

FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

October 1, 2008

The following is a general outline of Food Assistance Program eligibility requirements.

- 1. ARE YOU BELOW THE ASSET LIMITS?** \$3,000 for households where at least one member is disabled or age 60 or over; and \$2,000 for all other households. We do not count the assets of people who are receiving State cash assistance (TANF), federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or TANF Information and Referral Services.

- 2. WHAT IS GROSS INCOME?** Gross income is a household's total, non-excluded income, before deductions are made. Gross monthly income is determined by totaling the income of all members of the applicant household.

TANF and SSI households are income eligible. TANF Information and Referral households must meet the net income limit.

<u>HH SIZE</u>	<u>GROSS INCOME</u>	<u>NET INCOME</u>	<u>HH SIZE</u>	<u>GROSS INCOME</u>	<u>NET INCOME</u>
1	\$1,127	\$ 867	5	\$2,687	\$2,067
2	\$1,517	\$1,167	6	\$3,077	\$2,367
3	\$1,907	\$1,467	7	\$3,467	\$2,667
4	\$2,297	\$1,767	8	\$3,857	\$2,967
			Ea. Add. Mem.	+\$390	+\$300

- 3. WHAT CAN YOU DEDUCT?**

- A. To arrive at your net monthly income every household may deduct:

Standard deduction based on household size - \$144 (1-3 persons); \$147 (4 persons); \$172 (5 persons); \$197 (6+ persons).

20 percent of earned income (wages/salary).

Actual costs of dependent care.

A portion of high shelter costs (up to a maximum of \$446 for households not containing an elderly or disabled member) can be allowed for shelter deduction. High shelter costs are shelter expenses in excess of 50% of a household's adjusted income.

Child support paid to a non-household member.

- B. Households with elderly or disabled members may also deduct medical costs over \$35 a month incurred by the elderly or disabled individual, if not reimbursed or insured.

- 4. BENEFIT DETERMINATION.** Program benefits are determined by multiplying a household's net monthly income (as defined above) by 30% and subtracting that amount from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Thrifty Food Plan for that size household. The Thrifty Food Plan is as follows:

<u>HH SIZE</u>	<u>DOLLAR AMOUNT</u>	<u>HH SIZE</u>	<u>DOLLAR AMOUNT</u>	<u>HH SIZE</u>	<u>DOLLAR AMOUNT</u>
1	\$176	4	\$588	7	\$926
2	\$323	5	\$698	8	\$1058
3	\$463	6	\$838	Ea. Add. Mem.	+\$132

As an example, an eligible 4-person household with a net monthly food assistance income of \$500 would be entitled to \$438 worth of food assistance benefits ($\$500 \times .30 = \150 ; $\$588 - \$150 = \$438$).

For households who incur heating and/or cooling costs, the full standard utility allowance of \$653 is used.

SAMPLE ELIGIBILITY TEST: Family of four. Income includes \$500 in wages and \$350 in unearned income. Expenses include rent in the amount of \$120, utility expenses that qualify for the standard utility allowance of \$653, dependent care costs of \$125, and legally obligated child support paid to a non-household member of \$150. Total household income: \$850. Gross income limit: \$2,297. Net income limit: \$1,767.

HOW TO CALCULATE NET INCOME: Same sample family of four.

	\$500
Subtract 20% deduction from earned income	<u>-100</u>
	400
Add all other income:	<u>+350</u>
	\$750
Subtract the standard deduction:	-147
Subtract dependent care costs:	-125
Subtract child support paid:	<u>-150</u>
You have <u>adjusted income</u> :	\$328
If shelter costs are more than half of adjusted income, household may qualify for excess shelter deduction:	\$120 rent <u>653</u> utilities \$773 shelter expense
Shelter expense:	\$773.00
Minus half of <u>adjusted income</u> :	<u>-164.00</u>
Excess shelter costs:	\$609.00
To determine <u>net income</u> , subtract excess shelter cost from the adjusted income (up to maximum allowed):	\$328.00 <u>-446.00</u>
Net Income:	\$ 0.00

HOW TO CALCULATE BENEFITS:

Subtract 30 percent of the household's <u>net income</u> from the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan for the household sample:	\$588.00 <u>- 0.00</u>
Four-person household:	\$588.00
(Round down if benefit ends in cents)	

The first month's benefit will be prorated if less than a full month is covered, depending on the date of the application.

Households eligible and entitled to expedited service shall be allowed to participate no later than the close of business on the 7th calendar day after the date of application. Households eligible but not entitled to expedited service shall be allowed to participate within 30 days from date of application. After the initial month's benefit is issued, the issuance date for subsequent months of participation is on the 1st of the month.

WHERE TO APPLY

Food Assistance Program applications and additional information are available at all County Social Service Board Offices. The phone numbers of County Social Service Boards are listed in local telephone directories under Government Offices - County.