



Merative Social Program Management 8.1

**Cúram Income Support Food
Assistance Program Guide**

Note

Before using this information and the product it supports, read the information in [Notices on page 45](#)

Edition

This edition applies to Merative™ Social Program Management 8.0.0, 8.0.1, 8.0.2, 8.0.3, and 8.1.

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1 Merative SPM Income Support Food Assistance Program Guide

Income Support Food Assistance provides eligibility determination for households that are based on financial and non-financial factors. Captured evidence is assessed against a set of business rules to determine whether the household is eligible for food assistance.

1.1 Merative SPM Income Support Food Assistance Program overview

The overview guide contains details of rules used in assessment for eligibility and entitlement's for Food Assistance.

It is intended for anyone interested in learning about the rules used in the Merative SPM Income Support Food Assistance Program. It is intended as a reference manual for business analysts working within a social enterprise organization. The guide does not contain any technical information regarding how the rules are run or how to administer the rules.

Before reading this guide, it would be useful to have a basic knowledge of the product. It is assumed that you are familiar with the basic concepts of Social Enterprise Management.

Food Assistance overview

The Food Assistance program is an assistance program that provides food to low and no income households.

Benefits are distributed through the use of cards or coupons which can be used to purchase food for human consumption. These stamps can be used to purchase any prepackaged edible foods regardless of nutritional value.

Merative SPM Income Support Food Assistance provides eligibility determination for households based on financial and non-financial factors. The information required to determine program eligibility is captured as evidence. This evidence is assessed against a set of business rules to determine whether or not the household is eligible for Food Assistance.

Food Assistance eligibility is determined based on a number of factors:

- Non-financial rules that include citizenship, SSN, and residency.

The non-financial rules are used to determine whether a household member satisfies the non-financial requirements of the state before proceeding with program eligibility.

- Assistance unit determination that includes household composition, household determination and head of household.

The assistance unit determination rules are used to determine who should be included, excluded or not included in the assistance unit for Food Stamps coverage.

- Program rules

The program rules determine if a household member satisfies program requirements. If these rules are not satisfied, the household member or their household could be determined to be ineligible for Food Assistance.

- Financial rules that include income, resources, deductions, expenses, and benefit calculations.

The financial rules determine the household's total resources and total income less expenses and deductions. Use the rules to compare the household's resource and income total to the limits imposed by the state to determine whether the household is, based on their financials, eligible. The rules also determine the benefit amount to which the household is entitled.

1.2 Non-financial requirements

The rules specify the non-financial requirements that a household member must satisfy before they can meet further requirements for Food Assistance. Non-financial requirements include the rules for citizenship, Social Security Numbers, and residency.

Citizenship and alienage

To qualify as a citizen, eligible alien, or qualified alien, specific conditions must be met. In addition, a qualified alien must meet specific conditions to be eligible for Food Assistance.

Citizenship

To qualify as a citizen, one of 10 conditions must be met.

To qualify for citizenship, one of the following 10 conditions must be met:

1. Individual must be a United States citizen OR
2. Individual must be a US non-citizen national OR
3. An American Indian born in Canada OR
4. Hmong and other Highland Lao tribal peoples lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence OR
5. An individual who is the spouse of a Hmong or Highland Laotian OR
6. An individual who is a surviving spouse (who has not remarried) of a Hmong or Highland Laotian OR
7. An unmarried dependent child or surviving child (under the age of 18) of a Hmong or Highland Laotian OR
8. An unmarried dependent child or surviving child (under the age of 22) of a Hmong or Highland Laotian, and the child is a full-time student OR
9. Victims of a severe form of trafficking OR
10. Individual must be an eligible alien.

Eligible alien

To qualify as an eligible alien, an individual must meet two conditions.

- An eligible alien is an individual who is BOTH classified as a:
 - Qualified alien AND
 - Meets the qualified alien eligibility criteria to be eligible for Food Assistance.

Qualified alien

To be categorized as a qualified alien, an individual must meet one of nine conditions.

A qualified alien is an individual who meets one of the following conditions:

1. An alien who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act OR
2. An alien who is granted asylum OR
3. An alien who is admitted as a refugee OR
4. An alien who is paroled into the United States for a period of at least one year OR
5. An alien whose deportation is being withheld OR
6. An alien who is granted conditional entry OR
7. An alien granted status as a Cuban and Haitian entrant OR
8. An alien admitted as an Amerasian immigrant OR
9. An alien battered or subjected to extreme cruelty who meets the following conditions:
 1. The battered alien must be battered by their U.S. Citizen or LPR alien spouse or parent AND
 2. If a parent is the battered alien, any child who lives with them is also a battered alien OR if a child is the battered alien, the parent who lives with them is also a battered alien as long as the parent did not actively participate in the battery AND
 3. The alien must not currently be residing in the same household as the individual responsible for the battery or extreme cruelty AND
 4. There must be a substantial connection between the battery or extreme cruelty suffered by the alien (or the alien's child or parent) and the need for Food Assistance benefits.

Qualified alien eligibility criteria

A qualified alien must meet one of 22 conditions to be eligible for Food Assistance.

To be eligible for Food Assistance, a qualified alien must meet one of the following conditions :

1. An individual who on August 22, 1996, was lawfully residing in the U.S., and is now under 18 years of age OR
2. Effective October 1, 2003, an individual who is under 18 years of age OR
3. Individual who has resided in the U.S. as a qualified for five years OR
4. An individual who is a lawful permanent resident with 40 qualifying quarters of Social Security coverage OR
5. An alien who is admitted as a refugee OR
6. An alien who is granted asylum OR
7. An alien whose deportation is being withheld OR
8. An alien granted status as a Cuban and Haitian entrant OR
9. An alien admitted as an Amerasian immigrant OR
10. An individual who on August 22, 1996, was lawfully residing in the U.S., and is now receiving benefits or assistance for blindness or disability OR
11. Effective October 1, 2002, an individual who is receiving benefits or assistance for blindness or disability OR
12. An individual who on August 22, 1996, was lawfully residing in the U.S., and was born on or before August 22, 1931 OR
13. A qualified alien who is a veteran with an honorable discharge from the Armed Forces of the United States OR

14. A qualified alien lawfully residing in the State who is on active duty in the United States military OR
15. A qualified alien who is the spouse of honorably discharged veteran OR
16. A qualified alien who is a surviving spouse (who has not remarried) of an honorably discharged veteran OR
17. A qualified alien who is the spouse of an individual on active duty in the United States military OR
18. A qualified alien who is the spouse of an individual who died in active military, naval, or air service provided the spouse has not remarried OR
19. Child of a veteran/deceased veteran of the U.S. military, honorably discharged who have met the minimum active duty service requirements providing the child is under the age of 18 OR
20. Child of a veteran/deceased veteran of the U.S. military, honorably discharged who have met the minimum active duty service requirements providing the child is under the age of 22 and a full-time student OR
21. Child of individual on active duty in the Armed Forces of the U.S. (other than for training) or who died on active duty and the individual is an unmarried dependent who is under the age of 18 OR
22. Child of individual on active duty in the Armed Forces of the U.S. (other than for training) or who died on active duty and the individual is an unmarried dependent who is under the age of 22 and a full-time student.

Social Security Number (SSN)

An individual must provide a Social Security Number (SSN) OR an individual must apply for a SSN if they do not have one and provide the number once it is assigned.

Newborn exception

For newborns, households must provide a Social Security Number (SSN) or provide proof of application at the next certification or six months, whichever is later.

Residency

Residency rules apply to individuals who reside in the state and individuals who receive concurrent out-of-state benefits.

State residence

The following rules apply to individuals who residence in the state:

- A household must live in the state in which it files an application for participation.
- All household members are alive. An individual cannot receive benefits if they are deceased.

Concurrent out-of-state benefits

The following rule applies to an individual who is receiving concurrent benefits in another state:

- The individual does not receive benefits in another state.

1.3 Assistance unit determination overview

The Food Assistance program rules determine all the potentially eligible assistance units in the household.

The adult household members must designate a head of household for Food Assistance. The case worker records the selected head of household for the household for Food Assistance. The assistance units are then formed around the head of household that is specified for Food Assistance and includes all individuals based on the mandatory household member rules and exceptions. More assistance units are formed when rules determine that separate assistance units can be formed that do not include the head of household specified.

