

---

---

## COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

### Maricopa County Central Office

305 South Second Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona 85003  
(602) 258-3434 1-800-852-9075 TTY: (602) 254-9852

### Disability Advocacy Project

5060 N. 19th Avenue, Suite 306  
Phoenix, Arizona 85015  
(602) 212-2724 TTY: (602) 212-2702

### Volunteer Lawyers Program

305 South Second Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona 85003  
(602) 258-3434 1-800-852-9075 TTY: (602) 254-9852

### Eastside Office - Mesa

20 W. First Street, Suite 101  
Phoenix, Arizona 85201  
(480) 833-1442 1-800-896-3631 TTY: (480) 644-0572

### Yavapai County Office - Prescott

401 N. Mount Vernon  
Prescott, Arizona 86301  
(928) 445-9240 1-800-233-5114 Arizona Relay - 711

### Mohave County Office - Kingman

1720 Beverly, Suite A  
Kingman, Arizona 86401  
(928) 681-1177 1-800-255-9031 TTY: (928) 681-7281

### Yuma/La Paz Counties Office - Yuma

201 South 1st Avenue  
Yuma, Arizona 85364  
(928) 782-7511 1-800-424-7962 Arizona Relay - 711

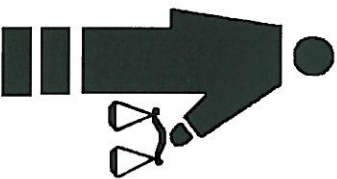
### Farmworker Program - Main Office

305 South Second Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona 85003  
(602) 258-3434 1-800-356-7115 TTY: (602) 254-9852

### Farmworker Program - San Luis Office

845 E. "B" Street, Suite 2  
San Luis, Arizona 85349  
(928) 627-8023 1-800-356-7115 Arizona Relay - 711

If you would like legal assistance  
or more information, you may  
apply for free services at any of  
the Community Legal Services  
offices listed.



Rvw: May 2008

Community Legal Services, Inc., does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, age, disability or national origin in its relations with service applicants or employees. This brochure can be made available in alternate formats. Call 602-258-3434 x2230.



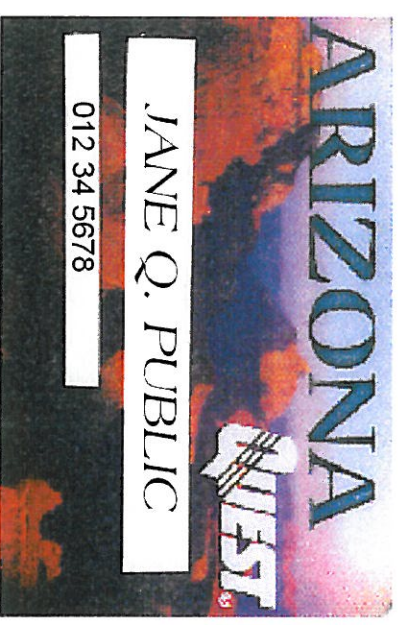
[www.clsaz.org](http://www.clsaz.org)

---

---

## COMMUNITY LEGAL SERVICES

# FOOD STAMPS



CLS . . . because justice is for all

## WHAT ARE FOOD STAMPS AND HOW DO I QUALIFY?

The Food Stamp Program is a federal program that provides low-income people with benefits to help purchase food. It is administered by the Department of Economic Security (DES). Food Stamp benefits are used like cash and are provided through an "electronic benefits transfer" (EBT) system. Consumers pay for food with debit cards that can be used at most grocery stores. With some exceptions, almost anyone who meets federal income, resource, immigration, and work or disability requirements can get Food Stamps.

## WHAT ARE THE INCOME LIMITS?

In order to qualify for Food Stamps, your household income must be under a certain limit. Your income limit depends on the number of people in your household. There are 2 types of income limits you must meet. The first type is the **gross** income limit. Before deductions, your income must be at or below this limit in order to complete the application process.

If your income is within the gross income limit, DES will deduct (subtract) certain expenses from your income to determine whether your remaining income, called "net" income, is within the limits. After deductions, your income must be at or below the **net** scale to be eligible for Food Stamps. If you are over the net income limit, you will not qualify for Food Stamps. To find out what the qualifying income limit is for you, contact your local DES office.

## WHAT DEDUCTIONS ARE AVAILABLE?

The deductions used to calculate your net income include expenses such as day care costs, child support payments, and shelter and utility expenses. People with disabilities and people who are elderly can also get a deduction for out-of-pocket medical expenses that cost over \$35 a month.

## WHO IS A MEMBER OF MY HOUSEHOLD?

Identifying the members of your household is an important step in determining whether you are eligible for the Food Stamps program. This is

because your eligibility is based on the income of your entire household. A "household" can be a person living alone, or a group of people living together who buy and prepare meals together. Generally, people who live together but buy and prepare separate meals are separate households. This means the income of one household cannot be included as income of the other household. However, a husband and wife who live together will not be considered separate households even if they do not buy and prepare meals together. Likewise, parents who live with their children under 22 years of age will not be considered separate household regardless of how they handle their food.

## ARE THERE ANY RESOURCE LIMITATIONS?

Yes. There are limits on the value of your resources (cash or other property that you own). You may have up to \$2,000 in resources and still receive Food Stamps. If at least one person in the household has a disability or is at least 60 years of age, you may have up to \$3,000 in resources and still receive Food Stamps. Some resources do not count, such as your home. There are also special rules that apply to vehicles.

## AM I REQUIRED TO WORK?

In order to qualify for Food Stamps, you must work or be in a DES approved training program for at least 20 hours a week. However, you may not have to meet this requirement if you are:

- a 1/2 time student enrolled in a training program;
- unable to work because of a disability;
- pregnant;
- getting unemployment benefits;
- taking care of a disabled person at least 20 hours a week;
- in a drug or alcohol treatment program;
- living where there is high unemployment;
- responsible for the care of someone with a disability or a child under 18.

## IF I WANT TO APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

You must fill out an application, be interviewed and register for work if necessary. Sometimes DES will request that you provide more information. If

you receive this request, you **MUST** cooperate by the deadline set by DES. If you are unable to provide the information, let DES know. DES must help you get the information if you are unable to do so yourself.

## HOW DO I SUBMIT MY FOOD STAMPS APPLICATION?

You may turn in the application in person, by mail, fax, or by having someone take it to your local DES office for you.

## DOES MY INTERVIEW HAVE TO BE IN-PERSON?

Generally, you, a member of your household, or a person you want to represent you must have a face-to-face interview with a DES eligibility worker. However, you may have the right to a telephone interview or a home visit if you can show it is difficult for you to get to DES because hardships such as illness, disability, transportation difficulties, and work schedule prevent you from doing so.

## HOW LONG DOES THE APPLICATION PROCESS TAKE?

DES must determine your food stamp eligibility within thirty calendar days from the date you submitted your application.

## WHAT ARE EXPEDITED FOOD STAMPS?

Emergency food stamps are called "expedited" food stamps. Expedited food stamps must be given to you within 7 days of the date of your application. You must meet certain requirements in order to qualify for this service.

**NOTE:** The purpose of this brochure is to provide consumers with information that will help them identify benefits for which they may be eligible. It is not intended to be legal advice. It is an overview and does not cover all factors concerning eligibility. If you have questions regarding your eligibility, contact DES or seek legal advice.