

Once you have filed your application, you will receive a decision **within 30 days**.

If you are eligible, you or your authorized representative will receive food stamp benefits through the Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) system. EBT will allow you to use food stamp benefits at Point-of-Sale (POS) terminals in food stores. EBT ensures that your food stamp benefits are available on time.

It is to your advantage to file a food stamp application as soon as possible. If you are eligible, you will receive food stamp benefits dating back to the day you filed the application.

What Should I Bring with Me When I Apply?

- **Identification showing your name and address:**

If you have no address, you must say where you are staying.

- **Proof of Income**
Your last four pay stubs, copies of checks, or an official statement of the amount and frequency of payments.

- **Social Security Numbers for all Members Applying:**

If you do not have Social Security numbers for applicants, the food stamp worker will help you get them. Your food stamp application will be processed while you are waiting for your Social Security numbers.

- Bank book or current bank statements.
- Receipts for child care, or the care of other dependents who cannot care for themselves.

- Receipts for housing costs - rent or mortgage, heating and utilities.
- If you are not a citizen, bring proof of legal noncitizen status.
- Medical bills - if you are age 60 or older, or if you are disabled.

What If I Need More Information?

For more information about how you can get food stamp benefits, contact the Application Unit at 1-866-950-FOOD or call your local Department of Transitional Assistance Office. You may also visit our website at www.mass.gov/dta or visit Project Bread's website at www.gettingfoodstamps.org.



How to Get Food Stamp Benefits



Food Stamp Program
*Massachusetts Department of
Transitional Assistance*

FSP-INFO (Rev. 6/2008)
09-070-0608-05

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE



Who Can Get Food Stamp Benefits?

If the people in your household are:

- low income
- U.S. citizens, or legal noncitizens, and
- without a lot of assets,

you may be able to get food stamp benefits.

Who is Counted As Part of My Household?

In most cases, a household includes all people who buy, prepare and eat meals together.

What If I Have Little or No Money At All?

In an emergency, some people can get food stamp benefits *within seven days* of applying. If you have less than \$150.00 income in one month and less than \$100.00 in assets, or if your combined income and assets are less than your combined monthly rent or mortgage and utility expenses, go to your Transitional Assistance Office (TAO) and ask for expedited service.

Can I Have Income And Still Get Food Stamp Benefits?

Yes, you may have income and get food stamp benefits. Eligibility for food stamp benefits while collecting or earning money depends on the number of people in your household and how much income you have. To get food stamp benefits, your gross household monthly income (all the income before deductions) must be less than the amounts listed in the following table:

Income Standard for Households with Children Under 19, a Pregnant Woman Living Alone or Households With Elders or Disabled Members	
If your household size is:	Maximum gross monthly income is:
1 person.....	\$1,734
2.....	\$2,334
3.....	\$2,934
4.....	\$3,534
5.....	\$4,134
6.....	\$4,734
7.....	\$5,334
8.....	\$5,934
for each extra person	+ 600

For example, a household of 9 would have to have a monthly gross income of not more than \$6,534 to qualify for food stamp benefits: \$5,934 (the amount for 8 people) + \$600 each extra person.

Note: Elder or disabled households with income in excess of the standards listed above will be subject to a \$3,000 asset limit.

Income Standard for Households With Adults (age 19 - 59) only	
If your household size is:	Maximum gross monthly income is:
1 person.....	\$1,107
2.....	\$1,484
3.....	\$1,861
4.....	\$2,238
5.....	\$2,615
6.....	\$2,992
7.....	\$3,369
8.....	\$3,746
for each extra person	+ 377

For example, a household of 9 would have to have a monthly gross income of not more than \$4,123 to qualify for food stamp benefits: \$3,746 (the amount for 8 people) + \$377 each extra person.

If your gross income is under the income limit, a food stamp worker will figure out if your net income makes you eligible for food stamp benefits. Net income is what remains after certain deductions are applied to your gross income, such as dependent care costs, a standard deduction, an earned income deduction, qualified child support payments and some shelter costs.

What Kind of Property Can I Own?

You can own your own home, personal belongings, car and have money in the bank.

Certain households with disqualified members will have to provide information and proof of money in the bank and other assets such as stocks, bonds, CDs, IRAs and Keoghs. These households will be subject to asset limits.

How Can I Apply for Food Stamp Benefits?

To get a food stamp application, call your TAO or 1-866-950-FOOD or visit our website at www.mass.gov/dta or visit Project Bread's website at www.gettingfoodstamps.org.

You may mail, fax or take the completed application to the Department of Transitional Assistance Office (TAO) that serves your city or town. If you cannot get to the TAO, you may ask someone you trust to apply for you. That person is called your **Authorized Representative**.