

Changes to Food Stamp Program Affect Free School Lunch Eligibility

The Bellingham School District has again teamed up with the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to help distribute some exciting information to families in the district.

The income eligibility for Basic Food (formerly Food Stamps) will continue with an **increase to 200%** of the federal poverty level. It was set at 130%.

In other words, if your family has typically not qualified for food stamps because your family income was too high, you **may** now qualify. *If your family qualifies, your school-aged children will automatically be enrolled in the schools' free meal program for the rest of the school year.* A family with two children eating school lunch every day could save \$1,000 in lunch costs over the course of the school year! Other benefits include reduced ASB fees, athletic fees, and club memberships for the Bellingham Boys & Girls Club and Bellingham Parks.

Basic Food Applications are available in English, Spanish, and Russian on the district website. WRITTEN APPLICATIONS MUST BE TURNED IN TO THE DSHS OFFICE AT 4101 MERIDIAN IN BELLINGHAM.

Basic Food



Basic Food, the state's food stamp program, helps people in Washington make ends meet by providing monthly benefits to buy food. Participating in Basic Food has other benefits such as:

- Enrollment in free school meals for school-aged children;
- Qualification for low-cost local phone service; and
- Shows your family meets the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) income test.

Basic Information / Updates

Now, Basic Food is available to more people in Washington State. Gross income limits have increased to 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Asset limits are also waived under the current rules (e.g. retirement account and car value).

| Have income at or under the amounts below based on how often you are paid: | | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|---------------|------------------|--------|
| Household Size | Annual | Monthly | Twice Monthly | Every-Other Week | Weekly |
| 1 | \$21,660 | \$1,805 | \$903 | \$833 | \$417 |
| 2 | \$29,148 | \$2,429 | \$1,215 | \$1,121 | \$561 |
| 3 | \$36,624 | \$3,052 | \$1,526 | \$1,409 | \$704 |
| 4 | \$44,100 | \$3,675 | \$1,838 | \$1,696 | \$848 |
| 5 | \$51,588 | \$4,299 | \$2,150 | \$1,984 | \$992 |
| Add for each person over 6 | \$7,200 | \$600 | \$300 | \$138 | \$69 |

Am I eligible? How much would I get each month?

Eligibility for Basic Food is based on your monthly income (before taxes) and your household size. We also look at your regular expenses, such as rent and child care, to determine what your benefits will be. Use our [Benefit Estimator](#) to determine if you qualify for Basic Food and get an estimate of your monthly benefits.

Apply Here

Getting Basic Food is easy! You can apply in person at the local DSHS Community Service Office, by mail, or online. We can arrange a phone interview anytime an in-office interview is inconvenient and we can help verify any required information.

Please call our toll-free number: 1-877-514-FOOD (3663), for more information or to request an application.

Get hooked up!

When we approve you for Basic Food, even if you have a low or zero-dollar monthly benefit, you are eligible for low-cost local phone service through the Washington Telephone Assistance Program (WTAP).

People who receive Basic Food can enroll in WTAP by calling their local phone provider.

For more information about WTAP, Call 1-888-700-8880.

More Information

Basic Food FAQ's including how we determine your monthly benefits

Basic Food Publications - Brochure, Rack Card, Bookmark

-  Cambodian Brochure, Rack Card
-  Korean Brochure, Rack Card
-  Laotian Brochure, Rack Card
-  Russian Brochure, Rack Card, FAQ
- **Somali** Somali Brochure, Rack Card
- **Español** Spanish Brochure, Rack Card, FAQ
- **Tiếng Việt** Vietnamese Brochure, Rack Card
-  Chinese Brochure, Rack Card

More Resources

- DSHS Community Services Offices
- Washington Apple Health for Kids
- Community Organizations that help with applying
 - **From a client:**
 - "Thank you so much for the food stamp card. It has helped me so much...This helps me buy things I have not been able to buy for a long time, like greens and fresh fruit."
 - -Anna R., Colfax, WA



CSD Community Services
Division

- For more information about these services, call 1-877-514-FOOD.

Technical Site Comments: Webmaster.

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