programs**

### **WIC<sup>9</sup>**



**Food, nutrition counseling, and access to health services are provided to low-income women, infants, and children under the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, popularly known as WIC.**

### **Free/Reduced Price School Breakfast and Lunch Programs<sup>10</sup>**

**Any student attending a school that offers either program can eat breakfast or lunch at school.** Families must complete an application, or be directly certified, to determine eligibility for free or reduced price school meals through the School Lunch and School Breakfast Program. **Ask about this program at the child's school.**

### **Meals on Wheels<sup>11</sup>**

**Meals on Wheels is a nutrition program for senior adults.** It promotes and maintains the health and well being of persons sixty years of age and older through the provision of a daily low-cost, nutritional and satisfying noon day meal served in congregate settings or delivered to the home.

**Metro Social Services, Senior Nutrition Program:** (615) 880-2292  
**Home Delivery Referrals:** (615) 880-2459  
523 A Mainstream Dr.

**The Health Department has three WIC clinics in Nashville:**

#### Lentz Public Health Center

311 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North  
**(615) 340-5619**  
M-F 7:30am-4:30pm, T 7:30am - 7:00pm

#### East Nashville Public Health Center

1015 East Trinity Lane  
**(615) 862-6625**  
M-F 7:30am- 4:30pm, W 7:30am-7:00pm

#### Woodbine Public Health Center

224 Oriel Avenue  
**(615) 862-7904**  
M-F 7:30am-4:30pm, TH 7:30am-7:00pm



## **Second Harvest Food Box Sites in Davidson County<sup>12</sup>**

An emergency food box provides two to three-days worth of staple food items, based on the number of members in each household. The boxes contain non-perishable items such as canned vegetables, canned fruits, canned meat, macaroni & cheese, rice, beans, peanut butter, cereal and crackers. **Bring Social Security cards for each member of your household and something with your address on it (piece of mail, bill, lease, etc.)**

Note: Persons who do not have a social security *number* can still receive a food box.

**Questions? Contact Emergency Food Box Manager at 615-329-3491**

**East Nashville Cooperative Ministry**  
807 Main St, Nashville, TN 37206  
615-244-7312  
Monday-Friday  
Food Boxes 10AM-12PM, 1PM-2PM  
Homeless Lunches 12PM-12:30PM

**Martha O'Bryan Center**  
711 S 7th St Nashville, TN 37206  
615-254-1791  
Monday-Thursday 11PM-2:30PM, Friday 12-2:30PM

**New Life Seventh Day Adventist Church**  
208 Gatewood Ave Nashville, TN 37207  
615-228-7505  
Monday-Thursday 9AM-12PM

**Salvation Army Magness Potter**  
225 Berry St Nashville, TN 37207  
615-255-0921  
Monday-Thursday 1PM-4PM

**Lutheran Family Services**  
1628 8th Ave N Nashville, TN 37208  
615-242-3156  
Monday-Friday 8:30AM-11AM  
Closed on Thursday

**Temple Baptist Church**  
3720 Kings Lane Nashville, TN 37218  
615-876-7656  
Wednesday 1PM-3PM, Saturday 10AM-1PM

**St. Luke's Community House**  
5601 New York Ave Nashville, TN 37209  
615-350-7893  
Monday-Friday 9AM-1:30PM

**Edgehill Center**  
935 Edgehill Ave Nashville, TN 37203  
615-256-5108  
Mon-Wed., Fri 10AM-12PM, Thurs 4-6PM

**St. Phillips Episcopal Church**  
85 Fairway Dr. Nashville, TN 37214  
(615) 778-1849  
Tuesday & Thursday, 4-6pm

**Goodlettsville Help Center**  
108 Depot St Goodlettsville, TN 37072  
615-859-4706  
Monday-Friday 11AM-3PM

**Napier Community Center**  
73 Fairfield Avenue Nashville, TN 37210  
Monday-Thursday 1:30PM-2:30PM

**New Song Christian Fellowship**  
2949 Nolensville Rd Nashville, TN 37210  
Thursday 2PM-5PM, Friday 11AM-2PM

**Eastminster Presbyterian Church**  
3930 Gallatin Pike  
615-262-5531  
Monday 11AM-12PM, 1PM-3PM

**Christian Cooperative Ministry**  
201 Madison St Madison, TN 37115  
615-868-6865  
Monday-Friday 9AM-12PM

**Hamilton United Methodist Church**  
3105 Hamilton Church Rd Antioch, TN  
615-361-7210  
Monday and Wednesday 4PM-6PM

**Una Church of Christ**  
1917 Old Murfreesboro Pk. Nashville, TN 37217  
615-361-8920  
Open Thursday 9-11AM

**Watkins Park Community Center**  
616 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. N Nashville, TN 37203  
862-8468  
Wednesday and Thursday 12-2PM

<sup>12</sup> To find Second Harvest Food Distribution Sites in other counties in TN, visit this website:  
<http://www.secondharvestmidtn.org/?q=node/5>

## Health Insurance Programs

### Medicaid<sup>14</sup>

Medicaid provides health and long-term care coverage for nearly 59 million low-income people. **To be eligible, individuals must meet financial criteria and also be categorically eligible** (low-income children, pregnant women, the elderly, people with disabilities, parents).

