



## 10 Steps to Help You Fill Your Grocery Bag Through the Food Stamp Program

**Learn If You or Someone You Know Might Be Eligible for Food Stamps**

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### **Use the Internet Tool.**

If you want to find out if you could be eligible, check out the Internet tool at [www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov](http://www.foodstamps-step1.usda.gov). Your local library usually has computers you can use.

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### **Call or Go to the Local Food Stamp Office.**

If you think you might be eligible, call or go to the local food stamp office. Look in the blue pages of your phone book under “Social Services” or “Human Services” to find the number. If you need help finding your local food stamp office, call **1-800-221-5689**.

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### **Get an Application Form.**

There are 4 ways to get an application form:

- Pick it up at a local food stamp office, or
- Call the local food stamp office. Ask the worker to mail it to you, or
- Ask the worker if there are other places where you can pick up the form.
- Print the form from your State’s web page. (This is available in many States but not all.)

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### **Fill Out the Application Form.**

Fill out the food stamp application form as much as you can. If you need help, ask the food stamp worker. You can ask a friend or people who work at places like legal services or food banks to help you fill out the form.

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### **Return the Application Form to the Food Stamp Office.**

Get the application form to the food stamp office as quickly as possible. If you are picking up your application form at a food stamp office, put your name, street address, and social security number on the form and sign it. Leave that part of the form (usually the first page) at the food stamp office. This starts the process and helps you to get healthy food sooner, if you are eligible. Take the rest of the form with you to fill out later.

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### **Make an Appointment for an Interview.**

Make an appointment for an interview with a food stamp worker. If you are at a food stamp office, ask the worker to write down what you need to bring to the interview. If you are calling for an appointment, ask the worker what you should bring.

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Here are examples of some papers that you might need to bring:

- Driver's license or birth certificate;
- Pay stubs;
- Letter showing money received from social security, SSI, VA, child support, etc.;
- Most recent rental agreement or letter from your landlord;
- Most recent mortgage statement;
- Utility bills, such as electricity, gas and heating oil;
- Cancelled checks for day care for your child;
- Medical bills that you pay (if you are 60 or older, or disabled); and
- Court order or cancelled checks for child support payments.

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### **Get Papers or Other Information.**

Get the papers or find the other information that the food stamp worker needs to finish your application. If you need help getting the papers, ask the food stamp worker, a relative, a friend, or a community representative to help you.

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### **Go to the Interview.**

Go to the interview with the food stamp worker. Bring your papers with you. Ask the food stamp worker to make copies. Keep your original papers. If you need help filling out the application form or getting the information needed to finish your form, ask the food stamp worker. You may bring a friend or community representative to help you understand how to complete the process. If you can't go to the food stamp office for the interview, ask for a telephone interview. Or you can okay a friend or relative to go in your place.

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### **If You are Approved, Go Grocery Shopping.**

If you are approved for food stamps, happy shopping! Add lots of fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods, and other good foods to your shopping cart. Ask your local food stamp office where you can learn more about smart, economical eating and physical activity for better health. Nutrition education may be available to you as a food stamp participant.

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### **If You are Not Approved, Ask Why.**

Call or visit the food stamp office to ask why you were not approved. You may ask to speak with the food stamp worker's boss. If you think there is a mistake, you may ask for a "fair hearing." This means that a State person will meet with you and the food stamp office to discuss your application. Fair hearings do not cost you any money.



**Need More Information on the Food Stamp Program?**

**Call: 1-800-221-5689**

**Go to the Food Stamp website at  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/>**

**Food Stamps Make America Stronger**