- Household composition rules are used to form the assistance unit and determine the household members that are included in the unit.
- Household determination rules determine the household members that are not included or excluded from the assistance unit.
- Head of household determination rules determine the head of household for assistance units that are separately formed to the head of household that is specified for Food Assistance.
- Expedited Food Assistance rules determine whether the household is eligible for expedited Food Assistance.
- Categorically Eligible Food Assistance rules determine whether the household is eligible for categorical Food Assistance.

Household composition

The household composition rule group determines the mandatory and optional household members in an assistance unit.

If a household member is determined as mandatory, the member is included in the assistance unit. If a household member is determined as optional, you can include the member in the assistance unit. However, this is not required. You can form an assistance unit with and without the optional household member.

Eligible household members

The Food Assistance assistance unit is composed of one of five types of individuals or groups of individuals living in the household. Their income and resources are counted and they are included in the household size.

The Food Assistance assistance unit is composed of one of the following individuals or groups of individuals living in the household:

1. An individual living alone OR
2. An individual living with others, but customarily purchases food and prepares meals separately OR
3. A group of individuals who live together and customarily purchase food and meals together for home consumption OR
4. A homeless person or group of homeless people who purchase food OR
5. An individual or group of individuals residing in an exempt institution.

Homelessness

To qualify as homeless, an individual must meet one of five conditions.

An individual is considered homeless if they satisfy one of the following conditions:

1. Individual lacks a fixed and regular nighttime address OR
2. Individual has a primary nighttime address that is a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter designed to provide temporary living accommodations OR
3. Individual has a primary nighttime address that is an institution providing a temporary residence for individuals that are intended to be institutionalized OR
4. Individual has a primary nighttime address that is a temporary accommodation in the residence of another individual for no longer than 90 days OR
5. Individual has a primary nighttime address that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation.

Institution

Unless one of six exemptions apply, individuals who are residents of an institution are ineligible for Food Stamp benefits.

Individuals who are residents of an institution are ineligible for Food Stamp benefits unless one of the following exemptions apply:

1. The individual are residents of federally subsidized housing for the elderly OR
2. The Individuals are narcotic addicts or alcoholics and reside at a facility for treatment OR
3. The children of individuals are narcotic or alcoholics and reside at the same treatment facility OR
4. The individuals are disabled or blind and are residents of group living arrangements OR
5. The residents of shelters for battered women and children OR
6. The individuals are residents of public or private non-profit shelters for homeless persons.

Household member exceptions

Individuals who live with others are considered as customarily purchasing food and preparing meals with others, even where, in fact, the individuals do not customarily purchase food and prepare meals with others.

Individuals who live with others are included in the same assistance unit if they meet the following criteria:

1. Spouses who live together regardless of whether they purchase and prepare meals together OR
2. Children under 18 years of age, other than a foster child, who live with and are under parental control of a household member other than their parents OR
3. Persons under 22 years of age who are living with their natural, adoptive parent or parents or step-parent or step-parents.

Optional household members

You can include specific household members, who live in the home, in the assistance unit for Food Assistance. The exception is if a household member is required to be a Food Assistance assistance unit member as defined in household member exceptions.

For more information about household member exceptions, see the *Household member exceptions* related link.

For household members who are included, their income and resources are counted and they are included in the household size. The following are examples of such household members:

1. Boarders OR
2. Foster care individuals that are placed in the home of relatives or others by a federal, state, or local governmental foster care program can be included in the Food Assistance assistance unit at the household's request OR
3. Live-in attendants who purchase food and prepare their meals with the household.

Related concepts

[Household member exceptions on page 14](#)

Individuals who live with others are considered as customarily purchasing food and preparing meals with others, even where, in fact, the individuals do not customarily purchase food and prepare meals with others.

Boarder

A boarder is an individual or groups of individuals who reside with others (excluding residents of a commercial boarding house) and pay reasonable compensation for lodging and meals.

An individual or groups of individuals who reside with others (excluding residents of a commercial boarding house) and pay less than a reasonable amount for board is not considered a boarder. However, the individual or groups of individuals must be considered, along with a spouse or children who live with them, as a member of the household who is providing the board.

Reasonable compensation

For individuals whose board arrangement is for more than two meals per day, 'reasonable compensation' is an amount that equals or exceeds the maximum food stamp allotment for the appropriate size of the boarder household OR

For individuals whose board arrangement is for two meals or less per day, 'reasonable compensation' is an amount that equals or exceeds two thirds of the maximum food stamp allotment for the appropriate size of the boarder household.

Household composition special circumstances

If an individual is determined to be elderly and disabled and satisfies the Disabled and Elderly Exception, the individual can form an assistance unit. This unit is separate to other household members with whom they purchase and prepare food.

The household composition special circumstances rule group determines whether an individual is elderly and disabled.

If the elderly and disabled individual has a spouse, the spouse is also included in the assistance unit. The elderly disabled individual and their spouse can receive assistance as part of the assistance unit with whom they purchase and prepare meals. Alternatively, the elderly disabled individual and their spouse can receive assistance as part of their own separate assistance unit.

Elderly/disabled living with others

To meet the elderly/disabled and living with others criteria, certain conditions must be met.

The following conditions must be fulfilled to meet the elderly/disabled and living with others criteria:

1. An individual 60 years of age or older, together with their spouse (if living there), living with others who is unable to purchase and prepare meals because of a permanent disability AND
2. The Disabled and Elderly exception is satisfied AND

- The elderly and disabled individual and spouse can participate as a separate household OR
 - The elderly and disabled individual and spouse can choose to be included along with the other household members with whom they purchase and prepare food OR
3. The Disabled and Elderly exception is not satisfied AND
- The elderly and disabled individual and spouse must be included along with the other household members with whom they purchase and prepare food.

Disabled and Elderly Exception

To meet the Disabled and Elderly Exception, the gross income of the other household members with whom the individual resides (excluding the income of the elderly disabled individual and their spouse) does not exceed 165% of the poverty level.

Disability

To be considered disabled, an individual must one of 13 conditions.

An individual is considered to be disabled if they satisfy any one of the following conditions:

1. Individual receives supplemental security income OR
2. Individual receives disability or blindness payments from social security OR
3. Individual receives federally or state administered supplemental benefits OR
4. Individual receives federal, state or local public disability retirement pension because of a permanent disability OR
5. Individual receives or is entitled to receive payments from the Veterans' Administration (VA) for a 100 percent total disability OR
6. Individual is a veteran and considered by the VA to need regular aid and attendance or permanently housebound OR
7. Individual is a surviving spouse of a veteran and considered in need of aid and attendance or permanently housebound and incapable of self-support OR
8. Individual is a surviving spouse of a veteran and considered by the VA to be entitled to compensation under title 38 and has a disability considered permanent under section 221(i) of the SSA OR
9. Individual is a surviving child of a veteran and considered by the VA to be entitled to compensation under title 38 and has a disability considered permanent under section 221(i) of the SSA OR
10. Individual receives a disability annuity payment from Railroad Retirement and was determined disabled under Title XVI of the Social Security Act OR
11. Individual is a recipient of interim assistance benefits OR
12. Individual is a recipient of disability related medical assistance under title XIX of the Social Security Act OR
13. Individual is a recipient of disability-based state general assistance benefits.

Separate Food Assistance unit

In particular circumstances, live-in attendants and roomers can receive Food Assistance as a separate Food Assistance assistance unit.

Unless required to be a Food Stamp assistance unit member as defined in household member exceptions, the following household members, if otherwise eligible, can receive Food Assistance as a separate Food Assistance assistance unit:

- Live-in attendants who do not purchase food and prepare their meals with the household OR
- Roomers to whom the household furnishes lodgings for compensation but not meals.

The income and resources of live-in attendants and roomers are counted and they are included in the household size for the separate Food Assistance assistance unit.

For more information about household member exceptions, see the *Household member exceptions* related link.

Related concepts

[Household member exceptions on page 14](#)

Individuals who live with others are considered as customarily purchasing food and preparing meals with others, even where, in fact, the individuals do not customarily purchase food and prepare meals with others.

Household determination

The rule group for household determination governs whether any non-household members, excluded household members, or individuals whose income or resources will be later deemed to a household member. None of these individuals are included in the assistance unit.

