

Food Assistance (FA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

As of October 1, 2008, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program.

The new name reflects our focus on nutrition and putting healthy food within reach for low income households. Changes have been made to make the Program more accessible. Although SNAP will be the national name, your State may use a different name. SNAP helps low-income people and families buy the food they need for good health. You apply for benefits by completing a State application form. Benefits are provided on an electronic card that is used like an ATM card and accepted at most grocery stores. Through nutrition education partners, SNAP helps clients learn to make healthy eating and active lifestyle choices. Colorado's SNAP program is the Food Assistance program.

Overview

The Food Assistance Programs Division of the Colorado Department of Human/Social Services (CDHS) oversees the 64 County Departments of Human/Social Services who provide food assistance benefits to households that meet the citizenship, income, and resource guidelines of the FA Program.

Employment First (EF) is the Food Assistance Employment and Training Program, which is a mandatory component of the Food Assistance program.

Verifications:

Verification requirements differ by Food Assistance program. The following is a list of the most common required verifications (refer to applicable program regulations for more detailed information):

- Identity
- Citizenship
- Colorado Residency
- Income
- SSN
- Resources
- Expenses
- Disability (if applicable)
- Student Status

Programs:

- Expedited Food Assistance (FA)
- Regular Food Assistance (FA)
- Disaster Food Assistance (DFA)
- Employment First (EF)

Expedited Food Assistance

Definition:

Provides increased food purchasing power to eligible low-income households.

Benefits:

Entitled to receive Food Assistance benefits on or before the 8th day from the date of application for eligible households (Day 1 is the day after the Application Date).

Household Composition:

Must be a Colorado resident and a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident or in a qualified alien status.

Income:

See Other Requirements below.

Resources:

See Other Requirements below.

Liquid Resource Examples: cash, checking, savings accounts, certificates of deposits, stocks, bonds, lump-sum payments, Individual Retirement Accounts (IRA), etc.

Expenses / Deductions:

- Standard deduction based on household size
- 20% Earned income deduction
- Medical expenses for elderly or disabled members
- Dependent care costs
- Shelter/utility costs
- Higher of homeless shelter allowance or actual expenses
- Legally-binding child support payments

Other Requirements:

Except for identity, which is a condition of eligibility, verification can be received later.

Applicant household must meet one of the following:

- Migrant or seasonal farm worker households whose liquid resources do not exceed \$100 and who are destitute of income.
- Liquid resources do not exceed \$100 and have less than \$150 of gross monthly income in the calendar month of application.
- Combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than the household's monthly rent/mortgage and utilities.

Regular Food Assistance

Definition:

Provides increased food purchasing power to eligible low-income households.

Benefits:

Entitled to benefits by the 30th calendar day from the date of application for eligible households.

Household Composition:

Must be a Colorado resident and a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident or a qualified alien status.

Income:

Gross income test and/or a net income test based on the household size of eligible members.

- Gross income level is 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).
- Maximum monthly net income level is 100% of the FPL.

Federal Poverty Levels (FPL), which are updated annually, can be found at http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/government/FY06_Income_Standards.htm

Resources:

- \$2,000 for households not including a person age 60 or older.
- \$3,000 for households including at least one member who is age 60 or older or who is disabled.

Expenses / Deductions:

- Standard deduction based on household size
- 20% Earned income deduction
- Medical expenses for elderly or disabled members
- Dependent care costs
- Shelter/utility costs
- Higher of homeless shelter allowance or actual expenses
- Legally-binding child support payments

Disaster Food Assistance**Definition:**

Under federal law, there are two types of disasters:

- The U.S. President determines a major disaster.
- Temporary emergency means any (non-major) disaster, resulting from either natural or human causes, which has disrupted commercial channels of food distribution.

Benefits:

- The State Department shall establish temporary emergency standards of eligibility.

- The State shall provide special certification material and forms designed for certification of disaster victims.
- Certification shall be done for households that are victims of a disaster, which disrupts commercial channels of food distribution.

Household Composition:

As defined at time of disaster.

Income:

As defined at time of disaster.

Resources:

As defined at time of disaster.

Expenses / Deductions:

As defined at time of disaster.

Other Requirements:

As defined at time of disaster.

Employment First

Program

Employment First (EF)

Definition:

Employment First (EF) is the mandatory Employment and Training Program part of the Food Assistance program. The goals are to assist individuals in returning to the workforce and make individuals less reliant on public assistance.

A Food Assistance applicant or recipient may be exempt from participation in EF for various reasons, for example:

- Under 16 or over 60,
- Physical or mental disability,
- Pregnancy,
- Care of a child under age 6, or
- Employment.

For individuals who are not exempt (mandatory work registrant), the eligibility worker assists the client in completion of a Work Registration Referral Form, which the client must sign, and includes an appointment for the individual's first meeting with the local EF unit.

Mandatory work registrants who do not participate in EF are sanctioned, which means that they lose Food Assistance benefits for a period of time. Individuals who are exempt may be referred to EF if they choose to volunteer. Some counties are not required to have an EF Program.

Benefits:

Some Counties have a budget for Transportation/Personal Needs.

Household Composition:

N/A

Income:

N/A

Resources:

N/A

Expenses / Deductions:

N/A

Other Requirements:

Must be a Food Assistance applicant or recipient.