

Can I get Food Stamps?

Who is eligible for Food Stamps?

- Low-income families, especially families with children,
- Immigrants who are at least 75 years old, *and* have been legal residents since August 22, 1996, and
- Children who are in this country legally, even if their parents are not.

Do I have to give my Social Security number or proof of my immigration status?

No, not if you are applying *only* for your children.

How much can I earn and still be eligible?

Find your family size and your gross monthly income (before deductions) on this chart. If you earn less than this amount, you can get Food Stamps.

Family size	Monthly Income before deductions
1	\$1,037
2	\$1,390
3	\$1,744
4	\$2,097
5	\$2,450

Effective Oct. 1, 2005

If there are more than 5 people in your home, add \$353 for each additional person.

What other information do I have to provide?

You must tell the program about what you earn and what you own. You must also tell them about what everyone in your home earns and owns.

What if we have money in the bank?

Your household (all of you together) is allowed to have up to \$5000 in resources, including money in the bank.

How do I apply (or renew)?

Go to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (THHSC) office nearest you. Take ID and proof of income and expenses, like your paycheck stub, rent receipts, utility bills, etc.

What if I cannot go to the THHSC office?

You can apply for Food Stamps or renew your Food Stamps over the phone if:

- You do not have transportation or you live more than 30 miles away from the nearest office,
- You are at work or training during THHSC office hours,
- You cannot get to the office THHSC because of bad weather, or

- You are sick or you are taking care of a household member.

Call your local THHSC office and ask them to mail you an application. Fill out your application and send it back with a statement explaining why you cannot go to the THHSC office. They will contact you to set up a phone interview.

Are the rules for Food Stamps the same as for TANF?

No. TANF time limits do NOT affect your eligibility for Food Stamps.

And, even if you lose TANF, you may still be eligible for Food Stamps. You can get Food Stamps for as long as your income meets the guidelines.

Do I have to do anything in exchange for the Food Stamps?

If you are an unemployed parent, you may have to participate in job search or training activities.

What if my household situation changes?

You must let THHSC know about any changes, such as changes to your:

- Income or assets
- Job
- Address, and
- Who lives in your home

Contact them within 10 days of the change.

What if THHSC says I am not eligible for Food Stamps?

You can ask for a written notice saying why you do not qualify. You can also appeal (fight) their decision to deny or reduce your Food Stamps. But you must do this within 90 days of the notice.

You can still get Food Stamps while you appeal (if you ask for it). But if you lose your appeal, you may have to pay them back for the Food Stamps you received.

Do I need a lawyer to help with my appeal?

If THHSC says you received an overpayment, it's best if you talk to a lawyer. Your local Legal Aid office may be able to help you.

Call: **800-252-9690**

Or visit: **www.texaslawhelp.org**

Then, search under *Find Legal Aid Program*.