Non-household members

Household members who live in the home and meet one of eight conditions are not considered household members in determining the household members eligibility or benefit amount. For these household members, income and resources are not counted and they are not included in the household size.

None of the following household members, who live in the home, are considered household members in determining the household members eligibility or benefit amount:

1. Individuals sharing living quarters with the household but do not purchase food and prepare meals with them.
2. Live-in attendants who do not purchase food and prepare meals with the household.
3. Roomers to whom the household furnishes lodging for compensation but not meals.
4. Ineligible students.
5. Boarders who are residents of a commercial boarding house.
6. Individuals who are residents of an institution that is not exempt.
7. Individuals who are the spouses of narcotic addicts or alcoholics who reside at the same treatment facility.
8. Individuals who are concurrently eligible on another Food Assistance product delivery of any status, unless the individual is a resident of a shelter for battered women and children.

Student

An individual that is enrolled at least half-time in an institution of higher education is ineligible for Food Assistance unless they satisfy a student exemption.

Student exemptions

The following student exemptions apply:

1. Individual aged 17 or younger or aged 50 or older OR
2. Individual is physically or mentally unfit OR
3. Individual receives Cash Assistance under Title IV of the Social Security Act OR
4. Individual is responsible for the care of a dependent household member under the age of 6 OR

5. Individual is responsible for the care of a dependent household member aged 6-12 and the State agency determines that adequate child care is not available to enable the student to attend class and comply with the work requirements OR
6. Individual is a single parent that is enrolled in an institution of higher education on a full-time basis and is responsible for the care of a dependent child who reached the age of 6 and is under the age of 12 OR
7. If no natural, adoptive or stepparent is in the same food stamp household as the dependent child aged 6-12, another full-time student in the same household can qualify for eligible student status if they have parental control over the child and is not living with their spouse OR
8. Individual is enrolled as a result of participation in the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills program under Title IV of the Social Security Act or its successor program OR
9. Individual is employed for a minimum of 20 hours per week and is paid for such employment OR
10. Individual is self-employed for a minimum of 20 hours per week and receiving weekly earnings at least equal to the federal minimum wage multiplied by 20 hours OR
11. Individual is participating in a State or federally financed work study program during the regular school year and the work study must be approved for the school term and must be approved at the time of application for Food Assistance OR
12. Individual is participating in an on-the-job training program OR
13. Individual is placed in an institution of higher education through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), formerly known as Job Training Partnership (JTPA) OR
14. Individual is placed in an institution of higher education through an employment and training program under FS/Cash Assistance E&T under FS Act OR
15. Individual is placed in an institution of higher education through an employment and training program for low-income households that is operated by a State or local government where one or more of the components of such program is least equivalent to an acceptable food stamp employment and training program component as specified OR
16. Individual is placed in an institution of higher education through a program under section 236 of the Trade Act.

Ineligible household members

Certain household members, who live in the home, are not eligible for Food Assistance.

However, the resources of these household members ineligible for Food Assistance are counted in full. A pro-rata share of their income is counted. They are not included in the household size. The following household members, who live in the home, are not eligible for Food Assistance:

1. Individual who failed to apply for a Social Security Number OR
2. Individual who does not satisfy the citizenship and alienage rules OR
3. Individual who does not meet the residency requirements OR
4. Individuals that are sanctioned for failure to cooperate with child support enforcement agencies OR
5. Able Bodied Adults Without Dependent (ABAWD) individuals who have exceeded the eligibility time limit.

Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs)

Able Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) are participants of the Food Assistance program who satisfy specific conditions.

To qualify as ABAWDs, participants of the Food Assistance program must satisfy all the following conditions:

- Are age 18 or over or under age 50
- Reside in the household with no children under the age of 18
- Are considered physically or mentally fit for employment
- Are not pregnant
- Are not receiving SSI benefit
- Are not exempt from Food Assistance Work Requirements

Anyone who does not meet these ABAWD determination requirements is considered non-ABAWD.

Legislation requires that unless an exemption applies, the adult household members who are categorized as ABAWD individuals must meet work requirements otherwise they can only receive Food Assistance benefits for a maximum of three countable months in a 36-month period. When you calculate the total months of Food Assistance received by a household member, it is necessary to total the months received in other state or states with the months received in the current state for the 36-month period. Partial months do not count as a countable month and the individual is considered non-ABAWD during partial months.

ABAWD functionality is configured by using a system property `curam.isproduct.cgiss.abawd.applicable` in the administration application. The 36-month state-wide fixed clock period is configured by using the CER ruleset. All ABAWD members' clocks stop and start on the same date.

ABAWD rules determine when a month of assistance received in the current state should be counted toward the ABAWD time limit. A countable month is one in which the ABAWD individual receives Food Assistance for the full benefit month while not fulfilling an exemption.

• ABAWD Work Requirements

An ABAWD individual is meeting the work requirements if the individual works for 80 hours in a calendar month. ABAWD work requirements are calculated using the Employment Working Hours page. Two pages are available: the Employment Working Hours page and a dynamic evidence page that does not contain a Monday validation and has no end-date attribute. ABAWD work requirements are calculated as follows:

- $\text{Hours per week} / 7 \text{ days in week} = \text{daily hours}$.
- $\text{Number of days worked in the calendar month} / \text{daily hours} = \text{hours worked in the month}$.

For example, evidence is entered as 20 hours/week. This is 2.86 hours per day ($20/7$ days). Employment working hours start on the seventh of the month. There are 31 days in the calendar month. 25 days employment in the month: $2.857 * 25 = 71.5$ hours in the month.

- On the Dynamic Evidence page, hours are calculated from the start date to the end date of the employment.

• Regain eligibility and three additional months

After a member uses the three countable months, the member can regain eligibility if the member meets the 80 hours in 30 days requirement. The eligibility start date is the date the regain is met even if the 30 days is met before the application date.

Once a member has met a regain of eligibility, individuals can receive up to three additional months of Food Assistance benefits if the individual stops meeting the work requirement. The three-month extension is only granted once in a 36-month period. Once the extension starts, it continues until the three-month period is finished.

- **ABAWD Exemption**

An ABAWD individual is exempted from ABAWD Time Limit rules if the individual has an exemption with a reason of Inadequate Transportation, Homeless, or Health issues. The individual receives Food Assistance benefits during the exemption period as long as the individual satisfies Food Assistance eligibility.

- **ABAWD Time Limit**

An ABAWD individual is meeting the ABAWD time limit if any of the following apply:

- The individual is receiving three countable months.
- The individual is meeting ABAWD work requirements (see ABAWD Work Requirements above).
- The individual is having ABAWD exemption.
- The individual is receiving three additional months.

- **ABAWD Waivers**

A waiver from supporting ABAWD eligibility is granted to a state when the economy in the state is poor. The state can be on a waiver until the economy improves. A state can go on more than one waiver period depending on the performance of the economy. States can have waivers from ABAWD processing for any period (typical length is one year).

During the waiver period, only ABAWD determination rules are run to determine whether the individuals in the state are ABAWD or not. The individuals are not required to meet ABAWD time limit rules (countable months, additional months and so on) to become eligible for Food Assistance. All individuals receive Food Assistance benefits during the waiver period as long as they satisfy Food Assistance eligibility.

Disqualified household members

Eligibility for Food Assistance requires that an individual is not a member of another household during the same period and the household is not subject to any sanctions.

When a sanction is imposed on an individual, it can variously affect a household member or a household's eligibility. Similarly, a sanction can reduce the benefit amount.

As the household member is determined disqualified by the rules, each of the following household members, who live in the home, are not eligible for Food Assistance:

1. Individual found guilty of committing an Intentional Program Violation (IPV).
2. Individuals that are sanctioned for using Food Assistance in the sale of a controlled substance.
3. Individuals that are sanctioned for providing fraudulent information.
4. Individuals that are sanctioned for trafficking Food Assistance.
5. Individuals that are sanctioned for selling firearms.
6. Individual is sanctioned for non-compliance with the food stamp work requirements.
7. Individual is sanctioned for voluntary quit.
8. Individuals that are sanctioned for violating a condition of federal or state probation or parole.
9. Individual has a sanction for being a fleeing felon.
10. Individuals that are sanctioned because of a drug-related felony conviction.
11. Individual that failed or refused to register for work.

However, the income and resources of household members, who live in the home, are counted in full and they are not included in the household size.