**You can apply for Medicaid by using the same form you would use for TennCare. See information below.**



### CHIP/TennCare<sup>15</sup>

**The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) covers kids ineligible for Medicaid and/or are not covered by private insurance.**

CHIP coverage provides eligible children with coverage for a full range of health services including regular checkups, immunizations, prescription drugs, lab tests, X-rays, hospital visits and more. It has both premiums and co-pays. **In Tennessee, CHIP is known as TennCare.**

#### TennCare Specifics

To apply for TennCare you need to fill out an application. It is the same application as the one for Food Stamp Benefits. **You can get an application by calling 615-532-4000.** Don't give up, someone will eventually answer!

### Medicare<sup>13</sup>

Medicare is a national health insurance program for individuals eligible for Social Security who are either over 65 years of age or permanently disabled are entitled.

**Medicare has 4 parts: A, B, C, D**

A – Hospital and skilled nursing care  
B – Physician and outpatient hospital care  
C – HMOs/Medicare Advantage (MA)  
D – Outpatient prescription drug coverage

**You can use this website to find out more about eligibility and application process:**

<http://www.medicare.gov/>

**Or call: 1-800-772-1213**

### Medicare Savings Program<sup>15</sup>

The Qualified Medicare Beneficiary Program (QMB), Specified Low-Income Medicare Beneficiary Program (SLMB), and Qualified Individual Program (QI) **help Medicare beneficiaries of modest means pay all or some of Medicare's cost sharing amounts (i.e. premiums, deductibles, and copayments).** To qualify an individual must be eligible for Medicare and must meet certain income guidelines which change annually on April 1<sup>st</sup>.



<sup>13</sup> About Medicare <http://www.medicare.gov/>

<sup>14</sup> More information about Medicaid can be found at: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MedicaidGenInfo/>

<sup>15</sup> About TennCare <http://www.state.tn.us/tenncare/>

## Utilities Assistance Program

LIHEAP<sup>16</sup>



The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps pay the winter heating bills or summer cooling bills of 4.4 million households with low-incomes. States may allocate up to 15 percent of their basic grant allocation for low-cost residential **weatherization** or other energy-related **home repair** and up to 25 percent if they meet certain conditions and obtain a waiver from HHS.

Call 615-313-4766 to find out how to get help with your utilities bills. Check out this website for more organizations that could help you:  
<http://liheap.ncat.org/profiles/Tenn.htm>

## Family Cash Assistance Program

TANF/Families First<sup>17</sup>

Families First provides temporary cash benefits to families who have children, and are experiencing financial difficulties. These benefits are time-limited to 60 months in a participant's lifetime.

To apply for Families First, get an application for the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS) located at 1000 2nd Avenue North (37202) in Nashville. Or go to [www.tennessee.gov/humanserv/forms/foms.html](http://www.tennessee.gov/humanserv/forms/foms.html), fill out a form, and turn it in right away. After you turn in your application, you will need to see a worker at the DHS. You should receive a letter that tells your interview time. If you have problems getting to see a worker, call your local DHS at 532-4000 or call the Family Assistance Service Center at 1-866-311-4287. This is a free call. Within 45 days of turning in your application, you should know if you can get Families First.



<sup>16</sup> More information about LIHEAP can be found at <http://liheap.ncat.org/profiles/Tenn.htm>

<sup>17</sup> Information taken from the Families First Guide written and distributed by the Tennessee Justice Center and the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberlands.

## **Supplemental Security Income<sup>18</sup>**

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is designed to help aged, blind, and disabled people, who have little shelter or no income; and it provides cash to meet basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter.**

**You can apply by calling 1-800-772-1213 (or TTY 1-800-325-0778 if you are deaf or hard of hearing) and making an appointment to apply for SSI benefits.** With an appointment, a representative will help you apply for benefits. You can have an appointment to apply for benefits on the telephone or in person at your local Social Security office. Find contact information for the Davidson County Social Security Office below. **Check this website for more information about Supplemental Security Income and eligibility requirements:** <http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-apply-ussi.htm>

Many people who are eligible for SSI may also be entitled to receive Social Security benefits. In fact, the application for SSI benefits is also the application for Social Security benefits. They often need to obtain additional information from the person before Social Security benefits are awarded.



