

Facts About Basic Food



Can I have a job and still receive Basic Food?

Yes. Currently, almost 1 in 5 Basic Food recipients are employed. Everyone is experiencing the rising costs of food and this program helps families and individuals make ends meet.

Higher income limits make it easier for more people who work to receive Basic Food:

Household Size	Monthly Income
1	\$1,805
2	\$2,429
3	\$3,052
4	\$3,675
5	\$4,299

Do I have to have children to be eligible?

No. Households of any size may be eligible to receive Basic Food.

What about other people who need it more than me?

There is no limit to the number of eligible people who can receive Basic Food. Getting Basic Food for you or your family will not impact the ability of anyone else to receive these benefits.

Do I have to be a U.S. Citizen?

No. The federal Food Stamp Program is limited to U.S. citizens and immigrants that meet specific program rules. However, the state pays for Basic Food benefits to legal immigrants who do not meet the citizen rules for the federal program.

Getting Basic Food benefits will not impact someone's immigration status with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service.

Undocumented immigrants and non-citizens who are tourists or other non-immigrants cannot receive Basic Food.

Can I own my house and a car and still be eligible?

Yes. If you are income-eligible, any other resources such as vehicles, retirement accounts, your home and other assets are not considered.

How much will I receive to spend on food?

It varies based on your circumstances. The average monthly benefit families received in February 2009 was about \$216.

The highest monthly benefits are:

- \$200 for a one-person household;
- \$367 for a two-person household;
- \$526 for a three-person household;
- \$668 for a four-person household.

Some people only receive \$16 a month – Is it even worth applying?

Some people do receive the minimum monthly benefit for one- or two-person households, which is \$16. People who receive the minimum amount often save the benefits for a few months to cover the cost of a trip to the grocery store. Others use the benefits to add fresh fruits and vegetables to their food budget.

Most people receive a higher monthly benefit.

For an estimate of the monthly benefits you could receive, call our toll-free Basic Food line at 1-877-514 FOOD (3663) or visit our website at www.foodhelp.wa.gov.

Are there any additional benefits to getting Basic Food?

Besides monthly benefits to buy food, receiving Basic Food:

- Automatically enrolls school-aged children in the free school meal program;
- Qualifies you for low-cost local phone service through the Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP); and
- Shows that your family meets the Women Infants and Children (WIC) income test.

Do I have to go to an office to apply?

No. You can apply online at www.foodhelp.wa.gov or by mail. If your work schedule, childcare, or other circumstances make it inconvenient to have an in-office interview for benefits, we can arrange a phone interview.

What kind of paperwork do I need to provide?

When you apply for benefits, you can submit your application in-person at the local DSHS Community Services Office (CSO), by mail, or online at www.foodhelp.wa.gov.

You will also need to present us with your social security number, proof of your identity, and proof of the income and living expenses for the household you are applying for. If needed, we can help you get the required paperwork.

If approved, how long will it take to receive my benefits?

- On average, we approve applications for eligible households in 11 days.
- Nearly half of all applications are approved in less than six days.
- When we approve an application for Basic Food, benefits go back to the date of the application.



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For more information:

1-877-514-FOOD

www.foodhelp.wa.gov