Note: The preceding rules apply to both application and reassessment.

1. Individual found guilty of using food stamps in the sale of a controlled substance OR
2. Individual found guilty of trafficking food stamps to the value of \$500 or more OR
3. Individual failed the voluntary quit rules OR
4. Individual has an intentional program violation OR
5. Individual that is convicted of a felony that is committed after 23 August 1996 involving illegal drugs OR
6. Individual that is convicted of making a fraudulent representation or statement OR
7. Individual is a fleeing felon OR
8. Individual is on parole and violating parole conditions OR
9. Individual that is convicted of selling firearms.

Note: The preceding rules apply only on application.

Work requirements

A household member must satisfy the work provisions unless they are exempt or they have a valid non-participation reason.

Work provision rules on application and reassessment

1. Household member must register for work or be registered by the State agency AND
2. Household member must pass employment offer rules.

Work provision rules on application

1. Household member is work-eligible and is not registered for work or does not have a non-participation reason, member is considered eligible for FA pending work registration, provided they meet all other conditions of FA program eligibility.

Work registration exemptions

The following individuals are not work-eligible:

1. Individual is complying with Cash Assistance work registration and does not have a Cash Assistance sanction OR
2. Individual under 16 years of age OR
3. Individual is aged 16 or 17 and not the head of the household OR
4. Individual is aged 16 or 17, head of the household and is in school at least half time OR
5. Individual aged 60 or older OR
6. Disabled persons and persons who are physically and mentally incapable of engaging in gainful employment OR
7. Household member is responsible for the care of an incapacitated person OR
8. Household member is responsible for the care of a dependent child under six OR
9. Individual earning weekly income equivalent to the federal minimum hourly wage multiplied by 30 hours OR

10. Individual employed or self-employed and working at least 30 hours per week OR
11. Individuals residing in certain areas of Alaska who are engaged in subsistence hunting and/or fishing an average of at least 30 hours weekly OR
12. Individuals who are migrant and seasonal farm workers OR
13. Individuals who are applying for SSI and Food Assistance OR
14. Individual in receipt of Unemployment Compensation or Unemployment Insurance Benefit OR
15. Drug addicts or alcoholics who regularly participate as residents or non-residents in a drug or alcohol treatment and rehab program OR
16. Student who is enrolled at least half time in any recognized school, training program, or institution of higher education.

Work non-participation reasons

The following are work non-participation reasons for a household member that is failing or refusing to participate in the work requirements:

1. Individuals who are applying for SSI and Food Assistance OR
2. Household emergency OR
3. There is lack of adequate childcare for children aged 6 years but are less than 12 years of age OR
4. Illness of another household member that requires the presence of the employed household member OR
5. Illness of the employed household member OR
6. Transportation is unavailable OR
7. Individual has lack of education and work skills OR
8. Individual resides in remote area OR
9. Individual is a victim of domestic violence OR
10. Individual is temporarily disabled.

Employment offer rules

Specific good cause reasons apply to employment refusal and employment suitability.

1. Household member is not in receipt of an offer of employment OR
2. Household member must accept a bona fide offer of suitable employment, unless good cause exists for employment refusal or employment suitability.

Good cause from employment refusal

Good cause reasons for a household member who refuses an offer of employment:

- Employment does not materialize or results in employment of less than 30 hours a week OR
- Employment results in weekly earnings of less than federal minimum wage multiplied by 30 hours.

Good cause employment suitability

Good cause reasons for a household member who refuses an offer of suitable employment:

1. The wage offered is less than the highest of the State minimum wage OR federal minimum wage OR 80% of the federal minimum wage if neither federal nor State is applicable OR

2. The employment that is offered is on a piece rate basis and the hourly yield is likely to be less than the highest of the State minimum wage OR federal minimum wage OR 80% of the federal minimum wage if neither the federal nor State is applicable OR
3. Individual is required to join a legitimate labor organization OR
4. Individual is required to resign from or refrain from joining any legitimate labor organization OR
5. The work that is offered is at a site subject to a strike or lockout at the time of the offer OR
6. The degree of risk to health and safety is unreasonable OR
7. Individual is physically or mentally unfit to perform the employment OR
8. Employment that is offered within the first 30 days is not in the individual's major field of experience OR
9. Employment is considered unsuitable if the distance to the place of employment prohibits walking and neither public nor private transportation is available to transport the member to the job site OR
10. The distance from the member's home to the place of employment is unreasonable considering the expected wage and the time and cost of commuting OR
11. The working hours or nature of the employment interferes with the member's religious observances, convictions, or beliefs.

Voluntary quit

An individual must not voluntarily quit a job or reduce their work effort unless good cause exists.

Exception

A government employee dismissed due to participation in a strike against the government is considered to have voluntary quit.

Reduced work effort determination

Individual who reduces their work effort voluntarily without good cause and after the reduction, is working less than 30 hours per week.

Good cause for voluntary quit

Good cause for voluntary quit exists when the following apply:

1. Individual who quit at least 60 days before date of application OR
2. Individual who reduced work effort and is earning weekly income equivalent to the federal minimum hourly wage multiplied by 30 hours OR
3. Individuals who voluntarily quit employment that was less than 30 hours per week or weekly earnings less than FMW times 30 OR
4. Individual satisfies a work registration exemption or good cause for failure to comply with work requirements OR
5. Individual gets a job, comparable to the job just quit OR
6. Individual resigns from a job at the demand of an employer OR
7. Individual terminates self-employment business OR
8. Discrimination by an employer based on age, race, sex, color, handicap, religious beliefs, national origin, or political beliefs OR
9. Leaving a job with patterns of employment in which workers frequently move from one employer to another OR
10. Resignation by persons under 60 that are recognized by the employer as retirement OR

11. Work demands or conditions that render continuous employment unreasonable OR
12. Acceptance of employment by the individual that requires the individual to leave other employment OR
13. Enrollment of at least half time in any recognized school, training program, institute of higher education or acceptance of employment that requires the household to relocate and requires other employed household members to leave their employment OR
14. Changes in employment status that results from an employer initiated reduction in hours of employment.

Penalties for voluntary quit sanctions

The following penalties are imposed depending on the level of voluntary quit sanction imposed on an individual:

1. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for 1 month if no previous sanction exists for this member.
2. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for 3 months if a previous level 1 voluntary quit sanction exists for this member.
3. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for 6 months if a previous level 2 (or higher) voluntary quit sanction exists for this member.

Household disqualification

The whole household is ineligible if certain conditions apply.

The whole household is ineligible if any of the following conditions apply:

1. An individual in the household failed the striker rules OR
2. An Individual in the household failed the invalid resource transfer rules.

Note: The preceding rules apply to both application and reassessment.

Striker

Households containing a striker or strikers are ineligible for Food Assistance unless certain conditions apply.

Households containing a striker or strikers are ineligible for Food Assistance unless:

1. Individual satisfies an exemption OR
2. Individual satisfies the striker exception.

Striker exemptions

The following individuals are not considered strikers and are therefore eligible for Food Assistance:

1. Employees unable to work as a result of striking employees OR
2. Employees who are not part of the bargaining unit on strike and who do not want to cross the picket line due to fear of personal injury or death OR
3. Employee that is affected by a lock out OR
4. Employees who go on strike that are exempt from work requirements the day before the strike, other than employees exempt because they are employed.

Striker exception

A striker exception is a household that was eligible for benefits the day before the strike began.

Invalid resource transfer

If a household member performs an invalid resource transfer, the entire household is ineligible for assistance for a specific period.

Members cannot apply for assistance until the period of ineligibility expires. If they apply before the expiry of the period of ineligibility, they are determined ineligible.

The following rules determine whether a resource transfer is invalid and how the period of ineligibility is calculated.

For resources transferred by any household member in the three months before application or any time during the certification period:

1. Determine whether the resource is countable or excluded.
2. For countable resources, determine whether an invalid resource transfer exception applies.
3. For transfers that are not allowed, determine the uncompensated value for each transfer.
4. Total the uncompensated values for all the resources transferred (that are not allowed).
5. Calculate total household countable resources.
6. Add the total of uncompensated values as determined in Step 4 to the total household countable resources as determined in Step 5.
7. Compare total resources that are determined in Step 6 to the resource limit. A period of ineligibility applies when total resources are greater than the resource limit.