## **Social Security<sup>19</sup>**

Social security is for individuals aged 62 or older, or disabled or blind; and "insured" by having enough work credits. For applications filed December 1, 1996 or later, you must either be a U.S. citizen or lawfully present alien in order to receive monthly Social Security benefits.

To qualify for Social Security benefits based on a disability other than blindness, you must have worked long enough and recently enough under Social Security. The number of work credits you need for disability benefits depends on your age when you became disabled. You generally need 20 work credits earned in the last 10 years ending with the year you become disabled. However, younger workers may qualify with fewer credits.

**Contact the local Social Security office to set up an appointment to apply.** It is located at 120 Athens Way, Nashville, TN, 37228. The office is open M-F: 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

### **Phone Numbers:**

**Local Number** (615) 736-2248  
**Toll-Free** 1-800-772-1213  
**TTY** (615) 736-2319

<sup>18</sup> Understanding Supplemental Security Income <http://www.ssa.gov/ssi/text-apply-ussi.htm>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.ssa.gov/>

## Where to Find Help in Nashville

\*\*CALL 211 for more resources\*\*

### Housing

#### *Shelters*

Nashville Rescue Mission  
255-2475, 639 Lafayette St.

Salvation Army: 242-0411  
631 Dickerson Rd. (Men)

Family Life Center: 312-1574  
1716 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. N

Safe Haven Family Shelter  
256-8195

Oasis Center: 327-4455 (Youth)  
1415 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

Room in the Inn: 251-7019  
532 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. S, (Nov-March)

#### *Transitional*

Salvation Army: 242-0411

Park Center: 228-9254  
(persons with mental illness)

Matthew 25: 383-9577

The Next Door: 251-8805

#### *Permanent*

MDHA: 252-6500

Urban Housing Solutions:  
726-2696 x118

### Transportation

Downtown Clinic: 862-7900  
526 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue South  
Medical, Dental, Treatment

MTA Access Ride (disabled,  
+65)  
880-3970

TennCare Transport: 333-5445

Mid-Cumberland Community  
Services Agency: 1-877-883-  
2889

### Legal Services

Legal Aid 1-800-238-1443

### Veteran Services

V.A. Medical Center: 327-5320  
Operation Stand Down: 321-3919

### Health and Mental Healthcare

Lentz Health Center: 340-2172  
311 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, North, Room 206

Bridges to Care (Health Dept): 760-2799  
311 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue North, Room 120

Downtown Clinic: 862-7900  
526 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

Matthew Walker: 327-9400  
1035 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue North

Mental Health Cooperative: 726-3340  
24-Hr Mental Health Crisis Line and Walk-In Center: 726-0125  
275 Cumberland Bend Drive

Nashville General Hospital: 341-4000

Siloam Family Health Center: 298-5406  
820 Gale Lane

UNHS Cayce Clinic: 226-1695  
617 S 8<sup>th</sup> Street (Hablen Espanol)

UNHS Madison Family Clinic: 425-3333  
601 Due West Avenue

UNHS Waverly-Belmont Clinic: 269-3461  
1501 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

Vine Hill Clinic: 292-9770  
601 Benton Avenue

### HIV/AIDS

Street Works  
248-1905  
83 University Court

Nashville CARES  
1-800-845-4266  
501 Brick Church Park Drive

First Response Center  
321-9791  
1219 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, North

### Employment

Better Tomorrows Adult Education: 228-6525  
908 Meridian Street

TN Career Center at Metro Center: 253-8920  
621 Mainstream Dr., Ste 210

TN Career Center at Nashville South: 741-3556  
3763 Nolensville Rd.

Vocational Rehab: 741-1606  
88 Hermitage Avenue

Welcome Home Ministries  
309-7087  
(painting, landscaping, demo)

### Domestic Violence

YWCA DV Shelter: 242-1199  
Metro Police DV: 880-3000  
Bridges Shelter: 599-5777  
Rape and Sexual Abuse Center: 259-9055

### Rental Assistance

Campus for Human Development  
251-9791  
532 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

Ladies of Charity  
327-3430  
2212 State Street

Metro Action Commission  
1624 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue North  
862-8860 x124

Salvation Army (Vouchers)  
255-0921  
225 Berry St.

### Drug and Alcohol Treatment

Alcoholics Anonymous  
AA 24 Hour Hotline: 831-1050  
Narcotics Anonymous: 251-7400

Al-Anon Family Services of Middle TN  
176 Thompson Lane, Suite G-3  
333-6066

Buffalo Valley: 1-800-447-2766

Downtown Clinic: 862-7900  
526 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue South

First Response Center: 321-9791  
1219 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue North

Skyline Hospital-Madison: 860-6310  
500 Hospital Drive, Madison