Invalid resource transfer exceptions

Eligibility for Food Assistance is affected by the following transfers:

- Resources that are transferred between members of the same household (including ineligible aliens or disqualified persons whose resources are considered available to the household).
- Resources that are transferred for reasons other than qualifying or attempting to qualify for Food Assistance benefits between members of the same household (including ineligible aliens or disqualified persons whose resources are considered available to the household).

Calculate period of ineligibility

The period of ineligibility is calculated as follows:

1. Determine the value of the total resources.
2. Subtract these total resources from the resource limit and use this value to determine the number of months of ineligibility from the period of ineligibility proceeding chart.

Period of ineligibility

The following period of ineligibility is imposed if an individual makes an invalid resource transfer:

- The household is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for (n) number of months.

Table 1: Period of Ineligibility

Resource Transfer Value Exceeding Resource Limit	Number of Months Ineligible
Up to the value of \$249.99	1 Month
Between the Values \$250 and \$999.99	3 Months
Between the Values \$1000 and \$2999.99	6 Months
Between the Values \$3000 and \$4999.99	9 Months
A Value of \$5000 or over	12 Months

Deemed members of a financial unit: sponsored alien

If the household member is a sponsored alien, they can, in certain circumstances, be deemed members in the financial unit.

Sponsored alien

The following two conditions must be met:

1. The household member is an alien AND
2. Income and resources of an alien sponsor and the sponsor's spouse, if they live with the sponsor, are deemed an alien who is included in the assistance unit.

Head of household determination

To determine eligibility for Food Assistance, the eligible unit must have a head of household. Program rules determine the assistance units that exist within the household.

The case worker records the selected head of household for the household for Food Assistance. The household's selected head of household is assigned to the assistance unit in which the head of household is either:

- An eligible member of the assistance unit OR
- An excluded or non-household member OR
- An optionally excluded member.

The head of household can be end dated and a new head of household added.

Expedited Food Assistance

A household's circumstance might require immediate food assistance. For this reason, the processing of the household's first month of assistance for Food Assistance is expedited.

The first month of assistance is issued within 7 days rather than the normal 30 days. This is expedited Food Assistance.

In any of the following circumstances, households might be entitled to expedited Food Assistance:

- They have little income.
- The housing or utility expenses exceed their income.
- The household contains a migrant or seasonal farm worker who is in between jobs.

Expedited Food Assistance rules and processing applies only to the first month of assistance. To remain eligible for Food Assistance, the household unit must pass all the Food Assistance eligibility rules.

Application summary evidence is used to determine potential eligibility for expedited services. When the interview between the caseworker and applicant is complete and all evidence that is entered for the household, an eligibility check is executed. This includes full program rules execution for programs that are selected by the caseworker. An expedited icon is displayed in the context panel of the successful application.

Expedited Food Assistance households

To qualify for Expedited Food Assistance, a household must meet one of three conditions.

The following households are eligible for Expedited Food Assistance:

1. Household has countable gross monthly income less than \$150 in the month of application and liquid resources that do not exceed \$100 OR
2. Destitute household with one or more migrant or seasonal farm workers, provided liquid resources do not exceed \$100 OR
3. Household whose combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than the household's monthly rent or mortgage, and utilities (including entitlement to a Standard Utility Allowance (SUA)).

Destitute household

To qualify as destitute household, a household must meet one of three conditions.

The following households are classed as destitute households:

1. Household received their only income for the month of application prior to the date of application from a terminated source OR
2. Household's only income for the month of application is from a new source and the household anticipates that no more than \$25 from this new source will be received by the 10th calendar day after the date of application OR
3. Income from a Terminated Source and a New Source.

Categorically eligible Food Assistance

Individuals who are in receipt of other benefits or assistance programs are automatically determined as financially eligible for Food Assistance assistance. Therefore, resource or income eligibility determination for these individuals does not apply.

The household members are also not required to meet the non-financial rules that include the residency rules, sponsored alien rules, and SSN rules. The household must meet all the other Food Assistance eligibility rules other than those specified.

Categorical eligibility

Six eligibility requirements do not apply to categorically eligible Food Stamp households.

Categorically eligible Food Stamp households must meet all eligibility requirements except the following:

1. Resource limit.
2. Gross income limit.
3. Net income limit.

4. Residency rules.
5. Sponsored alien rules.
6. SSN rules.

Categorically eligible household definition

When all household members receive one of four specific benefits, a household is typically categorically eligible for Food Assistance.

A household is categorically eligible for Food Assistance, unless an exception applies, when all members (eligible and ineligible members) receive any of the following benefits:

1. Cash Assistance OR
2. Diversion payments OR
3. SSI or State Supplementary Payments OR
4. General Assistance.

Exceptions to categorically eligible households

When one of five specific conditions apply, a household that meets the categorical eligibility definition is not considered categorically eligible for Food Assistance.

A household that meets the categorical eligibility definition is not considered categorically eligible for Food Assistance when any of the following apply:

1. Entire household is institutionalized in a non-exempt facility OR
2. Entire household is disqualified for any reason OR
3. Household member is disqualified for an Intentional Program Violation (IPV) OR
4. Household member is disqualified because of a drug-related felony conviction OR
5. Household is ineligible under the striker rules.

Non-household members, ineligible household members, disqualified household members

Non-household members, ineligible household member, and disqualified household member are typically not included in a categorically eligible household.

Non-household members are not included in a categorically eligible household. Ineligible household members are not included in a categorically eligible household, except household members who failed either the SSN rules or the residency as these rules are waived under the categorical eligibility rules. Disqualified household members are not included in a categorically eligible household.

1.4 Alien sponsor

An alien sponsor is defined by four rules.

The following rules specify the definition of an alien sponsor and the sponsor deeming exceptions:

1. A person who signed an Affidavit of Support on behalf of an alien as a condition of the alien's entry or admission to the U.S. AND
2. The sponsor is not included in the assistance unit AND

3. The sponsor and the sponsor's spouse or the sponsor's spouse are financially responsible for the alien by deeming their income to the alien unless an exception is met AND
4. An alien can have more than one sponsor.

The deeming rules for sponsors use the preceding rules.

Sponsorship deeming exceptions

The alien sponsor deeming rules do not apply to certain aliens.

The following aliens are not subject to the alien sponsor deeming rules:

1. The alien is a refugee OR
2. The alien is a parolee OR
3. The alien is an asylee OR
4. The alien is a Cuban entrant OR
5. The alien is a Haitian entrant OR
6. Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR) who adjusted from refugee or asylee status OR
7. Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR) who entered the country before December 19, 1997 OR
8. Lawful Permanent Residents (LPR) who applied for a visa or adjusted their status before December 19, 1997 OR
9. Indigent Alien Exemption applies for 12 months from the month of determination OR
10. The sponsored alien becomes a naturalized citizen OR
11. The sponsored alien worked, or can be credited with, 40 qualifying quarters OR
12. The alien's sponsor dies OR
13. The sponsored alien leaves the U.S. permanently OR
14. The sponsor signed an Affidavit of Support OR
15. The battered alien spouse, alien parent of a battered child, or child of a battered alien, are exempt from deeming for 12 months and the batterer must not be part of the household OR
16. The alien is a victim of severe forms of trafficking.

Do not deem the income or resources of a sponsor if the alien belongs to any of the preceding categories.

Battered alien: first 12 months

For aliens who meet specific criteria, their income is not deemed for the first 12 months.

Do not deem income for the first 12 months for aliens who meet the following criteria:

- The battered alien must be battered by the battered alien's U.S. citizen or LPR alien spouse or parent AND is a refugee AND
- Either 1 or 2 of the following applies.
 1. If a parent is the battered alien, any child who lives with them is also a battered alien OR
 2. If a child is the battered alien, the parent who lives with them is also a battered alien where the parent did not actively participate in the battery AND
 3. There is a substantial connection between the battery and the need for benefits AND
 4. The individual subject to such battery or cruelty does not live in the same household with the individual responsible for the cruelty.

Battered alien: after 12 months

After 12 months, the alien continues to be exempt from sponsor deeming if two conditions are met.

After 12 months, the alien continues to be exempt from sponsor deeming if:

- The alien demonstrates that the battery or cruelty is recognized in an order of a judge or administrative law judge AND
- The local department determines that the abuse continues to have a connection to the need for benefits.

1.5 Food Assistance calculations

Calculate Food Assistance by using specific rules for resources, income, expenses, and benefit calculations.

The resource rules specify a resource limit that the household's total countable resources cannot exceed. Total countable resources include resources that are deemed to the household. If the household's resources exceed the resource limit, the household is ineligible for benefits. The decision tables in the Cúram Express Rules Editor contain a list of countable income. For more information, see the *Rule Element Reference for Decision Table Templates* related link.

The income rules specify a gross income limit that the household's gross income cannot exceed. Gross income is countable unearned, earned, and self-employment income. Total countable income includes income that is deemed to the household. The income rules also specify a net income limit that the household's net income cannot exceed. Net income is gross income minus allowable deductions or expenses. The decision tables in the Cúram Express Rules Editor contain a list of countable income. For more information, see the *Rule Element Reference for Decision Table Templates* related link.

The benefit calculation, benefit reduction, and initial month proration rules are applied to determine the benefit amount to which the assistance unit is entitled.

Related reference

Resource calculations

Countable resources must not exceed \$2000 for the household, except for households that include a member aged 60, or over, or disabled where countable resources must not exceed \$3000.

The following are the steps to be undertaken to determine the total countable resources for Food Assistance:

Resource deeming

The individuals whose resources shall be deemed is determined as part of the household determination rules.

Perform the following for an individual whose resources shall be deemed:

- If the individual is a sponsor, execute the sponsor to alien deeming.

Sponsor to alien deeming

The sponsor definition and the sponsor deeming exception rules for income deeming must be applied first when deeming resources.

For each sponsor, determine the resources to be deemed to the alien as follows:

- If the sponsor does not have a spouse that is living in the home:
 - Calculate countable resources for the sponsor and spouse (if spouse lives with sponsor) AND
 - Subtract \$1500 from the countable resources AND
 - Deem the remainder to the alien.

Note: Countable and excluded resources are detailed in the Resource Rules section. For more information, see the *Resource Rules* related link.

Sponsor definition

An alien sponsor is defined as meeting the following criteria:

1. A person who signed an Affidavit of Support on behalf of an alien as a condition of the alien's entry or admission to the U.S. AND
2. The sponsor is not included in the assistance unit AND
3. The sponsor and/or the sponsor's spouse are financially responsible for the alien by deeming their income to the alien unless an exception is met AND
4. An alien can have more than one sponsor.

Related concepts***Sponsorship deeming exceptions***

Certain categories are excluded from the alien sponsor deeming rules.

The following aliens are not subject to the alien sponsor deeming rules and so do not deem the income/resources of a sponsor if the alien falls into any of the following categories:

1. The alien is a refugee OR
2. The alien is a parolee OR
3. The alien is an asylee OR
4. The alien is a Cuban/Haitian entrant OR
5. Indigent Alien Exemption applies for 12 months from the month of determination OR
6. Alien is sponsored by an organization or group as opposed to an individual OR
7. The sponsored alien becomes a naturalized citizen OR
8. The sponsored alien has worked, or can be credited with, 40 qualifying quarters OR
9. The alien's sponsor dies OR
10. The sponsored alien leaves the U.S. permanently OR
11. Battered alien spouse, alien parent of a battered child, or child of a battered alien, are exempt from deeming for 12 months and the batterer must not be part of the household OR
12. The alien is a victim of severe forms of trafficking.

Battered alien: first 12 months

Do not deem income for the first 12 months for aliens who meet the following criteria:

- The battered alien must be battered by their U.S. citizen or LPR alien spouse or parent AND is a refugee AND
- Either 1 or 2 following must apply.
 1. If a parent is the battered alien, any child who lives with them is also a battered alien OR
 2. If a child is the battered alien, the parent who lives with them is also a battered alien as long as the parent did not actively participate in the battery AND
 3. There is a substantial connection between the battery and the need for benefits AND
 4. The individual subject to such battery or cruelty does not live in the same household with the individual responsible for the cruelty.

Battered alien: after 12 months

After 12 months, the alien continues to be exempt from sponsor deeming if:

- The alien demonstrates that the battery or cruelty has been recognized in an order of a judge or administrative law judge AND
- The local department determines that the abuse continues to have a connection to the need for benefits.

Total countable resources

Execute three steps for every individual in the income or resource unit whose resources are counted.

For every individual in the income or resource unit whose resources are counted, carry out the following steps:

1. Calculate the individual's countable resources AND
2. Add the total deemed resources, if any, to the individual's total countable resources to determine the total countable resources AND
3. Add the individual's countable resources to other household member's countable resources to determine the household's total countable resources.

Income calculations

Two main criteria are required to calculate income.

The following criteria are required to calculate income:

1. The household's monthly gross countable income is equal or less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Limit for the household size unless the household is exempt from the Gross Income Limit AND
2. The household's monthly net countable income is equal or less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Limit for the household size unless the household is exempt from the Net Income Limit.

Execute the following steps to determine the total countable gross and net income for Food Assistance.

Using the financial unit that is previously determined in the household composition rules for Food Assistance, carry out the following steps for the gross income test.

Income deeming

Three steps are required for every sponsor in the financial unit whose income is deemed.

For every sponsor in the financial unit whose income is deemed, perform the following steps:

1. Total the sponsor and sponsor's spouses (if living in the home) countable gross unearned income from all sources AND
2. Total the sponsor and sponsor's spouses (if living in the home) countable gross earned income from all sources, including income from self-employment AND
3. Carry out the sponsor to alien deeming.

Sponsor to alien deeming

Apply the sponsor definition and sponsor deeming exception rules when deeming income. For more information, see the *Alien sponsor* related link.

If no sponsorship deeming exceptions apply, perform the following:

1. For each sponsor, determine the amount of money to be deemed to the alien.
2. From the sponsor's and their live-in spouse (if any) countable earned income:
 1. Deduct the Earned Income Deduction from the sponsor's and their live-in spouse (if any) countable earned income AND
 2. Add the gross countable unearned income for the sponsor's and their live-in spouse (if any) AND
 3. Subtract an amount equal to the monthly gross Food Assistance income eligibility limit for a household equal in size to the sponsor, the sponsor's spouse, and any other person who is claimed or could be claimed by the sponsor or the sponsor's spouse as a dependent for federal income tax purposes AND
 4. Subtract any additional amounts the sponsor actually pays to persons not living in the home, but who are, or could be, claimed as dependents for federal income tax purposes AND
 5. The remaining amount, if any, is deemed as unearned income to the alien.
 6. Do not apply potential deemed amounts to sponsored alien children aged less than 18 years.

Related concepts

[Alien sponsor on page 28](#)

An alien sponsor is defined by four rules.

Pro-rated income gathering

Execute certain steps for every ineligible member in the income unit whose income is pro-rated.

For every ineligible member in the income unit whose income is pro-rated, carry out the following steps:

1. Calculate the individual's countable gross unearned income from all sources AND
2. Divide the countable unearned income equally among all of the household members, including the ineligible members AND
3. Count all but the ineligible member's pro-rata share as unearned income to the remaining household members.
4. Calculate the individual's countable gross-earned income from all sources, including income from self-employment AND

5. Divide the countable earned income equally among all of the household members, including the ineligible members AND
6. Count all but the ineligible member's pro-rata share as earned income to the remaining household members.

Gross countable income

Execute twelve steps for every individual in the financial unit whose income is counted.

For every individual in the financial unit whose income is counted, carry out the following steps:

1. Calculate individual's countable gross unearned income from all sources AND
2. Add deemable income, if any, to the individual's unearned income AND
3. Add individual's countable gross unearned income to other household member's countable gross unearned income AND
4. Add the pro-rated unearned income of ineligible household members, if any, to the household's total gross unearned income AND
5. Calculate the individual's countable income from self-employment AND
6. Add individual's countable income from self-employment to other household members' countable self-employment income AND
7. Offset any farming losses against total self-employment income AND
8. Calculate the individual's countable gross earned income from all sources AND
9. Add individual's countable gross earned income, excluding self-employment, to other household member's countable gross earned income, excluding self-employment income AND
10. Add household's self-employment income to household's gross earned income to determine the household's total gross earned income AND
11. Add the pro-rated income of ineligible household members, if any, to the household's total gross earned income AND
12. Combine the household's total gross unearned income and the total gross earned income to determine the household's total gross income.

The household's monthly gross countable income is equal or less than 130% of the Federal Poverty Limit for the household size unless the household is exempt from the Gross Income Limit.

The household is exempt if any of the following apply:

- It meets the categorically eligible rules OR
- The household has at least one member age 60 or over OR
- The household has a disabled member.

The exempt household must meet the net income limit only.

Net income calculations

The household's monthly net countable income is equal or less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Limit for the household size unless the household is exempt from the Net Income Limit.

Income deductions

For every individual in the income unit whose income is counted, you can apply deductions.

Apply disregards in the following order for each employed or self-employed individual in the household:

1. Subtract the earned income deduction from the household's gross countable monthly earned income to determine the countable net monthly earned income.
2. Apply the following disregards to the remaining total income (that is, the household's net monthly earned income after earned income deduction is applied plus the household's total countable unearned income):
 - Offset any remaining farm self-employment losses against the total amount of earned and unearned income after the earned income deduction is applied.
 - Subtract the standard deduction.
 - Subtract the allowable excess medical deduction for elderly or disabled household members.
 - Subtract allowable monthly dependent care expenses.
 - Subtract child support expenses.
 - Subtract shelter expenses.
3. Shelter expenses.

Deduct the appropriate shelter expenses for the household:

- Homeless shelter deduction OR
- Excess shelter deduction.

Earned income deduction

Deduct the 20% earned income deduction from the household's total countable gross earned income.

General income disregards

The following deductions are applied to the remaining total income (household's net earned plus household's total countable unearned income):

- Standard deduction
 - Allow a standard deduction for the applicable household size (applies to eligible members only).
- Excess medical deduction
 - Medical expense is incurred by household member who is elderly (60 or over) or disabled AND
 - Household member is an eligible or disqualified household member AND
 - Medical expense is an allowable expense AND
 - Allow only the part of the expense that is not reimbursed AND
 - Deduct the portion of allowable monthly medical expenses that exceeds \$35 per household.
- Allowable medical expenses
 - Medical and dental care, including psychotherapy and rehabilitation services that are provided by a licensed practitioner who is authorized by State law or other qualified health professional OR
 - Hospitalization or outpatient treatment, nursing care, and nursing home care, including payments by the household for an individual who has a household member immediately before they enter a hospital or nursing home that is provided by the State OR

- Prescription drugs when prescribed by a licensed practitioner who is authorized under State law and other over-the-counter medication (including insulin) when approved by a licensed practitioner or other qualified health professional; in addition, costs of medical supplies, sick-room equipment (including rental), or other prescribed equipment OR
- Health and hospitalization insurance policy premiums OR
- Medicare premiums that are related to coverage under Title XVIII of the Social Security Act; any cost-sharing or spend down expenses that are incurred by Medicaid recipients OR
- Dentures, hearing aids, and prosthetics OR
- Securing and maintaining a seeing eye or hearing dog, including the cost of dog food and veterinarian bills OR
- Eye glasses that are prescribed by a physician skilled in eye disease or by an optometrist OR
- Reasonable cost of transportation and lodging to obtain medical treatment or services OR
- Maintaining an attendant, homemaker, home health aide, or child care services, housekeeper, necessary due to age, infirmity, or illness.
- Dependent care deduction

Deduct the monthly amount paid for the care of each child or other dependent in the household up to the maximum defined in the Dependent Care Chart where the following applies:

- Child or other dependent is an eligible member of the assistance unit AND
- The dependent care provider is not a household member AND
- Actual cost of child care is not reimbursed AND
- The care is necessary for employment OR
- To attend training or pursue education that helps the individual prepare for employment AND
- Apply pro-rating procedures if the household member who is incurring the expense is an ineligible household member.
- Child support deduction
 - Deduct legally obligated child support payments that are paid by a household member to or for an individual outside the household AND
 - Apply pro-rating procedures if the household member who is incurring the expense is an ineligible household member (as determined by Household Determination rules).
- Homeless shelter deduction
 - Households in which all members are homeless but are not receiving free shelter are entitled to the standard shelter allowance AND
 - Allow actual shelter expenses, instead of the homeless shelter allowance, if the actual shelter costs would result in a higher deduction under the excess shelter deduction calculation.
- Excess shelter deduction
 - The excess shelter deduction is the monthly allowable shelter costs in excess of 50% of the Assistance Unit's income after the earned income, standard, medical, dependent care and child support deductions are subtracted AND
 - Do not allow more than the maximum excess shelter deduction amount unless Elderly and Disabled Exception applies AND
 - Apply pro-rating procedures if household member who is incurring the expense is an ineligible household member AND

- Apply treatment of shelter expenses for non-household members if any household member who is incurring the expense is a non-household member.
- Elderly disabled exception
 - Allow the full amount of the excess shelter expense as a deduction when at least one individual in the assistance unit is age 60 or over and or disabled.
- Allowable shelter expenses
 - Continuing charges for the shelter that is occupied by the household, including rent, mortgage, condo and association fees, or other continuing charges that are leading to the ownership of the shelter such as loan repayments for the purchase of a mobile home, including interest on such payments OR
 - Property taxes, State and local assessments, an insurance on the structure itself, but not separate costs for insuring furniture or personal belongings OR
 - Costs of repairing a home that was substantially damaged or destroyed due to a natural disaster, such as a fire or flood, where the expenses will not be reimbursed OR
 - Allowable utility costs OR
- Calculating utility costs

The following steps are followed to determine utility costs that are included in determining shelter deduction:

- Determine Eligibility for the Standard Utility Allowance (SUA).
- If eligible for SUA and State mandates the use of SUAs, use SUA.
- If eligible for SUA and it is not mandatory the use of SUAs, use higher of SUA or actual utility costs.
- If eligible for SUA and State mandates the use of the SUA (otherwise use higher of SUA or actual utility costs).
- If eligible for SUA, determine actual utility costs.
- Use higher of SUA or actual utility costs to determine shelter deduction.
- If not eligible for the SUA, determine eligibility for the Limited Utility Allowance (LUA).
- If eligible for LUA and State mandates the use of SUAs, use LUA.
- If eligible for LUA and it is not mandatory to use SUAs, use higher of LUA or actual utility costs.
- If not eligible for LUA, determine eligibility for the telephone allowance.
- If eligible for telephone allowance and State mandates the use of SUAs use telephone allowance.
- If eligible for telephone allowance and it is not mandatory to use SUAs, use higher of telephone allowance or actual utility costs.
- If not eligible for telephone allowance, no utility expenses are used to determine the shelter deduction.
- Standard Utility Allowance (SUA)

To be eligible for the Standard Utility Allowances (SUA), the household must:

- Incur a heating or cooling expense that is billed separate from rent or mortgage payments OR
- Receive direct or indirect assistance under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (LIHEAA) for applications before March 10, 2014 OR
- Receive direct or indirect assistance under the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (LIHEAA) on or after March 10, 2014 and the total amount that is received for a 365-day period is \$20 or greater OR

- Households that receive direct or indirect energy assistance that is excluded from income consideration (other than that provided under the LIHEAA) are entitled to a standard that includes heating or cooling only if the amount of the expense exceeds the amount of the assistance OR
- Households that receive direct or indirect energy assistance that is counted as income and incur a heating or cooling expense are entitled to use a standard that includes heating or cooling costs.
- Limited Utility Allowance (LUA)

To be eligible for the LUA, the household must incur two or more of the following non-heating or non-cooling utility expenses:

 - Electricity that is not used for heating or cooling.
 - Cooking fuel.
 - Telephone.
 - Water.
 - Sewage.
 - Well and septic tank installation and maintenance.
 - Garage or trash collection.
- Telephone allowance
 - If the telephone (including a mobile phone) is the household's only utility expense, the household is eligible for the telephone allowance.
- Allowable utility expenses
 - Heating and cooling expenses OR
 - Electricity OR
 - Cooking fuel OR
 - Water and sewage OR
 - Well and septic tank installation and maintenance OR
 - Garage or trash collection fees OR
 - All service fees that are required to provide for one telephone, including but not limited to, basic service fees, wire maintenance fees, subscriber line charges, relay center surcharges, 911 fees, and taxes OR
 - Fees that are charged by the utility provider for utility installation, excluding deposits.

Pro-rated expenses

- Pro-rated child support expenses
 - Divide the allowable child support expense, paid by an ineligible household member equally among all the household members, including the ineligible household members AND
 - Count all but the ineligible members' pro-rata share as a child support deduction for the remaining household members.
- Pro-rated dependent care expenses
 - Divide the allowable dependent care that is paid by an ineligible household member equally among all the household members, including the ineligible household members AND
 - Count all but the ineligible members' pro-rata share as a dependent care for the remaining household members.

- Pro-rated shelter expenses that use actual utility costs or no utility costs
 - Divide the allowable shelter expense that is paid by an ineligible household member equally among all the household members, including the ineligible household members AND
 - Count all but the ineligible members' pro-rata share as a shelter deduction for the remaining members.
- Pro-rated shelter expenses that use SUA, LUA, or telephone allowance
 - Divide the allowable shelter expense, less the standard utility allowance amount, paid by an ineligible household member equally among all the household members, including the ineligible household members AND
 - Count all but the ineligible members' pro-rata share as a shelter deduction for the remaining household members AND
 - Use full amount of SUA, LUA, or telephone allowance as already determined.
- Treatment of shelter expenses for non-household members (based on Household Determination rules)
 - Where the household shares shelter or utility expenses with a non-household member, only the amount that is actually paid or billed to the Food Assistance household is deducted as an expense.
 - Utility exception
 - The appropriate utility standard must not be pro-rated.

Net countable income

The household's net income is the adjusted income after you apply all deductions to the household's gross income.

The household's monthly net countable income is equal or less than 100% of the Federal Poverty Limit for the household size unless the household is exempt from the Net Income Limit.

Benefit calculation

Use three steps to determine the household's benefit amount for Food Assistance.

Apply the following steps to determine the household's benefit amount for Food Assistance:

1. Determine the maximum Food Assistance allotment for the household size by using the Food Stamp Allotment Chart.
2. Multiply the household's net monthly income (as previously determined by the net income test) by 30%.
3. Subtract the amount that is determined from Step 2 from the Maximum Net Monthly Allotment that is determined in Step 1.

The result is the net monthly allotment payable to the assistance unit.

Allow a minimum allotment of \$16 for a one- or two-person categorically eligible household if the net monthly allotment is less than \$16. For a one- or two-person household, if the net monthly allotment is less than \$16 but greater than zero, allow a \$16 minimum allotment.

Initial month proration

Use four steps to determine the household's benefit amount for Food Assistance for the initial month of eligibility.

Undertake the following steps to determine the household's benefit amount for Food Assistance for the initial month of eligibility:

1. A household's benefit for the initial month of certification is based on the day of the month the household applies for benefits.
2. Using the exact number of days in a month, households receive benefits pro-rated from the day of application to the end of the month.
3. After the pro-rated benefit amount is calculated, round down to the nearest whole dollar.
4. No benefits are issued for the initial month if the pro-rated allotment is less than \$10.00.

1.6 Sanction assessment overview

The sanctions assessment process is based on reassessment and determines whether any eligible members of the unit failed specific program rules.

Sanctions can be imposed if any of the eligible members of the unit failed any of the following program rules:

- Using Food Assistance in the sale of controlled substance
- Intentional Program Violation (IPV)
- Work requirements
- Voluntary quit
- Child support enforcement
- Drug-related felony
- Fleeing felony
- Parole violation
- Fraudulent information
- Sale of firearms
- Trafficking Food Assistance

The sanction assessment determines whether individuals are potentially subject to a sanction and the penalty to impose.

Sanction assessment

The sanction assessment process is separate to Food Assistance eligibility determination.

The sanction assessment determines whether an individual is subject to a sanction and the penalty to impose. The sanctions are not automatically created. Instead, caseworkers must manually create the sanctions.

The sanction assessment information is highlighted to the caseworker if the individual or individuals fail the sanction assessment. If the individual or individuals fail the sanction assessment, the caseworker must decide the action to take. The caseworker can sanction or override the sanction recommendation for the individual or individuals. The sanction assessment

information displays the reason the individual or individuals are subject to a sanction and the appropriate penalty to impose.

Individuals who are sanctioned are generally ineligible for assistance. In some circumstances, a sanction that is imposed on an individual member of a household can make the entire household unit ineligible. In other circumstances, a sanction can reduce the benefit for the entire household unit.

The penalty to impose due to the failure of program requirements depends on the following factors:

- Whether previous sanctions were previously imposed in respect of this requirement failure
- The level of the previously imposed sanction

Individuals are potentially subject to a sanction if they fail to comply with the following requirements without good cause.

Using Food Assistance in the sale of controlled substance

An individual must not have been found guilty of using Food Assistance in the sale of controlled substance.

Depending on the level of using Food Assistance in the sale of controlled substance sanction imposed on an individual, the following penalties are imposed:

1. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for two years if the using Food Assistance in the sale of controlled substance sanction if no previous sanction exists for this, for this member.
2. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits permanently if the using Food Assistance in the sale of controlled substance sanction if a previous sanction exists for this, for this member.

Intentional Program Violation (IPV)

The individual must not be an Intentional Program Violator (IPV).

Depending on the level of the Intentional Program Violation (IPV) sanction imposed on an individual, the following penalties are imposed:

1. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for 12 months if no previous sanction exists for this, for this member.
2. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for 24 months if a previous Level 1 IPV sanction exists for this, for this member.
3. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits permanently if a previous Level 2 (or higher) IPV sanction exists for this member.

Work requirements

The household member must satisfy the work provisions unless exempt or the household member has a valid non-participation reason.

For more information about work requirement rules, see the *Work requirements* related link.

Depending on the level of the work non-compliance sanction imposed on an individual, the following penalties are imposed:

1. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for 1 month if no previous sanction exists for this, for this member.

2. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for 3 months if a previous Level 1 work non-compliance sanction exists for this member.
3. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for 6 months if a previous Level 2 (or higher) work non-compliance sanction exists for this member.

Related concepts

[Work requirements on page 21](#)

A household member must satisfy the work provisions unless they are exempt or they have a valid non-participation reason.

Voluntary quit

An individual must not voluntarily quit a job or reduce their work effort without good cause.

For more information about the voluntary quit rules, see the *Voluntary quit* related link.

Depending on the level of the voluntary quit sanction imposed on an individual, the following penalties are imposed:

1. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for 1 month if no previous sanction exists for this, for this member.
2. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for 3 months if a previous Level 1 voluntary quit sanction exists for this member.
3. The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits for 6 months if a previous Level 2 (or higher) voluntary quit sanction exists for this member.

Related concepts

[Voluntary quit on page 23](#)

An individual must not voluntarily quit a job or reduce their work effort unless good cause exists.

Child support enforcement

An individual must assign all rights to support, including child support and spousal support AND an individual must cooperate (with CSED) to obtain support unless good cause exists.

Good cause child support enforcement non-compliance

1. Cooperation can result in physical or emotional harm to the child or caretaker relative OR
2. Legal proceedings for adoption of the child are pending before a court OR
3. The caretaker relative is being assisted by a public or licensed private social agency to resolve the issue for whether to keep the child or relinquish the child for adoption OR
4. The child was conceived as a result of incest or rape.

Penalty for child support enforcement sanction

The following penalty is imposed if an individual has a current child support enforcement sanction:

- The individual is ineligible for Food Stamp benefits.

Drug-related felony

An individual must not have been convicted of a felony that involves illegal drugs committed after 23 August 1996.

The following penalty is imposed if an individual has a current drug-related felony sanction:

- The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits.

Fleeing felony

An individual must not be a fleeing felon.

The following penalty is imposed if an individual has a current fleeing felon sanction:

- The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits.

Parole violation

An individual must not be on parole and must not be violating parole conditions.

The following penalty is imposed if an individual has a current parole violation sanction:

- The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits.

Fraudulent information

An individual must not be convicted of making a fraudulent representation or statement.

The following penalty is imposed if an individual has a current fraudulent information sanction:

- The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits.

Sale of firearms

An individual must not be found guilty of the sale of firearms.

The following penalty is imposed if an individual has a current sale of firearms sanction:

- The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits.

Trafficking Food Assistance

An individual must not be found guilty of trafficking Food Assistance to the value of \$500 or more.

The following penalty is imposed if an individual has a current trafficking Food Assistance sanction:

- The individual is ineligible for Food Assistance benefits.

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